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## **SENIOR ISRAELI PRESS OFFICER SAYS HAMAS HAS NO ROLE IN MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS**

*Also suggests that Palestine Authority "cease and desist" from any contact with the "terrorist entity"*

August 29, 2008 (Fort Lee, NJ) -- In a Shalom TV exclusive interview, David Baker, senior foreign press coordinator of the Israeli Prime Minister's office, tells America's national Jewish cable television network that Hamas has no role in peace negotiations in the Middle East.



"Israel feels that Hamas should be left out of the game, and is not a player," insists Baker. "Hamas is a major impediment towards peace between Israelis and Palestinians, and we feel that the Palestine Authority should cease and desist from having any meaningful contacts--or any contacts whatsoever--with this terrorist entity."

According to Baker, Israel is currently pursuing two tracks toward peace.

"We have direct negotiations with the Palestinians; we have indirect negotiations with the Syrians," he explains. "There's a lot of hope, and we're quite thankful that we have an opportunity to pursue peace with both sides.

"These negotiations are being held in an earnest fashion, and Israel will spare no effort to reach a peaceful situation with the Syrians, one that would lead to peace and security for Israel."

Speaking to Shalom TV after a private briefing to the leadership of B'nai Zion, David Baker, a Queens NY native who made aliyah two decades ago, believes that Egyptian involvement in the peace process may also prove helpful.

"Egypt, certainly, as the strongest Arab country, the most important Arab country, plays a major role in fostering contact between Israel and the Palestinians," conveys Baker. "Egypt has, in the past, played a constructive role, and we are appreciative of those efforts."

On the threat from Iran, Baker says that Israel both believes the threat and finds it unacceptable.

"At this point, diplomatic solutions and economic sanctions are the way to go," adds Baker. "This is not just a problem affecting Israel, this is a problem affecting the entire international community. We feel, in Israel, that these efforts should be redoubled. In the meantime, they have not been working to any great satisfaction."

Available in twenty million cable households throughout the United States, Shalom TV is an English-language service featuring news and public affairs coverage, films and documentaries, original series on Jewish life, and other mainstream programs of interest to the North American Jewish community. Additional information on the network is available at [www.shalomtv.com](http://www.shalomtv.com).

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