

The 7/10 Massacre of Hamas as an Inspiration Model for the "Change Stream" ("Tayyar al-Taghyir") in the Muslim Brotherhood

Dr. Michael Barak
December 2023

About the ICT

The International Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT) is one of the leading academic institutes for counter-terrorism in the world. Using a multidisciplinary approach, the ICT work to facilitate international cooperation in the global struggle against terrorism.

As an independent think-do-tank, the ICT focuses on themes related to terrorism, counter-terrorism, homeland security, threat vulnerability, risk assessment, intelligence analysis, national security, and defense policy.

Serving as a joint forum for international policymakers and scholars, the ICT draws upon the experiences of a comprehensive and international network of individuals and organizations with unique expertise on terrorism and counter-terrorism research, public policy analysis and education.

In addition to publishing research papers, situation reports and academic publications for worldwide distribution, the ICT hosts a number of international seminars, workshops and conferences to discuss and educate followers on global and regional issues of security, defense, and public policy in order to better facilitate the exchange of perspectives, information and proposals for policy action.

Licensing & Distribution

ICT publications are published in an open-access format and are distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International Public License, which permits the non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, and is not altered, transformed, or built upon in any way.

SPECIAL REPORT

The 7/10 Massacre of Hamas as an Inspiration Model for the "Change Stream" ("Tayyar al-Taghyir") in the Muslim Brotherhood

Dr. Michael Barak

Abstract

This article provides a thorough examination of the "Change Stream" within the Muslim Brotherhood. It delves into the group's response to Hamas' activities and its call for armed revolution against Egypt's regime, drawing parallels with extremist ideologies like those of Sayyid Qutb, Al-Qaeda, and ISIS. The article discusses the faction's evolution, leadership shifts, ideological stance, and influence on the Muslim Brotherhood's internal dynamics. It also explores the faction's operational base in Turkey, its impact on regional stability, and the potential for inspiring future terrorism, urging international attention to its activities.

Keywords: Muslim Brotherhood; Hamas; Egypt; Change Stream; Islamist Extremism

Received: 22 December 2023 • Accepted: 22 December 2023.

Background

The massacre of Hamas members in the southern settlements on 7/10 elicited not only sympathy but also served as a source of inspiration within Islamist circles, such as the "Change Stream" (Tayyar al-Taghyir), which represents a radical faction of the Muslim Brotherhood movement. On November 24, 2023, "The Change Stream" issued a proclamation lauding the employment of violent tactics by Hamas against Israel, even advocating for their adoption to secure the release of prisoners from Egyptian penitentiaries and invigorate the ongoing revolution against the Egyptian regime. According to their perspective, Israel and the Arab regimes are likened to two sides of the same coin, necessitating concerted efforts aimed at effecting their overthrow.

The "Change Stream" is identified as an extremist faction within the Muslim Brotherhood movement, advocating for an armed uprising against the Egyptian regime. It is commonly referred to by its detractors as the "Al-Kamaliun stream," in reference to its founder Muhammad Kamal. Kamal, who previously served as the leader of the military wing of the Muslim Brotherhood, was responsible for coordinating and directing acts of

terrorism conducted by different extremist cells, including “Liwa al-Thawra” and the “al-Hasam Movement.” These cells targeted military, economic, and civilian entities within Egypt following the military coup in the country. This faction was initially established as the “Front of the General Office” in 2015 under the leadership of Muhammad Kamal. Its formation was prompted by a crisis within the organization’s leadership, which was marked by discontentment with its policies and its handling of the matter concerning political detainees in Egypt. In 2016, the “General Office Front” suffered a significant setback following the assassination of Muhammad Kamal. Towards the end of 2020, the front underwent a name change and became known as “The Current of Change”. This renaming aimed to signify the movement’s determination to implement reforms and reaffirm its continued affiliation with the Muslim Brotherhood.¹ Currently, the movement is led by Muhammad Muntasir, the former spokesperson for the Muslim Brotherhood. It is worth noting that Muntasir openly expresses his sympathy for Sheikh Osama Bin Laden, the former leader of Al-Qaeda.²

On October 15, 2022, the “Change Stream” published its ideological manifesto at a conference held in Istanbul, emphasizing its adherence to Hassan al-Banna’s path, its commitment to overthrowing the Egyptian military regime, and its aspiration to establish an Islamic regime based on Sharia. It also vowed to protect Egypt’s Islamic identity against Westernization threatening to unravel its social fabric and to liberate Muslim lands from foreign and tyrannical rulers. Regarding the Palestinian issue, it clarified that from a religious perspective, every Muslim is obligated to participate in the struggle to liberate Al-Aqsa Mosque and all Palestinian territories from the river to the sea from Zionist occupation through struggle and jihad.³ That month, the “Change Stream” launched a new satellite channel named “Freedom 11/11,” serving as a propaganda outlet against the Egyptian regime.⁴

It should be noted that, the presence of the “current of change” within the Muslim Brotherhood movement is accompanied by two other currents that are engaged in a struggle for influence, power, and control. This internal division within the movement is primarily characterized by the “London Front,” led by Muhy al-Zayit, and the “Turkey Front,” led by Mahmoud Hossein.

1 “The Current of Change: A New Division Strikes the [Muslim] Brotherhood” (in Arabic), Al-Marsad Al-Masri, October 18, 2022. <https://marsad.ecss.com.eg/73510/>

2 For instance, Muntasir conveyed his condolences regarding the demise of Bin Laden through a post on his Facebook page. Additionally, he cited a renowned quote from Bin Laden: “Understand that the problem resides in the head of the snake and not in its tail”, Facebook, October 20, 2023. <https://www.facebook.com/muntaser2015/posts/pfbid-0FUmgmnV4RzJX2mRiZVVxzSdKyjwB6iCY638jC91fU52UAU2HzF6o7UQMXW8eCMLI>

3 “The First Document - The Political Publication” (in Arabic), The Change Stream in the Muslim Brotherhood Group, October 15, 2022.

4 “Two Television Channels of the Muslim Brotherhood Organization..Why Now?” (in Arabic), Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, October 23, 2023. <https://aawsat.com/home/article/3947136/ل-ناتينوي زفلت-ناتانق/نآل-اذامل-«ن اوخال-م يظنت»-ل-ناتينوي زفلت-ناتانق/3947136>



The Facebook page of the “Change Stream” in the Muslim Brotherhood; From right to left, former leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood: Sayyid Qutb, Hassan al-Banna, Muhammad Morsi, Muhammad Kamal, Muhammad Badie.



From right to left: Muhammad Montasser, leader of the “Change Stream” in the Muslim Brotherhood; a post on Montasser’s Facebook page praising Sheikh Osama bin Laden, the former leader of al-Qaeda.

Hammas’ Massacre in the Discourse of the “Change Stream”

The “current of change” views the Hamas massacre on 7/10 as a heroic act that should be perpetuated against the “Zionist occupation” until all Palestinian territories are liberated. For example, it emphasized that: “the armed resistance is the sole option for liberating the land and the holy places in Palestine against an enemy that solely understands the language of war and responds to force. We urge all Muslims to persist in supporting the resistance and reinforcing a steadfast stance against aggression using all available means”.⁵ According to the perspective of the “current of change,” the

5 7.10.23. <https://www.facebook.com/ikhwan.eg1/posts/pfbid034aYzDLAX5RQ6cMfRKUjTtygS2tCF1zqjyMg2i4TGT->

military operation in Gaza exposed the genuine nature of Arab regimes that demonstrate willingness to collaborate with the Crusader Jewish Alliance, leading to the detriment of the Palestinian population. This is evident in their passive response and reluctance to aid the Palestinians. For instance, the stream accused the Egyptian regime of complicity in the alleged murder of the Palestinian people due to its refusal to open the Rafah crossing for Gazan refugees.⁶ On November 14, 2023, supporters of Muhammad Muntasir's movement convened a protest outside the Egyptian consulate in Turkey, advocating for the initiation of two key actions: the unlocking of the Rafah crossing and the implementation of humanitarian assistance to the Gaza Strip.⁷ From their perspective, the fundamental prerequisite for the liberation of Palestine's entire territory is contingent upon the initial and paramount objective of toppling the oppressive Arab regimes that align themselves with Western powers. Therefore, in order to accomplish this aspiration, it is deemed obligatory for all Muslims to instigate revolutions anew within Muslim nations.⁸

It seems that the recent Israeli prisoner exchange deal with Hamas for the release of Palestinian security prisoners from Israeli jails serves as an inspiration for members of the "Change Stream." On November 24, 2023, "Change Stream" issued a proclamation titled "This is how the prisoners will be freed..." wherein it underscored that the "revolution is the sole means to address the military regime and secure the liberation of prisoners and detainees. A revolution founded upon the preservation of various instruments of power, encompassing the potency of mass mobilization capable of displacing military rule and safeguarding its own existence, the influence of information dissemination, the efficacy of communication to counter the army's propaganda machinery, and the ability to impose a revolutionary agenda and foster innovative approaches".⁹ In its view, "the [Zionist] occupation and the regimes are two sides of the same coin; what the occupation did, namely killing unarmed people, burning bodies, breaking into hospitals, storming homes, arresting dignitaries, and deporting families, was also done by the Egyptian army and Al-Sisi [...]. There is no greater testimony to Al-Sisi's betrayal [of the Palestinians] than his role in tightening the siege and blockade on our people in the Gaza Strip, and the dragging of his feet in providing aid, opening the crossing, and more, depressing positions that have been happening since the military coup 10 years ago." ¹⁰ Given this, the Change Stream emphasizes that just as the Palestinians

63JRyaB6LSvR3NxAAA3w9LAI

6 31.10.23. <https://www.facebook.com/ikhwan.eg1/posts/pfbid02gzTYMk8RKShfGoA6eqQgLGwk39xrzuestb-3aq2y4Bd9iUPdc2LHL8vVzKjjEZ4zl>

7 15.11.23. <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=325554023566103>

8 31.10.23. <https://www.facebook.com/ikhwan.eg1/posts/pfbid02gzTYMk8RKShfGoA6eqQgLGwk39xrzuestb-3aq2y4Bd9iUPdc2LHL8vVzKjjEZ4zl>

9 "This is How the Prisoners Will Be Freed," The Political Bureau – The Muslim Brotherhood, November 25, 2023. <https://www.facebook.com/M.B.SPOKESMAN1/posts/pfbid05TYZ3YS5W12k1251Z6qjMQuDayShqAKypwewyeTst-ZL58kfDMZkhCq6HPyabUGWPI> ; <https://www.facebook.com/ikhwan.eg1/posts/pfbid02axYfEz7unTvyCbzv2U5dx-UhbAs23epxBgaZH29g54MiWSVbtidpjDnULHYqbCngEI>

10 Ibid.

have shown increasing and robust resistance against the Zionist occupier for 75 years, Muslims in Egypt should adhere to resistance against the Egyptian regime.¹¹

Conclusion

In conclusion, it appears that the "Change Stream" in the Muslim Brotherhood exploits Hamas' terrorist events on October 7 to advance the idea of an armed revolution against the Egyptian regime, described as an obstacle to the liberation of Palestine due to its alliance with the West and Israel, necessitating its overthrow. The focus on the campaign against "the near enemy" (the Egyptian regime and other Arab regimes) greatly echoes the perceptions of Sayyid Qutb and the organizations Al-Qaeda and ISIS. It seems that the colossal success of the 7/10 slaughter events may strengthen the belief and confidence among Islamist elements, like the "Change Stream," that the use of massive force can achieve their goals. Therefore, there is a growing concern about encouraging future terrorist attacks inspired by Hamas, and it is possible that terror cells operating in Egypt under the direction of the "Change Stream" are already planning to carry out attacks in Egyptian territory.

It is important to highlight that the activities of the "Change Stream" against the al-Sisi regime are being conducted from Turkish territory, despite recent efforts to improve relations between Turkey and Egypt following a period of estrangement. The tolerance displayed by Erdogan towards these activities is not surprising, considering Turkey has provided sanctuary to Islamist power elements affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood, the Salafist movement, and Hamas for more than a decade. These organizations even collaborate with each other, as evidenced by the alliance between Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood, sharing a common ideological foundation and goals. Given these circumstances, it would be reasonable for the international community and the countries comprising the moderate axis in the Middle East to call upon the Turkish regime to curtail the activities of subversive elements that seek to propagate ideological extremism and terrorism.

¹¹ Ibid.