



A regime-sponsored Rubik's cube event in support of Hamas in Tehran on October 24, 2023

Anti-Hamas Sentiments Grow In Iran As Israel Becomes More Popular

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Four decades of propaganda by the Islamic Republic to garner support for its anti-Israeli campaign seems to have backfired as many Iranians want defeat for Hamas.

This heightened interest in the war's developments is driven by growing concerns about the potential for an escalation that could entangle Iran in a deadly conflict with Israel, and potentially even involve the United States.

The potential for escalation was revealed [in remarks by US Secretary of State Antony Blinken](#) who told the UN Security Council on Tuesday: "The United States does not seek conflict with Iran. We do not want this war to widen. But if Iran or its proxies attack US personnel anywhere, make no mistake: we will defend our people, we will defend our security -- swiftly and decisively."

Iranian lawmakers and military commanders have issued several threats to reassure the nation that they are in a strong position. However, these counter-threats have only served to heighten concerns about the uncertain future, especially if one of these threats were to materialize into military or terrorist actions.

Both in the actual world and on social media, Iranians have been showing strong opposition to the government's pro-Hamas and anti-Israeli narratives as well as unusually vocal support for Israel in the Gaza war. "Neither Gaza, nor Lebanon, I will sacrifice my life for Iran," has been a popular slogan for protesters, students and even football fans.

However, **pro-regime filmmaker Abolqasem Talebi** even claimed this week that the slogan was created by Israel, ignoring the fact that it was first chanted several years before the Gaza war.

An article on the moderate news website Rouydad24 on Monday tried to discourage Iranians from chanting the slogan which is the lingering legacy of nationwide anti-government protests since 2018.

The article suggested that this "nationalistic" slogan had the potential to pave the way for "fascism." A brief examination of the website on Monday showed that it was part of a series of articles critical of patriotic and nationalist sentiments, which share significant similarities in the Persian language.

The website's concern about the slogan and its preaching that Iranians "must not chant any slogan they think will be helpful in their struggle against the government" has been particularly raised after spectators at Iranian stadiums chanted the slogan when confronted with government propaganda about the Palestinian issue, especially when it was intended to express support for Hamas.





A child during a regime-sponsored rally in support of Hamas in Tehran (October 2023)

As the war in Gaza began, Iranians noticed brand new cars belonging to Palestinians who were leaving Gaza City in response to Israel's warning. Iranians shared images of these vehicles on social media, serving as a reminder that the government had been portraying Palestinians as impoverished for decades, all the while they were driving luxurious cars. This highlighted the stark contrast with Iranians who were struggling with high prices for poorly manufactured Iranian and Chinese vehicles.

In numerous videos from Gaza, Iranians also observed that Palestinians were living in homes and new apartment buildings that were much better than those in Iran.

Then came the news on social media about Hamas fighter being paid between \$400 to \$600 per month by the Iranian government, while current wages in Iran barely reach \$200. The news may or may not be true, but given the current circumstances and the lack of fair and transparent information in Iranian media, people tend to believe even rumors.

The last blow came, once again on social media, and on satellite television, as footages showed [Hamas Leader Ziad Nakhaleh shunning Shiism](#) and telling Palestinians: "You can be a Shiite, but in this case you need to leave Hamas."

In recent weeks, Iranian stadiums have been venues for various anti-Hamas and anti-Palestinian incidents, as the government and its media often conflate Hamas with all of Palestine. Spectators at these events initially chanted disrespectful slogans when Palestinian flags were displayed in the stadium. In another instance, they created a disturbance by shouting and whistling when the loudspeakers called for a minute of silence to honor Palestinian "martyrs."

Meanwhile, numerous instances of Iranians expressing support for Israel have emerged on social media. Podcaster Sadegh Rohani pointed out in a tweet: "Israel has never been as popular in Iran as it is now. Even if there were Israel supporters before, they were not as outspoken as they are today."

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