



June 13, 2013

## This Year as Well Summer Camps Open in the Gaza Strip, Run Mostly by the Terrorist Organizations. The Curriculum Includes Social Activities, Radical Islamist Indoctrination and Semi-Military Training



Children learn how to fire automatic weapons at a Palestinian Islamic Jihad summer camp (Sarayanews website, June 12, 2013).

### Overview

1. As in years past, summer camps are held in the Gaza Strip. Most of them are run by **Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)** and operate for more than 100,000 Gazan children and adolescents. Some of the camps are also run by Islamic organizations, women's associations and UNRWA. The Hamas and PIJ campers participate in **social activities and receive radical Islamist indoctrination and semi-military training.**
2. For Hamas the camps are an important venue for **indoctrinating Gazan youth with radical Islamist ideology.** Their objective is to foster a cadre of future Hamas supporters and operatives for its military-terrorist wing and its organizational and administrative institutions. The campers learn the themes of "the liberation of

Palestine," jihad and "resistance" [i.e., terrorism], the destruction of the State of Israel, the so-called "right of return" and other facets of the movement's anti-Israeli Islamist ideology.

3. Indoctrinating Gazan youth in its summer camps is **one aspect of Hamas' broader educational concept of preparing the next generation of Hamas operatives in the de-facto Hamas administration's educational institutions throughout the Gaza Strip**. During the 2012-2013 school year Hamas instituted a new curriculum in its schools called **Al-Futuwwa, within which tens of thousands of youths receive theoretical and practical military training during their studies.**<sup>1</sup>

## Summer Camps, 2013

### Hamas

4. **At the beginning of June 2013 Hamas announced the opening of this year's summer camp project**. The theme this year is "**The generation of the return**" [i.e., the return of the Palestinian refugees to Israel]. According to **Khalil al-Haya**, a member of Hamas' political bureau, **an estimated 100,000 Gazan children** will participate in the camps. He said the camps' objectives were "to unite the younger generation with the homeland," "to make religion attractive" and "to instill educational values." According to **Musa al-Samak**, chairman of the high summer camp committee, **there are 700 summer camps throughout the Gaza Strip** with activities which will end before the Muslim religious month of Ramadan (Safa News Agency, June 8, 2013). As in past years, **the camps can be expected to be exploited to give the children and adolescents semi-military training**.

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<sup>1</sup> For further information see the May 8, 2013 bulletin ["Hamas has introduced a program in Gaza Strip schools called Al-Futuwwa, which provides military training for tens of thousands of adolescent boys."](#)



**Left: One of the camp counselors explains the map of Palestine, according to which the State of Israel does not exist (Filastin Al-'Aan, June 8, 2013). Right: Semi-military training is given to children at a Hamas camp in the Gaza Strip (Palinfo website, June 10, 2013).**

5. The ceremony opening the Hamas camps was attended by **Ismail Haniya**, head of the de-facto Hamas administration, and other senior Hamas figures. Haniya said that the objective of the camps was to instill the campers with values to strengthen their morals and **spread the spirit of jihad** (Al-Ra'i, June 9, 2013). He also said "**Israel has no future in the land of Palestine**" (Al-Aqsa TV, June 9, 2013).



**Ismail Haniya at the opening ceremony of the summer camps in western Gaza City (Filastin Al-'Aan, June 9, 2013).**

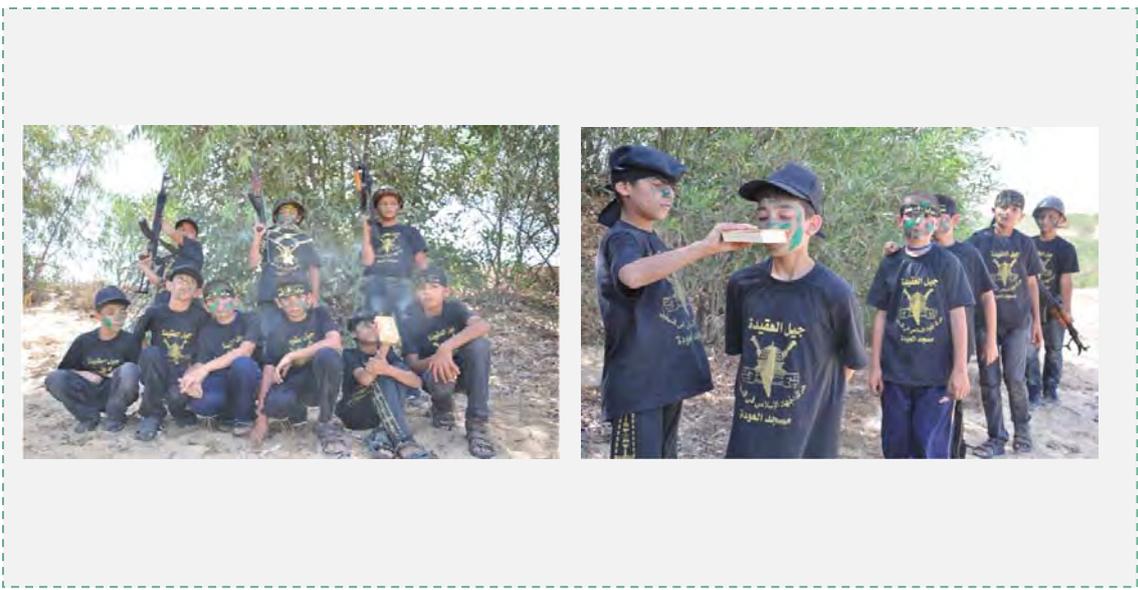
## The PIJ

6. **The PIJ runs its own camps throughout the Gaza Strip where semi-military training and education are emphasized.** This year their theme is "The generation of faith," and each camp session will last two weeks. Campers – including the very young – receive military training and learn how to use weapons. The organization has provided broad media coverage for the camp activities (possibly to compete with Hamas and other organizations running camps).

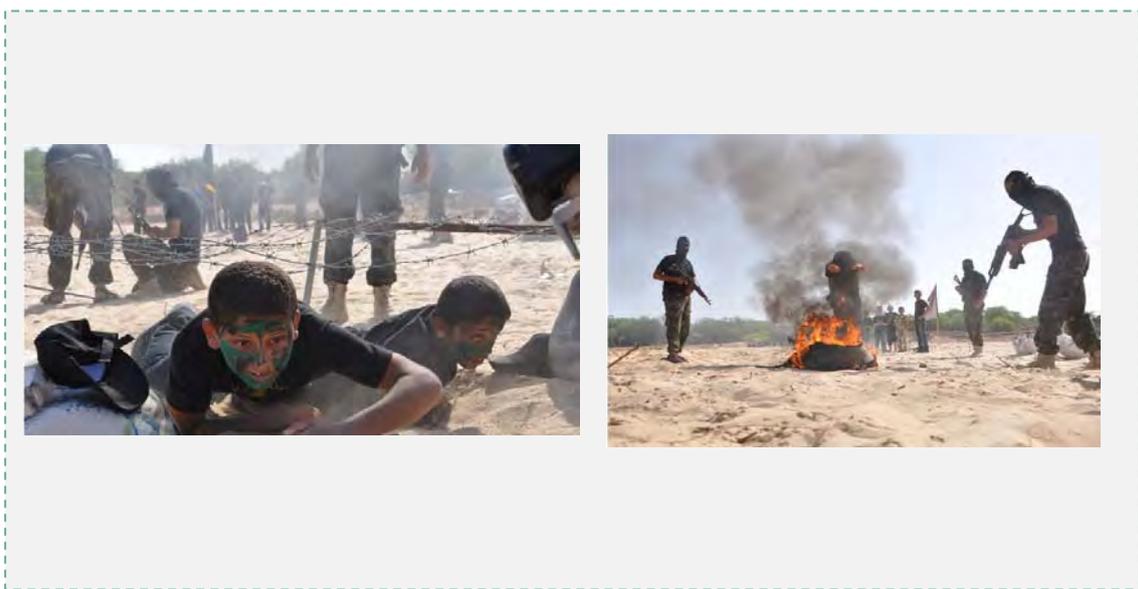
7. On June 12, 2013, **a ceremony was held to mark the end of the PIJ's first camp session in Rafah.** It was filmed by an Agence France-Presse correspondent who had been invited to the ceremony (PIJ military-terrorist wing website, June 12, 2013). The ceremony was military and the children demonstrated the various military skills they had acquired, including firing live ammunition, **simulating the abduction of an Israeli soldier** (See pictures below.).

8. According to one of the camp counselors, **the objective of the camp was to train a younger generation familiar with the PIJ's goal of fighting the "Zionist enemy"** and a generation faithful to the Qur'an, a concept commanded by PIJ founder Fathi Shqaqi. The counselor said that the camp sessions were in great demand. A 12 year-old camper said that "Today I feel joy at joining the PIJ. **I desire to receive military missions in the future and to be like the great shaheeds...**the Zionist enemy will not overcome our people, who have been raised on the fundamentals of the Qur'an and on **the love of death for the sake of Allah.** My father's blood was not shed in vain. Today I shoot my first bullet. My blood burns in my veins and will not cool until I am on the battlefield fighting the enemy" (PIJ military-terrorist wing website, June 12, 2013).

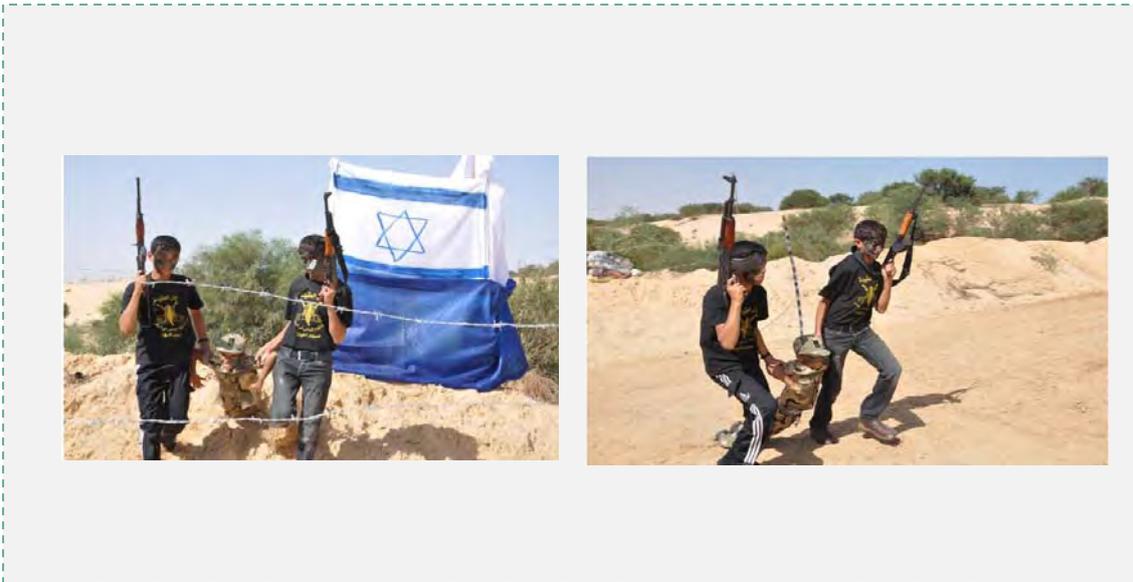
## First Session End-of-PIJ-Camp Ceremony



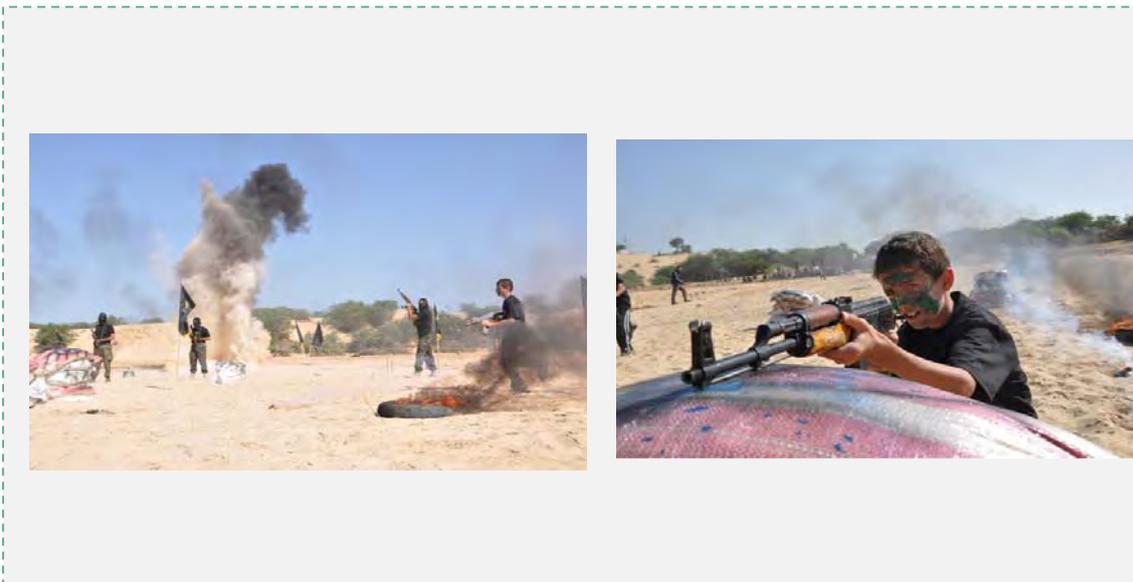
Swearing on the Qur'an (Sarayanews website, June 12, 2013)



Crawling under barbed wire and running under fire (Sarayanews website, June 12, 2013)



"Abducting an Israeli soldier" (Sarayanews website, June 12, 2013)



Firing with live ammunition (Sarayanews website, June 12, 2013)

## Islamic Associations

9. Various Islamic associations also hold summer camps in the Gaza Strip for inculcating Islam and Qur'an memorization. For example, the **Hamas-affiliated Dar al-Qur'an wal-Sunna** launched its camps for Qur'an memorization. The camps are expected to be attended by an estimated 20,000 children (Safa News Agency, June 8, 2013). The camps are strictly non-coeducational.

## UNRWA

10. UNRWA, Hamas' main competitor in the summer camp project, said in an announcement that **it had completed preparations for opening its 125 camps in**

**the Gaza Strip.** Sessions will last for one week each and be attended by a total of 150,000 Gazan children. **Activities will include mainly sports** (UNRWA website, June 2013). According to the UNRWA director in Rafah, **Yusuf Musa**, activities will be limited because of the proximity of Ramadan and because of UNRWA's financial difficulties. **He said that this year the camps' organizers would take into consideration the customs and traditions of Palestinian society and there would be complete gender separation.**

11. In our assessment, the remarks made by Yusuf Musa may signal UNRWA's surrender to Hamas demands about the programs of the summer camps. Since it took over the Gaza Strip (June 2007), Hamas and other organizations have criticized the UNRWA camps for emphasizing universal values and **not providing religious-political-military indoctrination.** In the past that criticism often led to the harassment of UNRWA camps by Islamists.

12. Last year UNRWA did not hold summer camps. Sources in the agency claimed the reason was UNRWA's lack of financing. However, there may have been other reasons, such as the ongoing competition between UNRWA and Hamas and other organizations in the Gaza Strip and the criticism in the past of the UNRWA camps' programs.

## Appendix

### Previous Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center Bulletins about Summer Camps in the Gaza Strip

1. **July 30, 2012** – " Hamas and the other terrorist organizations' summer camps in the Gaza Strip. This year Hamas and the other terrorist organizations operating in the Gaza Strip again exploited summer camps to integrate camping activities with political Islamic brainwashing and paramilitary training."
2. **August 7, 2011** – "This year's summer camps in the Gaza Strip were once again used by Hamas and its military wing to combine social activity with Islamic and political indoctrination and paramilitary training."
3. **May 27, 2010** – "Educating the younger generation in the Gaza Strip: summer camps organized by UNRWA in 'competition' with Hamas, are a target for threats and assaults."
4. **August 17, 2009** – "Hamas summer camps in the Gaza Strip integrate social activities with political and Islamic indoctrination and semi-military training."
5. **August 28, 2008** – "Summer camps in the Gaza Strip run by Hamas and other terrorist organizations inculcate youngsters with radical Islamic ideology and the culture of terrorism."