

Quoting Arafat, Palestinian mission in Colombia calls for Israel's destruction

Tweet from official account, since deleted, said: 'Our goal is the end of Israel... We want WAR and victory.'



Palestinian refugees stand next to graffiti bearing a portrait of late Palestinian Authority president Yasser Arafat at the Ain Al-Helweh refugee camp, near the southern Lebanese city of Sidon, on March 16, 2015. (AFP/Joseph Eid)

The official Palestinian mission to Colombia on Thursday night tweeted a quote from former Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat calling for the destruction of the State of Israel.

The tweet read, "Our goal is the end of Israel, and there can be no compromises or mediations.... We don't want peace. We want WAR and victory — Yasser Arafat," according to a spokesperson for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Following a report on Israel's Channel 1 television, the Spanish-language tweet was removed. No explanation or apology was offered.

Israel's Foreign Ministry responded to the tweet by condemning Arafat for his "legacy of hostility" and death.

"A quote from one of Arafat's statements clearly illustrates to us the hatred that was always his lot and the legacy of hostility he left behind," the ministry told the TV station. "In his life and death, his entire legacy is death, hatred and disgust."

Israel's ambassador to Colombia said the matter had been raised with the local authorities.

"We brought the matter of the Palestinian mission's tweet to the attention of the government in Bogota," Marco Sermoneta told Channel 1. "Anyone who believes everything the Palestinians say must also believe them when they say this."

Arafat, who died in 2004, remains a venerated figure among Palestinians, but is seen by many in Israel as an unreformed terrorist who doomed the 2000 Camp David peace talks, orchestrated the suicide bombing onslaught of the Second Intifada that followed, and disseminated a still-prevailing narrative among Palestinians that denies Jews' history and legitimacy in the Holy Land.

The aforementioned quote from Arafat appeared in the Washington Post in March 1970, long before he became Israel's negotiating partner for peace or the head of the Palestinian Authority. However, Arafat continued to call for the destruction of Israel even after the peace deal was signed in 1993.

On January 30, 1996, Arafat gave a speech in Sweden in which he said, "We will not bend or fail until the blood of every last Jew from the youngest child to the oldest elder is spilled to redeem our land!"

Most of the tweets on the Colombian mission's Twitter account, which has fewer than 600 followers, over the past few days have been quotes from Palestinian nationalist writer Mahmoud Darwish.

Darwish, who died in 2008, is considered a Palestinian national symbol and was a member of the Palestine Liberation Organization. Born in a village that later became part of northern Israel and a resident of countries including Lebanon, France, and Jordan, he spent part of the last years of his life in the West Bank city of Ramallah. On the far right, current West Bank leader Mahmoud Abbas (photo credit: courtesy GPO)

Darwish was a frequent visitor to Israel, where four of his books were translated into Hebrew. He was critical of Israel as well as of terror group Hamas, which currently rules the Gaza Strip.

Source: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/quoting-arafat-palestinian-mission-in-colombia-calls-for-israels-destruction/>

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