



**Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center
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Anti-Semitism on Arab media: the popular Qatari TV channel Al-Jazeera is still used as a venue for blatant anti-Semitism. The reputable cleric Sheikh Yussuf al-Qardawi presents the conflict with Israel as a campaign between Islam and the Jews and says that Jews should be killed, citing a well-known Islamic tradition



Al-Jazeera's show "Religious Law and Life", with Sheikh Dr. Muhammad Yussuf al-Qardawi. Al-Qardawi used the show for blatant anti-Semitic incitement (Al-Jazeera TV, March 15, 2009)

Overview

1. The show "Religious Law and Life" ("*Al-Shari'a wal-Hayat*") is broadcasted every Sunday on the **popular Qatari TV channel Al-Jazeera**. The show featured (March 15) the religious scholar **Sheikh Dr. Muhammad Yussuf al-Qardawi**, a reputable Muslim Sunni cleric, who is now the source of religious authority for many Sunni Muslims in the Middle East and elsewhere. During the show, whose topic was the righteous men of Islam, one of the viewers addressed a question to Sheikh Yussuf al-Qardawi about the role of the righteous (*al-salihun*) in the Quran in the liberation of the holy places of Islam and the victory of the (Muslim) nation.

2. Al-Qardawi used the opportunity to give a distinctly political reply, which included blatantly anti-Semitic rhetoric against the Jewish people based on a well-known Islamic tradition (*hadith*) which says that **Jews must be killed**. In response to the question, Al-Qardawi said that the righteous were the salt of the earth, those who were always responsible for liberating the lands. He said that the righteous were the source of hope and aspiration and they would bring about the liberation of Jerusalem, as well as Palestine, Gaza, and all the lands ruled by the enemies of Islam. He continued to describe his views on the subject, stressing that **the war against the Jews was not only for the Palestinians to fight, but rather a war of all the Muslims**.



Sheikh Dr. Yussuf al-Qardawi responds to viewers' questions (Al-Jazeera TV, March 15, 2009)

3. In his reply, Sheikh Al-Qardawi cited the well-known Islamic tradition (*hadith*) about the apocalyptic war between Muslims and Jews. According to Al-Qardawi as he expressed himself on the show, Prophet Muhammad said the following: "You will therefore continue to fight the Jews, and they will fight you **until they are killed by the Muslims**. The Jew is hiding behind the rock and the tree. The rock and the tree say, 'Oh, slave of Allah, oh, Muslim, here is the Jew behind me, **come and kill him.**'"¹ Al-Qardawi interprets the *hadith* by saying that everything standing

¹ According to the original *hadith*, every tree and rock will give away the hiding place of the Jews except for the salt tree (a thorny bush which grows in arid regions), which will protect the Jews. In other versions of the *hadith*, such as the one

next to those who fight the Jews and liberate the lands, even the rock and the tree, will point out (the hiding places of) the Jews. He further notes that those engaged in the campaign to liberate the holy places **are the Muslim slaves of Allah, rather than Jordanians or Palestinians or Egyptians or Iraqis.**

4. Sheikh Yussuf al-Qardawi is known for his extremist opinions when it comes to Israel, **and he is also a major religious authority for Hamas.** In the past, Al-Qardawi issued religious rulings calling for jihad against Israel and the Jews and allowing suicide bombing attacks, even if women and children were hurt as a result. He was also the first to grant an authorization to Palestinian women to perpetrate terrorist attacks, and also allowed terrorist attacks against the Americans in Iraq. Yussuf al-Qardawi's leading status in Sunni Islam provides additional weight to his opinions, **which justify Palestinian terrorism** and turn him into a dominant figure in shaping the anti-Israeli worldview in the Muslim and Arab world (see Appendix for details).

5. The Qatari **Al-Jazeera** channel, sponsored and controlled by the ruler of Qatar, is the most important and most popular TV channel in the Arab and Muslim world. It is viewed by tens of millions of people, influencing and shaping public opinion in the various Arab countries. Its broadcasts are notable for their unequivocal support of Hamas's propaganda (which was seen during Operation Cast Lead), giving a platform to Al-Qaeda,² and showing a great deal of hostility to the State of Israel and the Jewish people. It should be noted that in recent years, several blatantly anti-Semitic statements were aired on Al-Jazeera, making use of The Protocols of the Elders of Zion and portraying the Jews as the enemies of humanity.³

cited by Sheikh Al-Qardawi, the Prophet's words are not necessarily viewed as an apocalyptic prophecy but rather in modern political contexts, as a general commandment to kill Jews, without the motif of the protective salt tree.

² The TV channel provides a platform to Al-Qaeda and global jihad elements. Bin Laden's media campaign gained its widespread media attention mostly thanks to Al-Jazeera. It often aired fragments from tapes released by Al-Qaeda, thus expanding their reach while also increasing its own popularity. **Al-Jazeera has become Al-Qaeda's preferred channel**, not shying away from expressing support of Al-Qaeda and its radical Islamic ideology. This owes to self-interest and opportunistic motives and possibly to political and ideological reasons (it should be noted that several Al-Jazeera reporters have been arrested for alleged cooperation with Al-Qaeda).

³ For details, see our Information Bulletin: ["Contemporary Arab-Muslim anti-Semitism, its Significance and Implications"](#) (April 17, 2008).

Appendix

A brief portrait of Sheikh Dr. Yussuf al-Qardawi



Sheikh Yussuf al-Qardawi (photo from his website, February 17, 2009)

6. **Sheikh Dr. Yussuf Mustafa al-Qardawi** was born in Egypt in 1926. During his studies in Al-Azhar University, he took an active role in the resistance against British presence in Egypt, inspired by the radical Islamic ideology of Hassan al-Banna (founder of the Muslim Brotherhood). Because of his preaching against the British, and later against Nasser's government, Al-Qardawi spent many years in prison. It is possible that his excessively provocative statements led to his dismissal from Al-Azhar University in 1961 and his appointment to director of the university's branch in Qatar. It was that move, however, which set him apart as an independent cleric who did not rely on the establishments of Arab countries.

7. In 1977, **with the support of the Qatari administration**, Al-Qardawi established a faculty for the study of Islamic religious law (*shari'a*) at the University of Qatar, and at the same time founded an institute for the study of Sunna. Those institutions are still an important center for his activity in the Muslim religious world, including Arab and Muslim communities in the West. Al-Qardawi is currently a major authority on religious law for many Sunni Muslims in the Middle East and elsewhere.

8. Sheikh Al-Qardawi is also an Islamic religious authority **for the Hamas movement in the Palestinian Authority-administered territories and even for the Islamic Movement in Israel**. However, in his capacity as director of the **Union of Good**, he also assists Hamas in the practical realm of funding terrorism. (The **Union of Good** is an umbrella organization of Islamic foundations worldwide which transfers money to Hamas's civilian infrastructure in the Palestinian

Authority-administered territories). Al-Qardawi makes extensive use of electronic media (television and Internet) to disseminate his extremist views and messages of hatred throughout the Arab and Muslim world.