

Palestinian ‘moderates’: Indonesians who met with Israelis ‘sold their souls to the devil’

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Indonesian scholars who participated in a conference in Jerusalem committed “a crime against the city, the members of our people, and Muslims throughout the world,” Fatah charged.

By: World Israel News Staff

A spokesman for the supposedly moderate Fatah faction harshly condemned an Indonesian delegation of Muslim scholars who came to Israel to participate in a conference of the American Jewish Committee (AJC) in Jerusalem earlier this month,

calling it “a crime against the city, the members of our people and Muslims throughout the world.”

Fatah is the largest faction in the PLO and is headed by Palestinian Authority (PA) head Mahmoud Abbas. Compared to Hamas, it is considered the more moderate Palestinian political leadership.

A White House delegation is expected to present a peace plan to Israel and the PA in coming weeks in an attempt to restart peace talks.

The official PA daily *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, which reported on the Palestinian outrage last week, said that Fatah charged that the Indonesian delegations’ actions constitute “support for the criminal Israeli occupier against our fighting and resolute people,” according to a translation by the Palestinian Media Watch (PMW).

Yahya Cholil Staquf, secretary-general of Nahdlatul Ulama, [attended the AJC conference](#) and [met with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu](#) in Jerusalem.

The 60-million-member Nahdlatul Ulama is Indonesia’s largest Muslim organization.

A Fatah spokesman said the participants had “sold their soul to the Devil.”

Braving angry protests at home, he made the trip in order to spread what he calls a message of interfaith compassion.

However, Fatah spokesman Osama Al-Qawasmi said in a press statement that Staquf’s participation in the conference in “occupied Jerusalem is a betrayal of the religion, the Al-Aqsa Mosque, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the Palestinian people, and the Arab and Islamic nations.”

Al-Qawasmi demanded that the senior Indonesian officials and the Indonesian people “settle the account with those who have sold their souls to the Devil and agreed to serve as pawns in the hands of the Zionists and Israelis.”

PMW noted that Fatah’s defining Staquf’s visit to Israel as “selling his soul to the Devil” is reminiscent of other hate-speech by Palestinians who have compared Israel to the Devil or even stated that Israel is Satan.

In another statement last week, the Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs condemned the Indonesian religious scholars, emphasizing that their participation in these activities is “a blow to Palestine and to Jerusalem, and a heavy blow to Indonesia.”

Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim country, does not have diplomatic relations with Israel. Support for the Palestinians there is strong.

In a letter to Indonesia's foreign minister that was published online, Staquf said the government could "deny" his actions if deemed harmful to state interests. "But if there is a 'benefit,' let's follow it up to be a real advantage."

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