

The Caucasus' Own Hamas

By [Anna Dolgov](#)

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Magomed Tagayev, a Dagestani ideologist of separatism and torchbearer of the 1999 Islamist insurgency in Dagestan, has called for Russians to be expelled from the Caucasus and eventually from all of Russia. In his book “The Call of Eternity, or My Caucasus,” he talks about “Russian colonists,” “bloodthirsty occupants” and “Russian terrorists” and concludes: “One way or another, the Russians shall be forced to pack up their belongings and get out of the Caucasus.” In another book, eerily titled in an apparent nod to Hitler “Our Struggle, or the Rebel Army of Imam,” he writes: “There is only one solution — with the sword and fire, to burn and raze everything and everyone so that not a single one of them may crawl away.”

Imagine a hypothetical scenario. Let’s roll the clock back a few years to the time when Tagayev was at large and Chechnya’s late separatist President Aslan Maskhadov was still alive. Imagine a pact between these two men, along with notorious terrorists such as Umar Khattab and Shamil Basayev. Imagine Maskhadov then going to the United Nations to present the group’s bid for a sovereign state called the “North Caucasus Emirate of Chechnya and Dagestan.” Imagine also that he vowed, from the UN podium, that his people would not rest after getting that state but would continue their “struggle.”

Finally, imagine that the declaration was met with roaring applause from world leaders at the UN, and a major power with a permanent seat on the Security Council announced that it would support “any proposal put forth by the Chechens and Dagestanis.”

Replace Maskhadov with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, Russia with Israel, and Khattab with the terrorist group Hamas and its genocidal anti-Semitic charter, and you will get a good picture of what happened at the UN General Assembly on Sept. 23, when the Palestinians applied for statehood. Just as Tagayev said the Caucasus state would not allow any Russians in it, Palestinian officials in New York said the Palestinian state would not allow any Jews in it. Just as Tagayev said the North Caucasus had been under Russian “colonial military occupation” since the Russians set foot on his land, so the Palestinian leader said his land had been under Israel’s “colonial military occupation” for 63 years — the time since Israel’s creation. This is not a dispute about land that Israel took over in the 1967 defensive war against far more numerous Arab armies. It is about Israel’s very existence.

Never mind that Israel has repeatedly offered to recognize a Palestinian state, if only the Palestinian administration would concede that the Jewish state had the right to exist. As Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu noted in his own remarks at the UN, “The Palestinians want a state without peace.” Tagayev declared that his “liberation struggle is the way of the righteous [and] will continue eternally.” Abbas declared that his people “will continue their popular peaceful resistance to the Israeli occupation.” The Palestinians’ “peaceful resistance” includes firing Grad rockets, supplied by Iran, at Israeli cities. Notably, the very day Abbas was extolling the Palestinians’ peacefulness before the UN, an 18-month-old Israeli boy and his 25-year-old father were killed when a mob of Palestinian activists attacked their car with rocks.

Israel went beyond an offer of state recognition. It actually pulled out its troops and settlers from Gaza in 2005. But you would never know that from the Palestinian president’s speech. Nor would you know that Hamas has been launching a steady barrage of missiles from Gaza into Israel. In response, Israel imposed a blockade.

But in Abbas’ opinion, his land is suffering from a “war of aggression,” “ethnic cleansing” and “apartheid policies.” The Palestinian president could have easily borrowed his language from Tagayev’s books or from the separatist web site Kavkaz Center.

Having delivered the theatrics, Abbas once again refused talks. When Netanyahu appealed to him from the UN podium to negotiate face to face while they were both in New York, the Palestinian leader responded by hopping on the next plane home.

The Palestinians must recognize Israel’s right to exist. The alternative scenario of a continued “struggle” has already been outlined by Tagayev, when he wrote that Russians would need to leave “the lands that were never theirs — Vologda, Kostroma, Vyatka, Ryazan and many others.”

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