



**Intelligence and Terrorism  
Information Center  
at the Israel Intelligence Heritage  
& Commemoration Center (IICC)**

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**As part of the Gaza Strip military buildup, women are trained for combat and for suicide bombing attacks. Hamas and the PIJ allowed media coverage of female combatants during the lull in the fighting. Such public messages are designed to deter Israel from entering the Gaza Strip in the future.**

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A poster titled "Women suicide bombers" (*Al-Istishadiyyat*) dedicated to Palestinian women who perpetrated suicide bombing attacks. In 2008, it was prominently featured on the Hamas website Palestine-info.

## Overview

1. As part of the military buildup of the Palestinian terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip, which continues on a large scale even when the lull in the fighting is in place, the terrorist organizations provide military training to women, teenagers, and even children.<sup>1</sup> During the lull, the terrorist organizations allowed a Lebanese TV correspondent (and, prior to that, the Al-Jazeera TV channel<sup>2</sup>) to film and interview women terrorists. It is our assessment that by doing so, the terrorist organizations wish to communicate their commitment to the struggle against Israel and **deter** the IDF from entering the Gaza Strip following the lull.

2. The women interviewed and featured on the media undergo **defensive training** (in case the IDF enters the Gaza Strip) and **offensive training** (such as firing rockets and perpetrating suicide bombing attacks). The women train in firing small arms, launching RPG rockets, throwing grenades, ambushes, attacking IDF soldiers, firing rockets, and blowing themselves up near IDF soldiers using explosive belts.

3. In the terrorist organizations' view, using women for combat activities has considerable operational advantages, the main of which is the relative ease they can operate without raising suspicions, both in the Gaza Strip (during IDF operations) and when perpetrating terrorist attacks in Israeli territory. It should be noted that, in the past, the various terrorist organizations (mainly Hamas, the PIJ, and Fatah) used women terrorists to perpetrate suicide bombing attacks in Israeli territory<sup>3</sup> and to hit IDF soldiers during activities in the Gaza Strip. For example:

a. **On November 6, 2006**, during IDF Operation Autumn Clouds, a woman suicide bomber attempted to hit a Giv'ati force south of Beit Hanoun. The force spotted the suicide bomber and motioned her to stop, at which point she blew herself up, lightly injuring an IDF soldier. The **PIJ** claimed responsibility for the terrorist attack.

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<sup>1</sup> See our Information Bulletin: [“Summer camps in the Gaza Strip run by Hamas and other terrorist organizations inculcate youngsters with radical Islamic ideology and the culture of terrorism. Some camps offer military training to prepare future ranks of operatives for the terrorist organizations”](#) (August 24, 2008).

<sup>2</sup> However, the terrorist organizations do not publicize the phenomenon of women terrorists **on their own** Internet websites and other media.

<sup>3</sup> See, for instance, our Information Bulletin: [“The Israel Security Agency arrested two female residents of the Gaza Strip who, guided by the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, intended to perpetrate a double suicide bombing attack at a crowded place in Tel-Aviv and in Netanya”](#) (June 17, 2007).



The suicide bomber Mirfat Amin Mas'oud reading her "last will" before leaving to perpetrate the suicide bombing attack. She said that hopefully she would go to heaven and meet her mother (Al-Jazeera, November 6, 2006).

b. On **November 23, 2006**, an IDF force spotted a female suicide bomber on the outskirts of the Jebaliya refugee camp. She was carrying an explosive charge and approaching the force. She blew herself up, lightly injuring four IDF soldiers. Hamas claimed responsibility for the terrorist attack. The suicide bomber, who had formerly led women's demonstrations in the Gaza Strip, was **57 years old**. It was the first time such an old female suicide bomber was dispatched to perpetrate a terrorist attack.



Left: suicide bomber Fatima Najar reading her last will before embarking on the suicide bombing (Al-Aqsa TV, November 23, 2006); right: Fatima Najar leading a women's demonstration at the entrance of Beit Hanoun in the winter of 2006 (NTV, August 19, 2008)

4. Following is a summary of several reports which appeared on the Arab media, dealing with the terrorist organizations' training and use of female suicide bombers in the Gaza Strip during the past year.

## **Hamas's Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades**

5. On August 19, 2008, the Lebanese TV channel **NTV** (Al-Jadeed) aired a program about women belonging to Hamas's Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades training in the Gaza Strip. The program showed women training in firing small arms, throwing grenades, and ambushing and attacking IDF soldiers. The correspondent noted: **"Every year, dozens of women in the**

**Gaza Strip undergo military training**, including students, mothers, and working women. They know that their part in the conflict is not limited to taking care of the injured and the children. [They know] that what they do may change the balance of power [between the Palestinians and Israel]." Following are several images from the NTV program:



**Throwing a grenade while shouting  
"Allah Akbar"**



**Firing small arms**



**Shooting a rifle with a telescopic sight**

6. Following are photographs taken before the lull in the fighting of women belonging to the Hamas movement on training and operative activity. The photographs appeared on the Internet forum of the popular TV channel Al-Jazeera (January 31, 2008).



A woman Hamas operative carrying an RPG launcher



Female Hamas operatives wearing long skirts and veils about to fire a Qassam rocket. Two of them carry an RPG launcher.

## The Palestinian Islamic Jihad

7. A show aired on Lebanese TV channel **NTV** (August 19, 2008) featured a female operative of the PIJ's Jerusalem Brigades. Referring to herself as "**Ashiqat al-Quds**" (i.e., the woman who desires Jerusalem), she presented a **ready-to-use explosive belt** and expressed her willingness to blow herself up among IDF soldiers in case of an Israeli military action in the Gaza Strip.



The so-called "the woman who desires Jerusalem", operative of the Jerusalem Brigades (NTV, August 19)



The explosive belt belonging to "the woman who desires Jerusalem" (NTV, August 19)

8. The operative told the Lebanese television reporter that she had taken part in combat operations before and noted that she was highly motivated to continue her activity. She also said she was engaged, but that she informed her fiancé that she would have to leave if duty called. She further stated: "Even if the Jews come on my wedding day, I will go out and confront them on my wedding day. Nothing will stop me on my way to martyrdom..."

## **Fatah's Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades**

9. The Al-Jazeera forum (January 31, 2008) published photographs of female Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades (Fatah's military wing) operatives on training. It was said on the forum that Fatah women have carried out suicide bombing attacks.<sup>4</sup>



**Women operatives belonging to Fatah's Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades networks training in the Gaza Strip**



**Women operatives belonging to Fatah's Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades networks**

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<sup>4</sup> For example, see our Information Bulletin: ["A suicide bombing attack planned to be carried out in Israel by a Palestinian female suicide bomber was thwarted at the Erez crossing in the Gaza Strip. The terrorist infrastructure of Fatah's Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades in the northern Gaza Strip stood behind the terrorist attack, which was probably meant to take place in an Israeli hospital. The incident is yet another link in a long chain of Palestinian terrorist attacks thwarted since the lull in the fighting began"](#) (June 24, 2005).