



April 5, 2016

## Inculcating Hatred and Violence for Israel in the Palestinian Educational System: The Rudolf Walther School in Deir al-Balah, as a Case Study<sup>1</sup>



Military training given at the Rudolf Walther School in Deir al-Balah in the Gaza Strip. It is part of the Al-Futuwwa program to train Gazan youth as the next generation of Hamas terrorist operatives. The Al-Futuwwa logo is at the upper right.

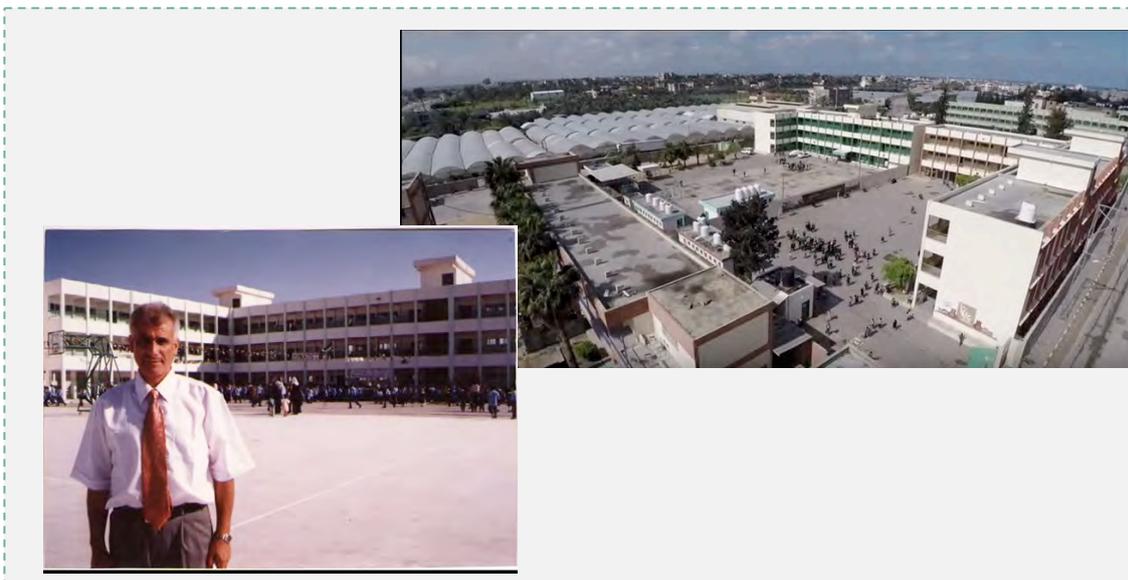
### Overview

1. At the end of March 2016 the Hamas-affiliated **Shihab News Agency** issued a video showing a **Palestinian teacher indoctrinating school children with hatred for Israel and support for an armed struggle against it. The teacher used the letters of the Arabic alphabet as a didactic tool to teach them "the fundamental Palestinian national principles" even before they learn to read.**<sup>2</sup>
2. **The name of the school is not mentioned in the [video](#), but an ITIC examination (including a comparison between existing pictures and the picture in the video) indicated the video was apparently filmed in the Rudolf Walther School in Deir al-Balah in the central Gaza Strip, which was constructed with money from a German donor. The school is a complex of three governmental schools under the jurisdiction of the ministry of education in the Gaza Strip, which is a branch**

<sup>1</sup> Follow-up to the March 30, 2016 bulletin "[Recent Video Shows Palestinian School Children Subjected to Anti-Israel Indoctrination.](#)"

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uWA7WL4FeNg&feature=youtu.be>. This new version now has [English subtitles](#).

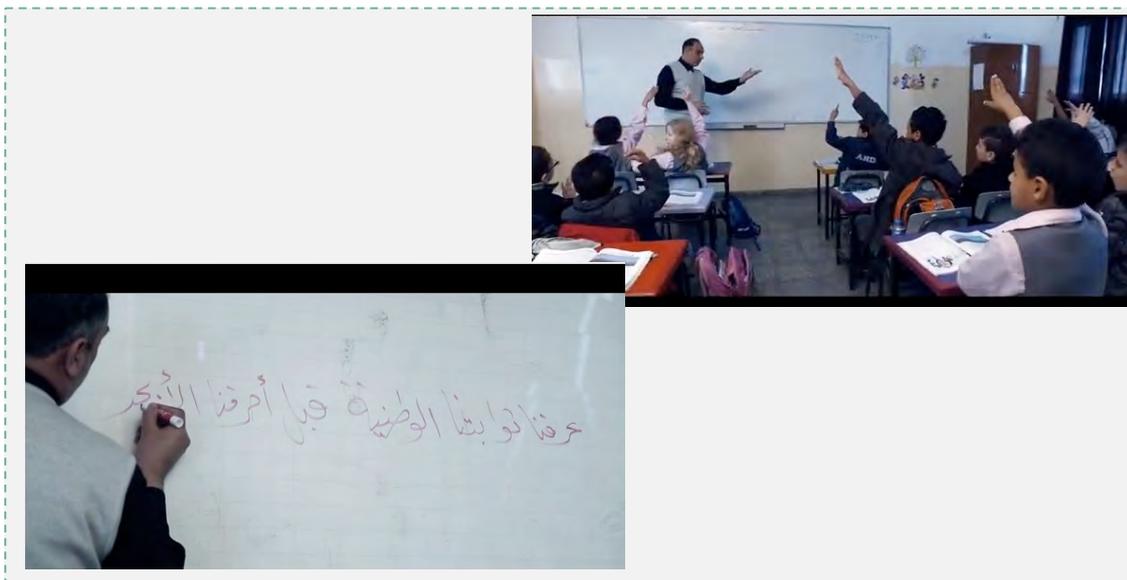
of the Palestinian Authority (PA) ministry of education. The complex has an elementary school for boys, an elementary school for girls, and a high school for boys. According to the boys' elementary school Facebook page, its objectives are to educate for "**correct values and to inculcate the awareness and concept of a flourishing Islamic homeland**" (Facebook page of the Rudolf Walther Boys' Elementary School, March 31, 2016).



Left: Part of the Rudolf Walther School in Deir al-Balah, built with money from a German donor (YouTube 2012). Right: The school as it appears in the video distributed by the Shihab News Agency, where a teacher is shown inculcating the students with anti-Israel hatred and support violence against it (YouTube, March 30, 2016). An ITIC examination reached the conclusion that they were apparently the same school.



Background of the Rudolf Walther Boys' High School Facebook page. At the right is Palestinian Authority logo, indicating the school is under the jurisdiction of the PA's ministry of education.



The teacher and children filmed for the Shihab News Agency video. Left: The teacher writes on the board, "This is how we first learn our fundamental national principles even before [we learn] the alphabet." Right: A classroom (Pictures from the video).

3. An examination of the Facebook pages of the three wings of the Rudolf Walther School indicates the themes are introduced into both the formal and informal educational system in the school (and in other Palestinian schools). The Palestinian educational system in the Gaza Strip inculcates its students with **radical Islamic values** and **teaches them hatred for Israel**. In addition, the children undergo **military training in preparation for joining Hamas when they are older**. The anti-Israeli brainwashing they receive, as shown in the video, is not exceptional and is reinforced with a variety of military and doctrinal activities carried out in the Rudolf Walther School.

4. The school complex was built with a contribution from a **German businessman named Rudolf Walther**. Representatives from Germany visited the school in 2012, and during their visit the German flag was flown (See Appendix A). It seems that **the school, built with money donated by a German, not only educates its pupils to hatred and violence against Israel in theory, it also provides them with military training to put what they have learned into practice**.

### **Activities of Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) Student Organizations at the Rudolf Walther School**

5. On February 17, 2016, **the Islamic Bloc**, Hamas' student organization, distributed prizes to school children who excelled in their studies (Facebook page of the Rudolf Walther Boys' Elementary School, February 17, 2016) . On February 18, 2015, **the**

**PIJ's Islamic League** (al-Rabita al-Islamiya) student faction conducted a competitive "cultural activity" for the school (Website of al-Rabita al-Islamiya, February 18, 2016).



Left: The website of the PIJ's Islamic League's article about its competitive "cultural activity" at the Rudolf Walther School (Website of al-Rabita al-Islamiya, February 18, 2016). The site has pictures of Fathi Shqaqi, a PIJ leader who died in a targeted killing, and five PIJ operatives who were killed by the IDF (October 6, 1987). Right: Islamic Bloc awards ceremony for excelling students (Facebook page of the Rudolf Walther Boys' Elementary School, February 17, 2016).

6. The school often hosts clerics and political propagandists to reinforce the students' indoctrination. One of their guest speakers was **Sheikh Yassin Abu Khasiwan**,<sup>3</sup> who preached a sermon to the students (Facebook page of the Rudolf Walther Boys' Elementary School, March 24, 2016). On February 27, 2016, the school began a week of activities for "the preservation of Islamic values" in daily life **in collaboration with Hamas' Islamic Bloc** (Facebook page of the Rudolf Walther Boys' Elementary School, February 27, 2016).

7. The Rudolf Walther School hosted **Sheikh Ibrahim Darwish**, head of the ministry of endowments in the central Gaza Strip. A Facebook page of the Rudolf Walther Boys' Elementary School shows **representatives of the administration for political guidance of Hamas' ministry of the interior** in the Gaza Strip on a visit to the school. They spoke before the high school students. Thus, the "**Islamic values**" on which the children are educated are **based on Hamas' extremist version of Islam, adopted from the ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood**.

<sup>3</sup> **Sheikh Yassin Abu Khasiwan** lives in Deir al-Balah. He has a degree in the fundamentals of Islam from the Islamic University in Gaza. He is the imam of the Ali Ibn Abu Taleb mosque in the Sajaiya neighborhood in the eastern part of Gaza City. He works as a preacher for the religious guidance unit of the ministry of endowments in the central Gaza Strip district.



The Rudolf Walther School hosts Sheikh Ibrahim Darwish, head of the ministry of endowments in the central Gaza Strip. He gave a speech to the students about Jerusalem and the harm done to it by Israel (Facebook page of the Rudolf Walther Boys' Elementary School, October 15, 2015). Jerusalem is traditionally used as a subject for anti-Israel incitement and encouragement for anti-Israel violence and terrorism.



Representatives from the political guidance administration of the Hamas-controlled ministry of the interior in the Gaza Strip visit the school and speak to the children (Facebook page of the Rudolf Walther Boys' Elementary School, March 18, 2016).

## Military Training Held by Hamas at the School

8. **The Rudolf Walther Boys' High School** is on the list issued in January 2014 of schools supervised by Hamas in the Gaza Strip. **There are 46 schools on the list where Al-Futuwwa ("youth," "courage") training camps are held in collaboration with the Hamas-controlled ministry of the interior** (See Appendix B).

9. **Al-Futuwwa military training camps were held at the Rudolf Walther School as early as April 2013** (and probably afterwards as well). The school produced a

video showing students **training for fitness, drilling, shooting, and dismantling and assembling weapons**. It was uploaded to YouTube on April 12, 2013. Scenes from the video include:



Introduction to the video about Al-Futuwwa at the Rudolf Walther School (YouTube, April 12, 2013).



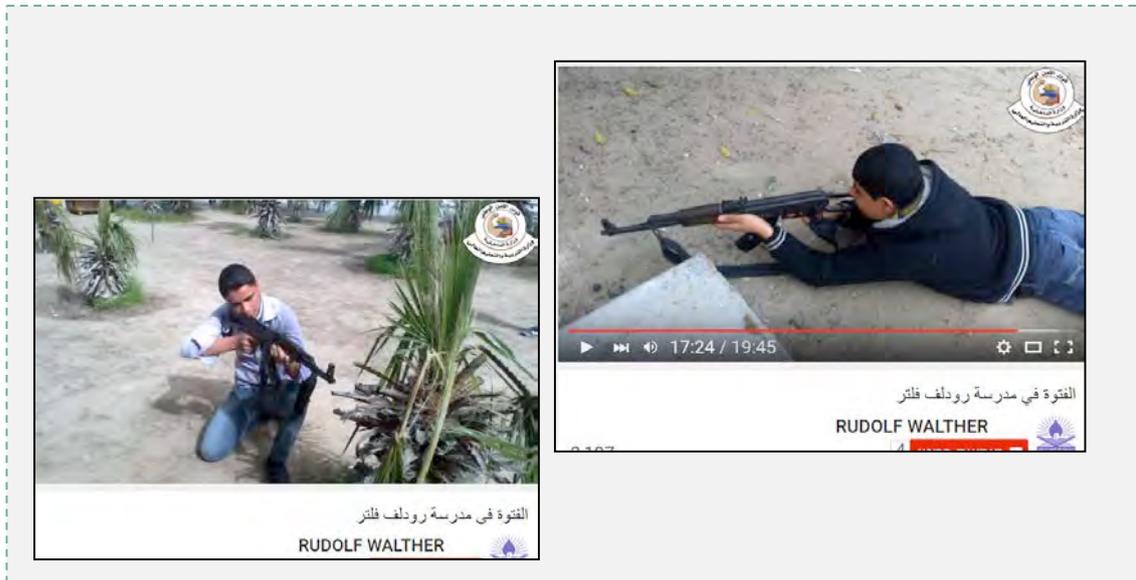
Military training in the schoolyard. The instructor is an operative from the Hamas-controlled national security force in the Gaza Strip (YouTube, April 12, 2013).



Al-Futuwwa military training in the schoolyard (YouTube, April 12, 2013).



Rudolf Walther School students learn to use light arms. The Al-Futuwwa logo is in the upper right-hand corner (YouTube, April 12, 2013).



Light arms training. The Al-Futuwwa logo is in the upper right-hand corner (YouTube, April 12, 2013).

## The Battle for Hearts and Minds in the Rudolf Walther School

10. **The Rudolf Walther School holds Hamas-inspired activities to deepen the students' hatred for Israel and its symbols.** To that end various events are exploited, among them "Land Day."<sup>4</sup> "Land Day" was recently marked at the school with a simulation of IDF soldiers attacking an old Palestinian and threatening Palestinian children (Facebook page of the Rudolf Walther Boys' Elementary School, March 31, 2016).

<sup>4</sup> Since 1976 Israeli Arabs have commemorated "Land Day" every March 30 to express their adherence to their lands and their objection to the expropriation of land.



Rudolf Walther School students put on a show for "Land Day," playing the parts of IDF soldiers attacking an old Palestinian man (Facebook page of the Rudolf Walther Boys' Elementary School, March 31, 2016).



A drawing prepared at the Rudolf Walther Boys' High School for "Land Day" (Facebook page of the Rudolf Walther Boys' High School, April 1, 2016).



**An Al-Futuwwa troupe from the Rudolf Walther Boys' High School puts on a display at the Mammduh Sidam Girls' School in the Nuseirat refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip on May 5, 2013. One of the photographers stands on an Israeli flag, which has been laid on the floor (Facebook page of the Rudolf Walther Boys' High School, May 8, 2013).**

## Appendix A

### The Affiliation between the School and Germany

1. **Rudolf Walther**, who donated the money to build the school, was born in Windecken in the district of Hanau, Germany, in 1923, the son of a farmer. During the 1960s he became the manager and owner of one of the largest furniture companies in Germany which today has more than a thousand employees and several factories throughout Germany. At the end of the 1980s he passed the management of the company to his son and began devoting his time to needy children. He has helped children in various countries, among them Guatemala, Romania, Poland and Bosnia. **In October 1996 he joined forces with Suha Arafat [Yasser Arafat's wife] in laying the cornerstone for school in the Gaza Strip for 1,440 students.** At the time he also planned to establish a school in Jerusalem but no confirmation has been available showing he realized his intention.

2. It is not clear if the Rudolf Walther School in Deir al-Balah is the only government school built with contributions from Germany. However, Germany does support UNRWA schools. For example, in March 2012 UNRWA signed an agreement with KfW, a German federal agency that finances economic and social projects, for a contribution of €3 million for the construction of new schools in the Gaza Strip (Reliefweb.int, March 22, 2012). **Frank-Walter Steinmeier**, the German foreign minister, who paid a visit to the Middle East (June 1, 2015), attended the opening of a UNRWA school in the Gaza Strip built with German financing (Walla!, an Israeli news website, June 1, 2015).



The German flag flies at the Rudolf Walther School during a visit of German representatives (YouTube 2012).



"Many thanks for your school" (YouTube 2012).

## Appendix B

### A Selection of ITIC Bulletins about Military Training for Youth in the Gaza Strip

1. Information about military training for Palestinian youth during the summer of 2015 appears in the ITIC weekly bulletins ("News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict")
2. " Hamas and other terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip use schools for military-terrorist purposes: The case of rockets found hidden in an UNRWA school during Operation Protective Edge," July 20, 2014<sup>5</sup>
3. "This year, as in years past, summer camps in the Gaza Strip were exploited by Hamas for radical Islamic ideological indoctrination and semi-military training," July 7, 2014<sup>6</sup>
4. "Military Training as Part of the School Curriculum: The Al-Futuwwa Program in the Gaza Strip Schools Provides Military Training for Students," January 19, 2014<sup>7</sup>
5. "This Year as Well Summer Camps Open in the Gaza Strip, Run Mostly by the Terrorist Organizations," June 17, 2013<sup>8</sup>
6. "Hamas has introduced a program in Gaza Strip schools called Al-Futuwwa, which provides military training for tens of thousands of adolescent boys," May 8, 2013<sup>9</sup>
7. "Education for terrorism: Hamas increases its military and propaganda activities among Gazan youth to raise a younger generation able to continue its anti-Israeli path of terrorism and ensure Hamas control of the Gaza Strip," February 4, 2013<sup>10</sup>
8. "Hamas and the other terrorist organizations summer camps in the Gaza Strip," July 30, 2012<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/en/article/20680>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/en/article/20664>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/en/article/20612>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/en/article/20528>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/en/article/20511>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/en/article/20471>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/en/article/20373>

9. "Summer camps in the Gaza Strip run by Hamas and other terrorist organizations inculcate youngsters with radical Islamic ideology and the culture of terrorism," August 28, 2008<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> <http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/en/article/1842>