



July 20, 2014

## 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

### UNRWA STRONGLY CONDEMNS PLACEMENT OF ROCKETS IN SCHOOL

**17 July 2014**

Yesterday, in the course of the regular inspection of its premises, UNRWA discovered approximately 20 rockets hidden in a vacant school in the Gaza Strip. UNRWA strongly condemns the group or groups responsible for placing the weapons in one of its installations. This is a flagrant violation of the inviolability of...

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UNRWA condemnation of rockets hidden in one of its schools in the Gaza Strip  
(Unrwa.org. July 17, 2014)<sup>1</sup>

## Overview

1. During Operation Protective Edge UNRWA announced in a press release that **on July 16, 2014, 20 rockets were discovered hidden in a vacant school in the Gaza Strip** (the name and location of the school were not mentioned). Immediately after the rockets were found UNRWA reported the incident to "the relevant parties" (no specifics given) and "took all necessary measures for the removal of the objects in order to preserve the safety and security of the school."

2. UNRWA, according to the press release, "**strongly condemns the group or groups responsible for placing the weapons in one of its installations.**" Calling the incident "**the first of its kind in Gaza,**" UNRWA said it "endangered civilians including staff put at risk UNRWA's vital mission to assist and protect Palestine refugees in Gaza." UNRWA said it had "launched a comprehensive investigation into the circumstances surrounding this incident."

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/press-releases/unrwa-strongly-condemns-placement-rockets-school>

## Using Educational Installations for Military-Terrorist Purposes in the Gaza Strip

3. This case of **placing rockets in an UNRWA school was not the first incident of its kind in Gaza**, because Hamas and the other terrorist organizations **routinely and systematically use educational installations (many of which belong to UNRWA) in the Gaza Strip for military-terrorist purposes**. By doing so they endanger the children and teaching staff, and **grossly violate the international laws governing war**.

4. Hamas and the other terrorist organizations **do not hesitate to establish their military facilities in close proximity to schools**, mosques and various governmental institutions, or to launch rockets and mortar shells from areas close to educational installations. The extent of the practice was exposed during Operation Cast Lead (See below). During Operation Protective Edge the IDF attacked a military facility belonging to one of the terrorist organizations which was located near a school (IDF Spokesman, July 9, 2014).



Attack on a military facility near a school (IDF Spokesman, July 9, 2014)

5. In addition, Hamas also uses school in the Gaza Strip **during the summer vacation as training camps, where its military-terrorist operatives instruct youths in military subjects**. For example, the semi-military training held in summer camps in 2014 included rocket fire and the techniques for abducting an Israeli soldier through a

tunnel and bringing him into the Gaza Strip.<sup>2</sup> In addition, in 2013 and 2014, Hamas introduced a new syllabus in its schools (the Al-Futuwwa program) in which every year tens of thousands of school children receive military training as part of their studies.<sup>3</sup>

## Semi-Military Activity on School Grounds



**Semi-military training at a school in the Khazaa summer camp. A uniformed Hamas operative teaches children how to hold a rifle. The children are using toy guns (Facebook page of the Khazaa summer camp, June 16, 2014).**

<sup>2</sup> For further information see the July 7, 2014 bulletin ["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"](#)

<sup>3</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."](#)



Children at a summer camp near Khan Yunis simulate the abduction of an IDF soldier from a burning jeep (Facebook page of the summer camp in the Khan Yunis region, June 21, 2014).



Uniformed Al-Futuwwa students photographed during the simulation of an attack on an IDF post and the abduction of an IDF soldier (Facebook page of the Al-Futuwwa project, March 28, 2013).

## Extensive Military Use of Educational Installations Before and During Operation Cast Lead<sup>4</sup>

### Overview

6. Before and during Operation Cast Lead (December 2008 – January 2009) the extensive military use Hamas and the other terrorist organizations made of educational installations in the Gaza Strip was revealed. The uses included:

- 1) Firing rockets and mortar shells near educational installations.
- 2) Booby-trapping a school.
- 3) Locating military facilities near educational installations.
- 4) Holding military activities in an academic institution.

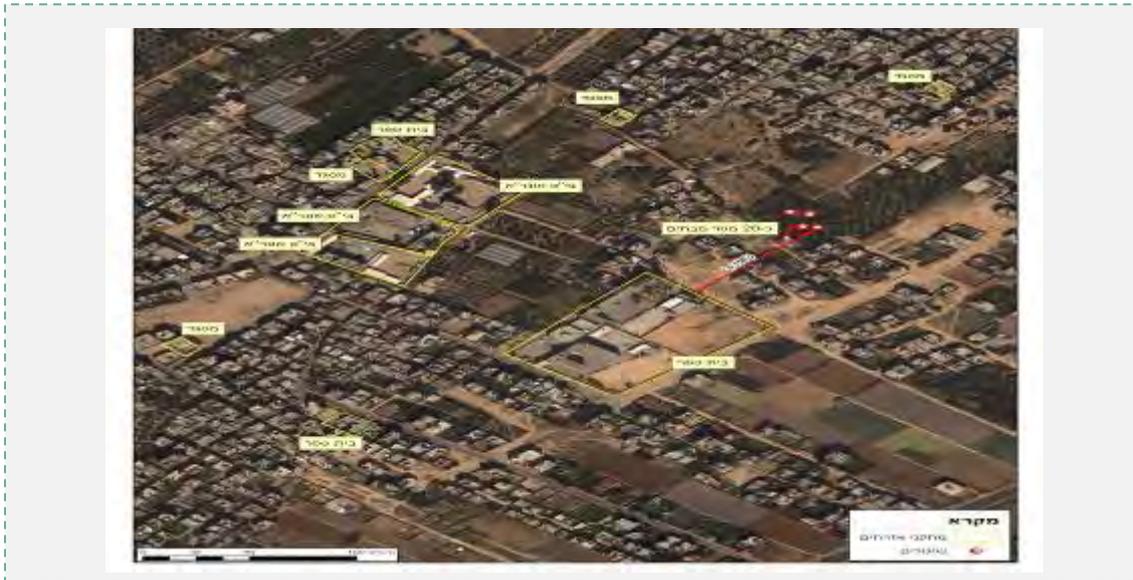
### Firing Rockets and Mortar Shells near Educational Installations

7. **Firing rockets and mortar shells near population centers and educational and public institutions**, and locating military facilities nearby are a **modus operandi often used by Hamas and the other terrorist organizations**. Their objective is to protect the squads firing rockets from IDF reprisals and to increase their chances of survival. There were many examples of the practice during Operation Cast Lead.

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<sup>4</sup> Examples taken from the March 10, 2010 bulletin "[Hamas and the Terrorist Threat from the Gaza Strip. The Main Findings of the Goldstone Report Versus the Factual Findings.](#)" Part Two.

## Aerial Photos



Firing from locations close to an UNRWA school in the region of the refugee camps in the central Gaza Strip. (Note: Launchings (red) about 20 meters from the school.)



Locations of rocket launchers and military facilities (red) near schools (yellow) in the northern Gaza Strip.

## Israeli Air Force (IAF) Videos Document Rocket Launchings near Schools

8. On **January 18, 2009**, at the end of Operation Cast Lead, after Israel had declared it was holding its fire, terrorist operatives launched rockets into Israeli territory from a location near a school. **The IAF identified the rocket launcher on the outskirts of the**

**Sajaiya neighborhood (to the east of Gaza City), located between school buildings.**

The photos of the rocket launchers:



Launching a rocket close to two schools. The crosshairs indicate the rocket launchers. The red arrows indicate schools (IDF Spokesman, January 18, 2009).

9. On **January 8, 2009**, a rocket launching squad was identified inside a schoolyard on the outskirts of Sajaiya, the IAF attacked the launcher before rockets could be fired.



Left: The crosshairs indicate the rocket launcher in the schoolyard. Right: The schoolyard is outlined in red.



Left: A terrorist squad prepares a rocket launcher inside a schoolyard. Right: Rocket launcher (circle) identified in a schoolyard.

10. On **January 13, 2009**, IAF aircraft identified a terrorist operative placing an IED for an attack on IDF soldiers. He located it near a large school in the Sabra network of Gaza City.



A terrorist operative extending a detonating cable across the street from a school in the Sabra neighborhood of Gaza City.

11. On **January 14, 2009**, two rocket launchers were identified near a school.



Two rocket launchers positioned near the fence of a school.

12. On **January 17, 2009**, a rocket launcher which had fired rockets was identified near a school in the Jabaliya neighborhood. It was attacked after it had fired.



The rocket launcher (circle) identified very close to the building of the Rafa' school for boys in Jabaliya (building above arrow).

## Intelligence Information

13. According to intelligence information, rockets were fired from an UNRWA school in Khan Yunis. Local residents said they wanted to leave the region because they were afraid of an Israeli reprisal.

## Interrogation of a Detainee

14. **Nawaf Faisal Atar**, a Hamas terrorist operative from Al-Atatra in the northern Gaza Strip, who was detained during Operation Cast Lead on January 11, 2009, **admitted during interrogation that Hamas operatives customarily fired rockets from schools.** As examples he gave the **Saknin school in the Abu Halima** area and another school in the **Al-Mal** neighborhood from which rockets were fired. **He said rockets were fired from schools because Hamas knew Israeli aircraft would not strike them.**

## Booby-Trapped School in the Zeitoun Neighborhood

15. On **January 11, 2009**, an IDF force operating in the northern Gaza Strip discovered **a school in the Zeitoun neighborhood which had been completely booby-trapped.** A delayed action fuse had been strung to the small zoo next to the schools, some of whose cages still held animals. The IDF soldiers neutralized the

bombs. Within the school a cache of weapons was discovered, including rifles and RPG launchers.



Aerial photo of the booby-trapped school (marked with arrow) in the Zeitoun neighborhood in Gaza City.



Ground photo of the booby-trapped school in the Zeitoun neighborhood in Gaza City (IDF Spokesman, January 11, 2009)



The booby-trapped school. A delayed action fuse led from the school to a small zoo nearby (IDF Spokesman, January 11, 2009)



The booby-trapped school. IDF soldiers neutralized the IED (IDF Spokesman, January 11, 2009).



The detonator that was supposed to blow up the IED in the school.

## Locating Military Facilities near Educational Installations



A Hamas military camp (red, about 27 meters from the school) identified during Operation Cast Lead, located near a school (yellow) in the Sajaiya Jadeeda neighborhood.



A Hamas headquarters (red) in the Tel al-Hawa neighborhood in Gaza City. Nearby there are schools, a mosque and a hospital (all yellow).



Military facilities (red) and rocket launching areas located near schools, a mosque and a hospital (all yellow) in Jabaliya.



**Military facilities and rocket launching areas (red) located near schools and mosques (all yellow) in the northern Gaza Strip.**

## **Military-Terrorist Activities Conducted from within Educational Installations**

### **Intelligence Information**

16. **The weapons cache discovered in the zoo of the booby-trapped school included rifles and RPG launchers.** It was not an isolated incident. According to intelligence information, during Operation Cast Lead Hamas made extensive military use of other educational installations. For example:

- 1) Hamas terrorist operatives took over the first floor of the **Tabariya school** in Khan Yunis. According to reports, no classes were held in the school during Operation Cast Lead and **it was turned into a location for Hamas activity.**
- 2) **A Hamas weapons storehouse was located in the Al-Fadhila school in Rafah** (founded by the Islamic Society).

**Weapons and RPGs found in the zoo near a school in the Zeitoun neighborhood**

17. **The Islamic University in Gaza City as a case study:** The university serves Hamas as a political stronghold and is **a classic example of the extensive, varied military activities carried out within an educational institution:** manufacturing and storing weapons, recruiting terrorist operatives (including suicide bombers), using the camp for secret meetings held by Hamas terrorist operative and as a location for military training.

## Military Use of Educational Installations – Examples from Operation Cast Lead

### Firing Mortar Shells Close to an UNRWA Educational Complex in Beit Hanoun (Northern Gaza Strip)



A three-man mortar shell-firing squad located near the main building of UNRWA's educational complex in Beit Hanoun. The video shows how the squad prepares the location for firing and launches the mortar shell close to the building. After the firing the squad takes shelter inside the building

(From a video photographed by the IAF and distributed by the IDF Spokesman, October 31, 2007)

### Hiding weapons in a School



Missile launcher and a number of anti-tank missiles hidden in the earth near a school, found by IDF forces during an IDF action on the outskirts of Sajaiya in the Gaza Strip (IDF Spokesman, May 22, 2008).