

**"HAMAS: PERJUANGAN DARI BUAIAN
SEHINGGA TITIS DARAH TERAKHIR"**

(HAMAS: A Struggle from the Cradle to the Final Drop of Blood)

Karisma Publications Sdn Bhd, 2010, ISBN: 978-983-195-480-5, xi, 242 p.

Malaysia, as one of leading the Muslim countries, has been an active participant in the Palestine issue. While Malaysia is known for its moderate stance in many of the world's conflicts, the Malaysian leaders and its people, particularly the Muslims have always been conscious of their view towards Palestine. First, Palestine as a critical humanity issue, and secondly, Palestine as one of the sanctified lands in Islam and the Muslims there as their brothers. Malaysians' effort, at various levels of the society can be traced back to these two views. Humanitarian aid for example, has been one of the biggest contributions made by Malaysia in this regard. Aids from the government, NGOs or the common public have been sent to Palestine since the 1990s and have continued well into the present days. In regard to the conflict resolution on the other hand, while Malaysia has never been part of the actual peace process of Palestine-Israel, its voice at the international level has been heard periodically, especially with the Malaysian's Prime Minister visit to Gaza early this year.

However, in the area of academic publication on issues relating Palestine, Malaysians still have much to do, even when compared to Indonesia, who is no less active in the humanitarian arena. Of this small number of publications, even fewer chose to make the political aspect of the Palestinian struggle as the focal point, thus making it appear as if the topic is less popular in comparison to other issues in Palestine. Especially in regard to a political organisation deemed as terrorist by prominent countries, opinions on the matter are well-known outside of Malaysia. It is perhaps timely that a book written in a language more accessible to Malaysians has been published, which also provides an insight into the views that Malaysians may have on the matter. The book, written by Saifullah Mohd Sawi and Munirah Atirah Zakariah takes a critical look at the organisation by outlining its past effectiveness in the liberation of Palestine and well as analysing its success in playing its role as an Islamic organisation, particularly in the sphere of the Palestine issue. The discussion takes place in six chapters, with the inclusion of an introduction of the

authors in the beginning and a list of bibliography towards the end.

Although the main focus is HAMAS, the authors open with the background and history of Palestine, highlighting the struggle at the civilians' level and thus resulted in the emergence of HAMAS, which is discussed in Chapter 2, which also includes the general details of the organisation. The next chapter explains the leadership of HAMAS including its prominent figures. The authors label the following chapter as the efforts in liberating Palestine and making the political aspect as the sole focus in Chapter 5, with substantial length of discussion for this particular topic. Chapter 6 closes the book's discussion with a conclusion. A bibliography is provided at the end. In terms of the presentation of the discussion, the book is aimed at the general audience, and may be also included under the label popular read. The language also suggests that the target audience would be the common public, particularly the Muslims of Malaysia. As the authors of the book mentioned throughout the book, the main aim of the book is to elicit awareness among the Muslims on their obligation in saving the land of Palestine. Through explicit focus on HAMAS, much has been uncovered by the authors in regard to the factors of the problems in the Palestine issue, which are presented in throughout the chapters.

The writers of the book has built discussion upon the premise that most of the writings on Palestine which pay particular focus on HAMAS in Malaysia have been far and between, especially in regard to its role in Palestine. What is known about HAMAS here is mainly from the media, which is an echo of the international media where HAMA is portrayed as a terrorist organisation bent towards violence. The authors counteract this view by proving the opposite side of the story: that HAMAS is a representation of the struggle by the Palestinians for the Palestinians. This is evident from the focus given by the authors on the activities of HAMAS in Palestine in two chapters. While HAMAS is mainly a political organisation as highlighted through its involvement in the Palestine's election, there have been other areas that are deserving attention, which when become better known would have shed light on its popularity in Palestine, particularly Gaza. If the efforts of HAMAS are viewed by the world as Palestinians have perceived them, then the victory achieved in the political would have been better explained, as opposed to the tendency to believe that Palestinians prefer violence through their support for HAMAS. Rather than putting trust in the major powers to solve this issue, Palestinians have as much right of any citizen of any given country to defend their lands. In fact, it is an obligation for them to do so, and for other Muslims to support them.

This book can be considered a presentation of one view that exists within the Muslims' society, that Palestine is a Muslim land, where the efforts of its inhabitants deserve the support of their Muslim brothers and sisters. As the main target is the Malaysian Muslims, it is written in the native language.

However, since this particular point of view by the Muslims on HAMAS is not very well-known abroad, it is perhaps beneficial to consider such publication in a more assessable language at the international level, especially for the purpose of research and finding the solution for peace in the Middle East. As such, gaps in the opposing views held by all those concerned with the issue of Palestine remain one of the greatest hurdles in achieving the long-appointed peace in one of the most conflicting regions in modern history.

Ummu Zainab Al-Abidah Zainal Abidin¹

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¹ Department of Islamic History and Civilization, Academy of Islamic Studies, University Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. E-Mail: ummuzainab_kakyong@yahoo.com