

Episode 17: Joseph Croitoru: The Rise of Hamas and Hisbollah

Guest: Dr. Joseph Croitoru, Historian, Author and Journalist

Hosts: Efe & Yusuf

Bio: Dr. Joseph Croitoru, born 1960 in Haifa, is a historian, author, and journalist. He studied history, art history, and Judaic studies in Jerusalem and Freiburg im Breisgau and earned a doctorate on the history of suicide attacks. For decades, he has reported as a Middle East expert for leading media such as the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* and the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. He is a leading authority on Hamas and Hezbollah and his work is a standard reference for understanding their structure, ideology and role in the region. His most recent book on Hezbollah is the first comprehensive reference in German. His clear analysis and exceptional historical depth, make him one of Germany's most outstanding experts on the Middle East conflict. In 2021, he was awarded the Peace Prize of the Geschwister Korn and Gerstenmann Foundation for his literary work promoting peace.

In this episode: In this episode, we talk with Dr. Croitoru about the origins, ideology, structures, and strategies of Hamas and Hezbollah, as well as their roles in regional, international, and Israeli politics. We examine historical developments, the events of October 7, 2023, current dynamics, and possible future perspectives. Special focus is given to Croitoru's recent books, which have significantly shaped the discourse on Islamist movements in the Middle East and the struggle over Jerusalem. We also explore the financing and external support of Hamas and Hezbollah, with an emphasis on the strategic roles of Iran and Qatar. This includes their funding, provision of weapons, political backing, and influence on Israeli politics through proxy actions and regional power dynamics.

Links:

Croitoru, Joseph. *Die Hamas : Herrschaft über Gaza, Krieg gegen Israel*. München : C. H. Beck, 2024. ISBN 978-3-406-81697-0. Publisher link. [Beck eLibrary+1](#) (Last accessed November 11, 2025)

Croitoru, Joseph. *Die Hisbollah : Irans Schattenarmee vor den Toren Israels*. München : C. H. Beck, 2025. ISBN 978-3-406-82909-3. [Publisher link](#). [Beck eLibrary+1](#) (Last accessed November 11, 2025)

Croitoru, Joseph. *Das System Netanjahu*. Berlin : Wagenbach, 2025. ISBN 978-3-8031-3759-3. [Publisher link](#). (Last accessed November 11, 2025)

Please also check our other episodes to explore multiple perspectives:

On Hamas: Johannes Becke, Volker Weiss, Khalil Sayegh, Omer Bartov, Omri Boehm, Gudrun Krämer

On Hezbollah: Johannes Becke, Volker Weiss

On the origins of Hamas in the Muslim Brotherhood: Gudrun Krämer

Dedication:

We dedicate this Podcast to all victims and survivors of October 7, the hostages and their families, to all innocent civilians killed and injured in Gaza and their grieving families and friends. To our dear guests Udi Goren, Khalil Sayegh, Sima and Mai who shared their losses so powerfully with us. To their families: Tal's wife Ella Haimi, their children Nir, Einav, Udi and Lotan, who never got the chance to meet his father. To Khalil Sayegh's mother and siblings, to Mai's and Sima's family, to her mother Bushra.

To the blessed memory of: Tal Haimi, Lara Sayegh, Jeris Sayegh, Mahmoud, Danny Darlington and Haim Perry.

Disclaimer:

In each episode of this podcast, the invited guests speak on their own behalf. They share their experiences, assessments, and expert perspectives. These contributions are central to the multiperspectivity of the project but do not necessarily reflect the views of the editorial team or producers.

Legal & Historical Anchor Episodes:

This podcast may include controversial legal terms of specific technical significance. Their legal applicability requires a thorough expert contextualization; for this, we refer to our legal chapter. All relevant terms of international law, its institutions, current controversies, and the state of jurisprudence are explained in the anchor episode with Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. mult. Claus Kreß LL.M. (Cambridge) (Episode 36). He is co-author of the Rome Statute, Special Advisor to the International Criminal Court, and Judge at the International Court of Justice in the parallel Gambia vs. Myanmar genocide case.

Historical matters are discussed from multiple perspectives in this podcast. Please check the cross-references in the shownotes of the respective episodes for details. All historically contested issues are addressed in the history anchor episode with Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Gudrun Krämer (Episode 21), author of the comprehensive work *A History of Palestine: From the Ottoman Conquest to the Founding of the State of Israel* (Princeton 2008), a standard reference in the field. For her scholarly achievements as a historian, she was awarded the *Preis des Historischen Kollegs* in 2025, the highest distinction in her discipline in Germany.