

“Eliminating Hamas is not going to happen any more” – Palestinian PM

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Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Mohammed Shtayyeh claimed Thursday that Israel’s war goal of eradicating Hamas is impossible to achieve because the terror group exists as an “idea” and many of its top members aren’t even in the Gaza Strip.

“The goal that they are setting – they will never reach this goal... because Hamas is not only in Gaza,” he [told the France24 news outlet](#), referring to the ongoing war in the Strip, launched in response to the terror group’s October 7 massacre in southern communities.

“Hamas is an idea, it’s not only a military structure or an organization in Gaza. Hamas is in the West Bank and Lebanon and Syria, Hamas leadership is in Qatar, and everywhere. So to say that the goal is to eliminate Hamas – it is totally not going to happen,” he said.

“Because what you see today, the war is on all Palestinians,” he added, noting the spike in deaths in the West Bank since the beginning of the war.

Many have defined Israel’s goal as dismantling Hamas’s ability to rule Gaza and its ability to terrorize and target the residents of Israel, as it did in its October 7 onslaught.

Hamas violently seized Gaza in 2007 from the Fatah-controlled PA and has ruled there ever since, using the enclave as a base to carry out attacks on Israel. However, the group also maintains support among Palestinians in the West Bank, while Qatar has hosted Hamas’s political office in its capital of

Doha for over a decade.

Among officials based there is Khaled Mashaal, the former head of Hamas who survived a 1997 Israeli assassination attempt in Jordan that threatened to derail that country's peace deal with Israel; and Ismail Haniyeh, Hamas's current chief.

The terror group has an office in Damascus and operates alongside Iran's proxy terror group Hezbollah in southern Lebanon.

Israel Defense Forces Chief of Staff Herzi Halevi told members of the Knesset Foreign Relations and Defense Committee that the PA was working to prevent rallies supporting Hamas and the atrocities it committed on October 7, the Haaretz daily [reported](#) Thursday, citing unnamed sources who were present at the meeting.

The meeting at the Defense Ministry headquarters in Tel Aviv was attended by senior officers and far-right MKs Zvi Sukkot of Religious Zionism, and Limor Son Har-Melech of Otzma Yehudit.

Halevi said there was no intelligence backing Sukkot's claim during the meeting that trusted sources told the lawmaker that the PA's security forces would begin fighting against Israel, as a sign of solidarity with terrorists in Gaza, the report said.

The military chief was said to assert that it was in the PA's interest to prevent signs of solidarity with its rival.

At the end of last month, Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich froze the transfer of the customs duties collected by Israel to the PA, [accusing](#) it of supporting Hamas's brutal incursion.

However, opposition from security chiefs and Washington prompted a vote by the security cabinet to [transfer](#) the money, minus funds for Gaza, as a necessary measure to shore up the

beleaguered PA's position in the West Bank.

Tensions in the West Bank have been escalating since October 7, when some 3,000 Hamas terrorists stormed into Israel from Gaza, killing some 1,400 people and taking at least 245 hostages, making it the deadliest day in Israel's history.

In response, the country has vowed to eradicate Hamas from Gaza, where the group has ruled since 2007, and launched an operation, attacking Hamas both from the air and on the ground.

While the IDF operates inside Gaza, the West Bank has continued to simmer, and since October 7, some 1,430 wanted Palestinians have been arrested across the West Bank, including more than 900 affiliated with Hamas.

The PA health ministry has said that more than 155 West Bank Palestinians have been killed by Israeli forces and in some cases, by settlers. The Yesh Din rights group said last week that there had been over 172 incidents of settler violence and harassment against Palestinians in at least 84 Palestinian towns and communities.

At the same time, there has been a noted uptick in terror attacks or attempted terror attacks by Palestinians across the West Bank and East Jerusalem.