



December 29, 2014

Hamas' Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades and National Security Forces Exercises Simulate Takeover of IDF Posts near Gaza Strip and Abduction of Soldiers



Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades terrorist operatives drag an IDF soldier from an IDF post (Paltimes.net, December 27, 2014).

Overview

1. On December 23, 2014, the national security forces in the Gaza Strip, one of the internal security forces controlled by Hamas, held graduation exercises for an officers' training course. The exercise **simulated the storming and takeover of an IDF post** and was held in an Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades training facility in the southern Gaza Strip. In addition, on December 27, 2014, the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades issued a video of dozens of armed operatives simulating attacks on IDF posts near the border security fence. **In one of the simulated attacks "IDF soldiers" were abducted from the post.** In another the operatives attacked and took control of a post, making off with the bodies of "dead IDF soldiers" (See the Appendices.)
2. The exercises were part of an extensive training program carried out by Hamas, the security forces and other terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip. They are another manifestation of efforts made by Hamas and the other terrorist organizations to rehabilitate the damage done to the terrorist organizations' military infrastructures by Operation

Protective Edge. Publicizing the exercises and boasting of Hamas' military capabilities are meant to deter Israel and show it that Hamas is returning to its former strength and will soon be fully operative. Hamas is also trying to raise the morale of the Gazans and its military-terrorist operatives.

3. In ITIC assessment, Hamas feels the attacks carried out on IDF posts near the border during Operation Protective Edge had positive results. Thus, exercises simulating attacks on IDF posts are intended to improve the operational skills of the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades and the security networks affiliated with to them. **The final goal is apparently to attack IDF posts during the next round of fighting**, for which they are preparing. In addition, **the exercises indicate the great importance Hamas attaches to seizing soldiers or the bodies of soldiers as bargaining chips** in the negotiations for the release of terrorist operatives imprisoned in Israel.

Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades Video of an Attack on an IDF Post

4. On December 27, 2014, the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades issued a video through the Paltimes.net website, illustrating the rehabilitation of its military capabilities after Operation Protective Edge. The video (which was then posted to YouTube) showed dozens of armed terrorists wearing uniforms and bulletproof vests simulating attacks on front-line IDF posts. In one attack they destroyed a front-line defensive post, entered and took the "bodies of IDF soldiers." In another video terrorists attacked a post, abducted a soldier and left the scene (See Appendix A for pictures).



Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades operatives simulate taking over an IDF post, killing the soldiers and seizing their bodies. The Israeli flag flies over the guard tower (Paltimes.net, December 27, 2014).

5. In the video the operatives demonstrated a variety of military tactics, among them launching long-range M-75 rockets; sniping; using tunnels to infiltrate Israeli territory; landing naval commando forces behind Israeli lines and using infantry forces to attack IDF posts. The video was made up of segments, some of them old and recycled for propaganda purposes. It is unclear when the segments dealing with attacking posts and abducting the IDF soldier were made.

Hamas' National Security Forces Simulate the Capture of an IDF Post¹

6. On December 23, 2014, the **national security forces** in the Gaza Strip held a military exercise **simulating the attack and takeover of an IDF post**. They detonated IEDs and used live mortar and light arms fire (See Appendix B for pictures).



National security force operatives complete the exercise. An Israeli flag flies over the post at the extreme left; there is another on the fence at the right (Facebook page of PALINFO, December 23, 2014).

7. The exercise took place during the graduation ceremonies of **166 operatives** of the eighth officers' training course. The course was held during November and December 2014 and dedicated to the martyrs of Operation Protective Edge. **The final exercise was held at an Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades training facility in the southern Gaza Strip**, east of Rafah.

8. **General Hussein Abu A'dhra**, the commander of the internal security forces in the Gaza Strip (and commander of the national security forces until 2011), **briefed them on the**

¹ Information about the exercises is taken from Hamas and national security forces sources: Safa.ps, December 23, 2014; Alresala.net, December 23, 2014; the Facebook page of the National Security Force; the Paltimes Facebook page, December 23, 2014.

final exercise. He said they were going to simulate the **takeover of an Israeli military post with mortar and light arms fire**, as well as IEDs. He added that the takeover of the post would translate into **heavy losses for Israel** (Website of the ministry of the interior in the Gaza Strip, December 24, 2014; Facebook page of PALINFO, December 23, 2014)



General Hussein Abu A'dhra
(Former website of the Hamas ministry of the interior in the Gaza Strip)

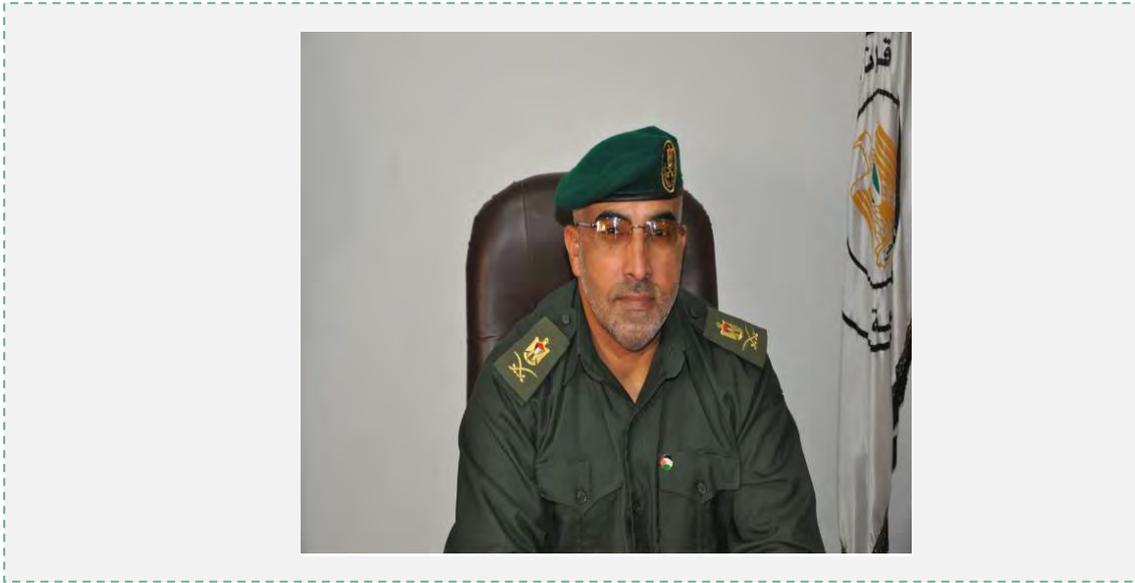
9. Two other senior members of the internal security apparatuses in the Gaza Strip controlled by Hamas participated in the exercise:

- 1) **Kamel Abu Madhi**, deputy minister of the interior and national security in the former de facto Hamas administration. He noted the ability of the general security forces to use heavy fire.



Kamel Abu Madhi (Facebook page of Kamel Abu Mahdi)

2) **General Jamal al-Jarrah (Abu Obeida)**, commander of the national security forces in the Gaza Strip since 2011. He said that the national security forces would carry out every mission given them regardless of the circumstances, "**even when salaries are not paid.**"



General Jamal al-Jarrah (Abu Obeida) (Website of the national security forces in the Gaza Strip)

The National Security Forces and Their Affiliation with Hamas

10. The national security forces are an important internal security apparatus in the Gaza Strip. They were reestablished when Hamas took over the Gaza Strip in June 2007 as part of the reorganization of the internal security networks that operated there under the Palestinian Authority regime. **Since the reorganization they have been controlled by Hamas and so far there has been no change.**

11. The main mission of the national security forces since 2007 has been to oversee the Gaza Strip borders and supervise activity at the crossings. That enabled them to support the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades' smuggling activities, and in several instances they participated in smuggling arms and equipment for the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades. They have also been involved in military-terrorist activities against Israel. They have extensive connections with the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, Hamas' military-terrorist wing and have worked with them closely.

12. When the Palestinian national consensus government was established the national security forces officially became subordinate to the Palestinian ministry of the interior in Ramallah. **However, their subordination exists only in theory.** In reality, **Hamas continues to control the national security forces and uses them for military purposes.**

That can be seen by the fact that the three senior commanders who participated in the graduation exercises were all **appointed to office by the de facto Hamas administration** before the establishment of the national consensus government. One of them, **Hussein Abu A'dhra**, (commander of the internal security forces in the Gaza Strip), who briefed the graduating operatives on simulating the attack on an IDF post, was dismissed by Mahmoud Abbas and stripped of his rank (because of blunders he made during the Hamas putsch of the Gaza Strip in June 2007).

13. **There are Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades terrorist operatives who double as operatives in the national security forces and in other internal security networks in the Gaza Strip.** Proof can be found on lists of those killed in Operation Protective Edge and other past events. Double identities allow Hamas to employ military-terrorist operatives in its security forces, give them governmental "legitimacy," and pay their salaries with funds earmarked for members of the internal security networks in the Gaza Strip.

Picture of National Security Forces Operative with Double Identity Seen in Exercise

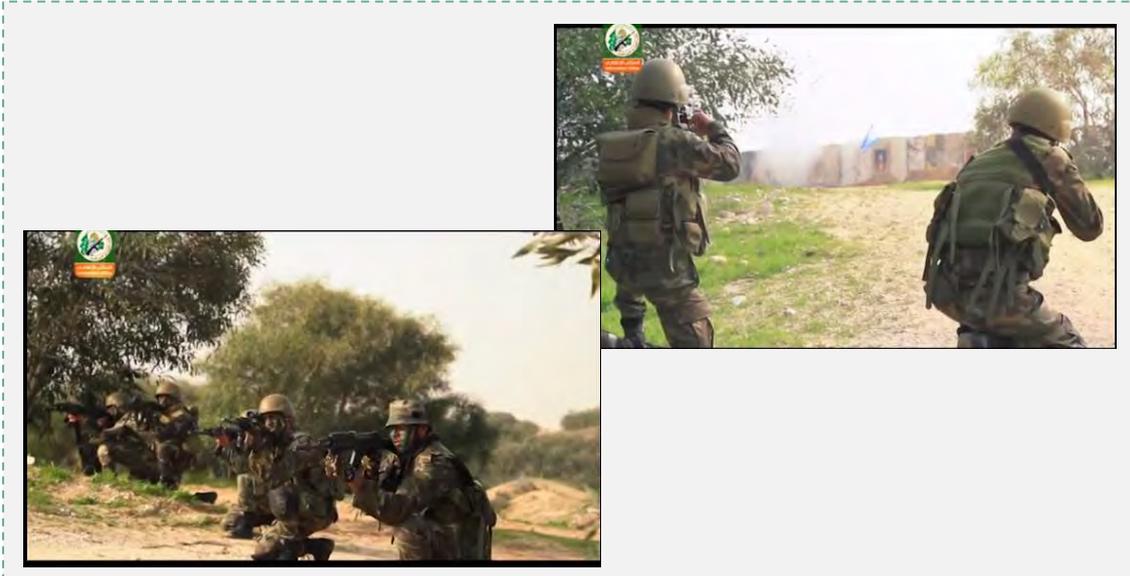


Hamas-affiliated Al-Aqsa TV commentator reports on the graduation exercises of the national security forces' officers' training course. At the left is a poster of Ibrahim Daoud al-Bala'wi, a national security force operative who also belonged to the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades and was killed in Operation Protective Edge.



Left: Death notice for Ibrahim Daoud Abd al-Fatah al-Bala'wi posted on the website of the national security forces in the Gaza Strip, July 8, 2014. Right: Death notice for al-Bala'wi posted by the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades.

Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades Operatives Simulate an Attack on an IDF Post



Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades operatives simulate an attack on an IDF post and seize the "bodies of IDF soldiers" (Paltimes.net, December 27, 2014).



Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades operatives simulate an attack on an IDF post and abduct "an IDF soldier," dragging him away to the left (Paltimes.net, December 27, 2014).



Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades operatives drag "the IDF soldier" away (Paltimes.net, December 27, 2014)

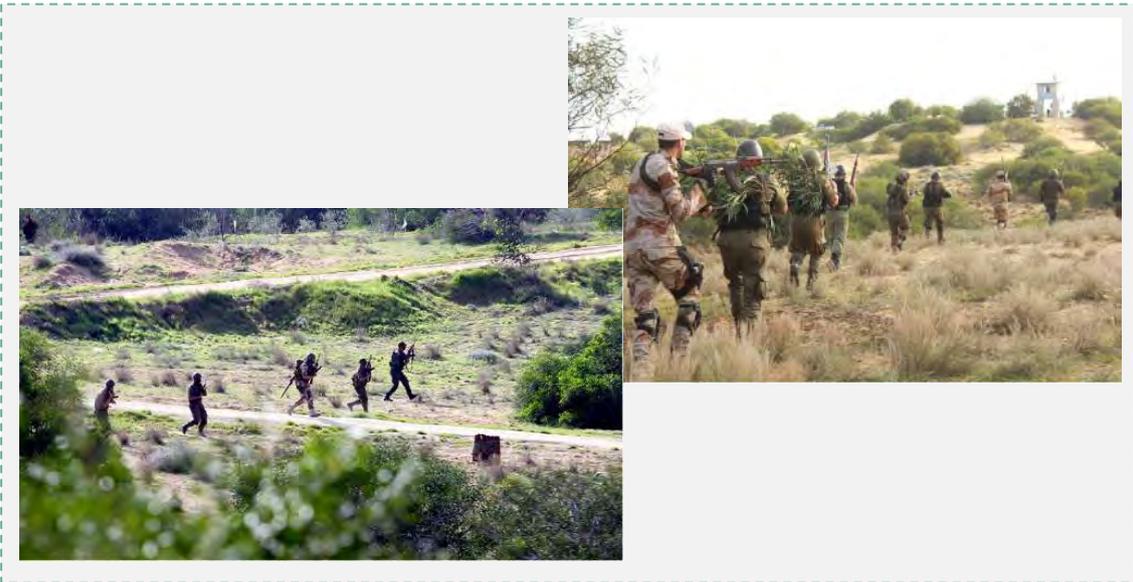
Graduation Exercises of the National Security Forces' Eighth Officers' Training Course



Hussein Abu A'dhra, commander of the national security forces in the Gaza Strip, briefs senior commanders on taking over an Israeli army post (Website of the Palestinian ministry of the interior, December 24, 2014)



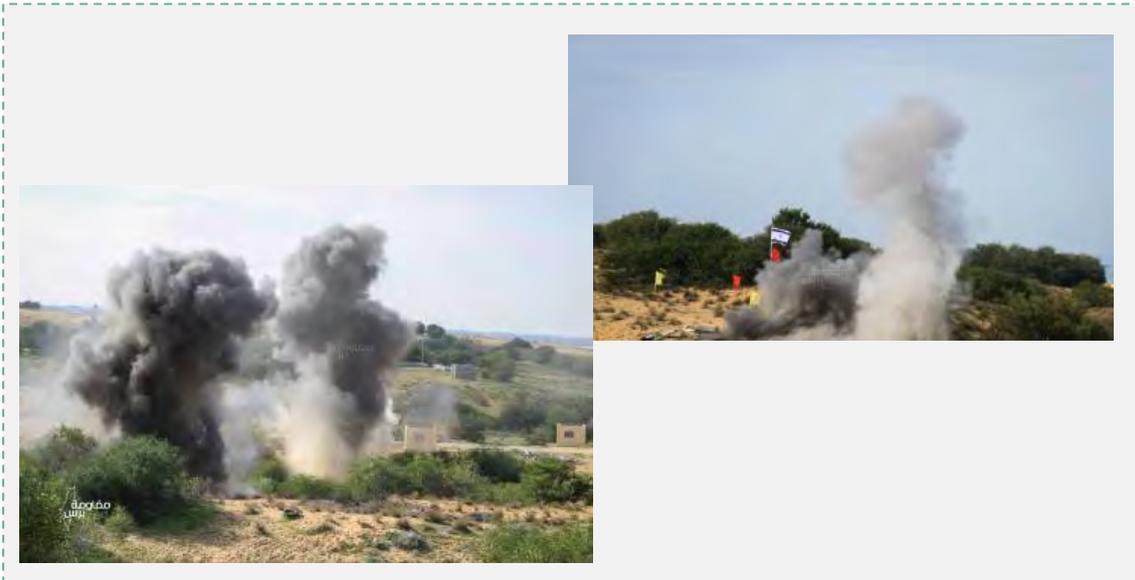
National security forces operatives simulate storming an IDF post (Palestine-info.info, December 23, 2014).



National security forces simulate storming an IDF post (Nsf.gov.ps, December 23, 2014).



National security forces operatives simulate storming an IDF post (Palestine-info.info, December 23, 2014).



National security forces operatives detonate IEDs near a simulated IDF post. The Israeli flag can be seen on the post (Facebook page of PALINFO, December 23, 2014)



National security forces operatives approach the simulated IDF post where Israeli flags fly (Al-Aqsa TV video posted to YouTube, December 23, 2014)



**National security forces operatives take over the simulated IDF post
(Nsf.gov.ps, December 23, 2014)**



**National security forces operatives during the exercise
(PALINFO, December 23, 2014; Nsf.gov.ps)**