



Global Islamism Monitor No. 95

October 11, 2021 **Ilan I. Berman, Canaan Odeh**

Related Categories: Democracy and Governance; Human Rights and Humanitarian Issues; Islamic Extremism; Terrorism; Afghanistan; Iraq; Israel; Middle East; North Africa

SUDAN SEIZES HAMAS ASSETS

For decades, while under the rule of Omar Al-Bashir, the African nation of Sudan served as a significant state sponsor of terrorism. Bashir's ouster as president in 2019 has led to a reconfiguration of the country's politics, now headed by a collective Sovereignty Council - including, most visibly, Khartoum's decision last year to normalize relations with the State of Israel as part of the "Abraham Accords." The changes appear to extend to the harboring of extremist activity as well. Recently, Sudanese authorities moved to seize the assets of Palestinian terrorist group Hamas situated in the country. A Sudanese government committee has reportedly taken possession of Hamas-linked businesses, properties and real estate holdings as part of a national effort to roll back the policies of the Bashir era, which allowed the terror group to operate - and fundraise - with impunity. (*Times of Israel*, September 23, 2021)

SAUDI TEXTBOOKS TREND MORE TOLERANT

As part of ongoing internal reforms, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is overhauling school textbooks to be more tolerant of other cultures and religions, an education policy monitoring group has found. According to the Institute for Monitoring Peace and Cultural Tolerance in School Education (IMPACT-se), an Israeli-based NGO, the Kingdom is continuing to make progress in moderating the tone and content of school textbooks and curricula. "The trend of significant reforms to the Saudi textbooks that we noted last year is continuing, reinforcing the view that we are witnessing a clear Saudi governmental policy of making rapid improvements to its textbooks in line with standards of peace tolerance in school education," IMPACT-se CEO Marcus Sheff has told the *Jerusalem Post*. "The country's rulers have stated their aim of preparing Saudi children with the skills to positively interact with the different cultures and world-views that they may encounter, and this textbook reform is a key element."

At least some problematic content still remains, however. IMPACT-se notes in its study that there has as yet been little progress on eliminating content that discriminates on the basis of gender, or which is hostile to "Zionists" or "Zionism" - that is, to the State of Israel. (*Jerusalem Post*, September 27, 2021)

NEXT UP, A NUCLEAR TALIBAN?

With the Taliban now consolidating control over their "Islamic emirate" in Afghanistan, worries are growing in the West that the Islamist movement is now positioned within striking distance of obtaining potentially catastrophic strategic capabilities. "The Taliban in control of Afghanistan threatens the possibility of terrorists taking control of Pakistan too," John Bolton, who served as President Donald Trump's National Security Advisor, warned publicly in a recent interview. "That means maybe 150 nuclear weapons in the hands of terrorists which is a real threat to us and our friends." (*Mirror*, September 28, 2021)

IRAQ AND THE "ABRAHAM ACCORDS"

At a recent conference in the northern city of Erbil, hundreds of prominent Iraqis issued an unprecedented call for the country's government and powerful militias to normalize ties with Israel. The event, organized by the New York-based Center for Peace Communications, brought together Sunni and Shi'ite Muslim tribal leaders, as well as former politicians, social activists and military officials. The core message of the event was communicated by Wisam Al-Hardan, one of the leaders of the "Sons of Iraq" movement, in a high-profile oped in the *Wall Street Journal*.

"We sacrificed lives for the sake of a unified Iraq, aspiring to realize a federal system of government as stipulated in our nation's constitution," Al-Hardan wrote. "Now, in striving to rebuild our country, we commit ourselves to an awakening of peace. Our guiding light is the memory of a more honorable past: a young, modern state with a glorious ancient tradition; a country that, at its finer moments, witnessed a spirit of partnership across ethnic and sectarian lines... The most infamous act in this tragedy was the mass exodus and dispossession of the majority of our Iraqi Jewish population, a community with 2,600 years of history, in the mid-20th century... In striving to rebuild Iraq, we must reconnect with the whole of our diaspora, including these Jews... Just as we demand that Iraq achieve federalism domestically, we demand that Iraq join the Abraham Accords internationally. We call for full diplomatic relations with Israel and a new policy of mutual development and prosperity." (*Wall Street Journal*, September 24, 2021; *Times of Israel*, September 25, 2021)

