



September 16, 2015

Two military exercises carried out by the national security forces under Hamas direction in the Gaza Strip simulated storming an IDF post and abducting soldiers. The two exercises indicate that the national security forces are military forces in every respect and not merely an internal security service.

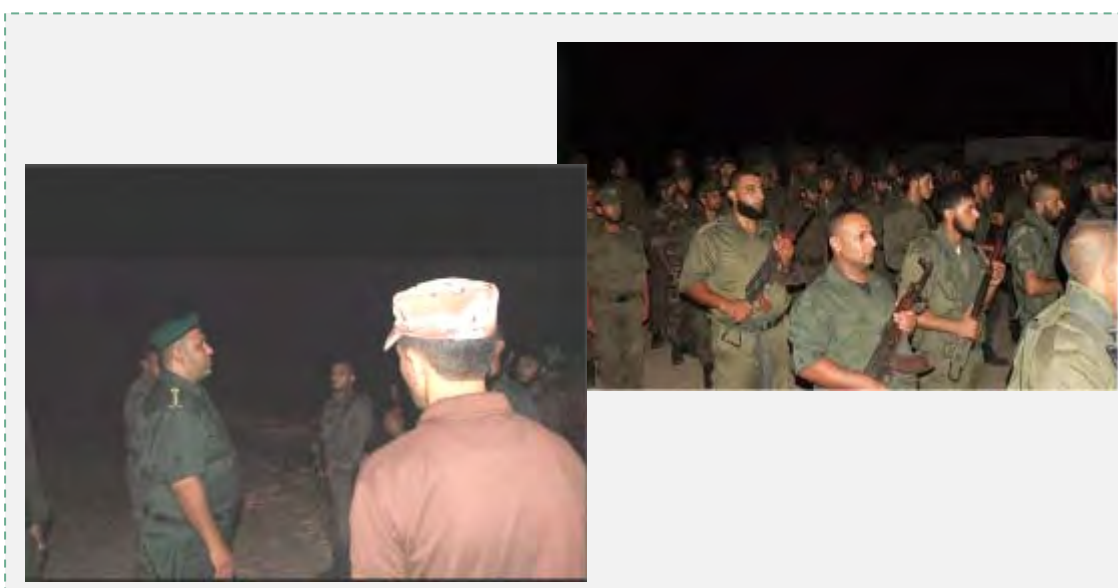


National security forces' operatives who participated in a night simulation of storming an IDF post (Website of the ministry of the interior and Facebook page of the national security forces in the Gaza Strip, September 7, 2015).

Overview

1. On September 6, 2015, a national security forces' unit in Rafah carried out in a **military exercise simulating a night raid on an IDF post in Israel**. Live ammunition was used. It was the second exercise simulating the capture of an IDF post since Operation Protective Edge. The exercise was reviewed by **Naim al-Ghoul**, commander of the national security forces, and his second-in-command, **Tareq Abu Hashem**. Al-Ghoul, in a speech given before the participants, said the exercises were held to improve Palestinian soldiers' military, physical and mental capabilities (Website of the ministry of the interior, September 7, 2015).

2. **The national security forces** participating in the exercise are **one of Hamas' most important internal security services in the Gaza Strip**. They were reorganized by Hamas after it took control of the Gaza Strip in 2007 and Palestinian Authority (PA) supporters were purged. The national security forces were placed under Hamas control, subordinate to the Hamas ministry of the interior in the Gaza Strip. Their formal mission is controlling the Gaza Strip borders and crossings. **However, the military training they undergo clearly shows they are a military force in every respect and that their missions are not limited to internal security.**



Left: Naim al-Ghoul (left), commander of the national security forces in the Gaza Strip, delivers a speech to the military course participants in Rafah (Facebook page of the national security forces in the Gaza Strip, September 7, 2015). Right: National security forces conduct an exercise during a military course that included the simulation of a night attack on an IDF post (Website of the ministry of the interior, September 2, 2015).

The Exercises and Their Significance

3. **This was the second time** since Operation Protective Edge that national security forces operatives participated in what **were clearly military exercises**. On December 23, 2014, they held a military exercise **to simulate storming and taking control of an IDF post**.¹ The exercise was held at an **Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades training facility**. National security forces' operatives detonated IEDs near the simulated IDF post and fired live ammunition and mortar shells.

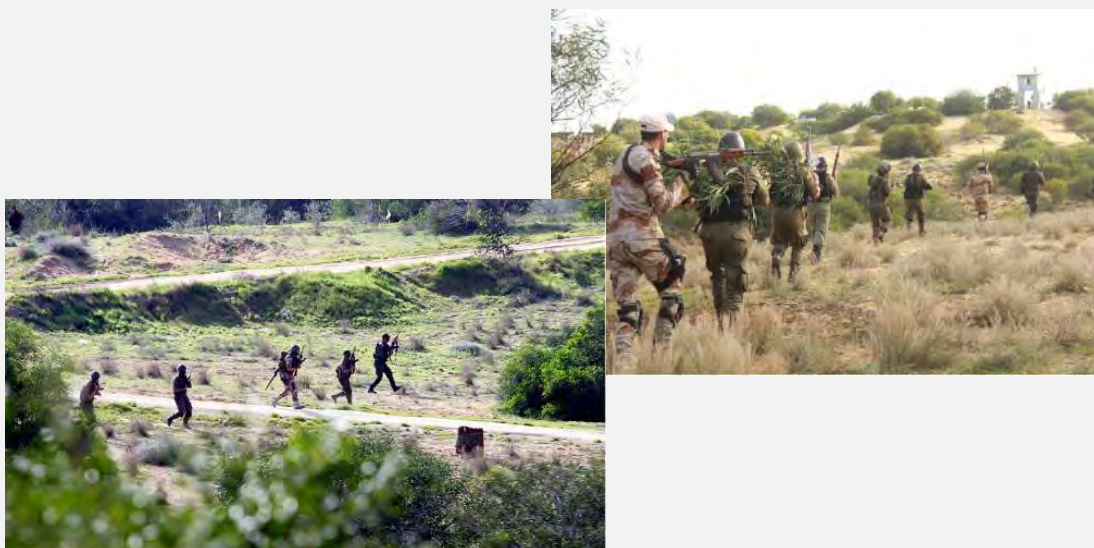
4. The military-terrorist nature of the exercises indicates that **the national security forces are a fighting military force in every respect**. The missions they train for

¹ For further information see the December 29, 2014 bulletin, "[Hamas' Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades and National Security Forces Exercises Simulate Takeover of IDF Posts near Gaza Strip and Abduction of Soldiers.](#)"

include **attacking IDF posts and abducting soldiers**. That was clear from the speech given by the national security forces' commander, Naim al-Ghoul, who called the participants in the simulation "soldiers" (*junud*). The exercises also indicate **the importance Hamas gives to raiding IDF posts to seize "bargaining chips" (IDF soldiers or the bodies of IDF soldiers.)**



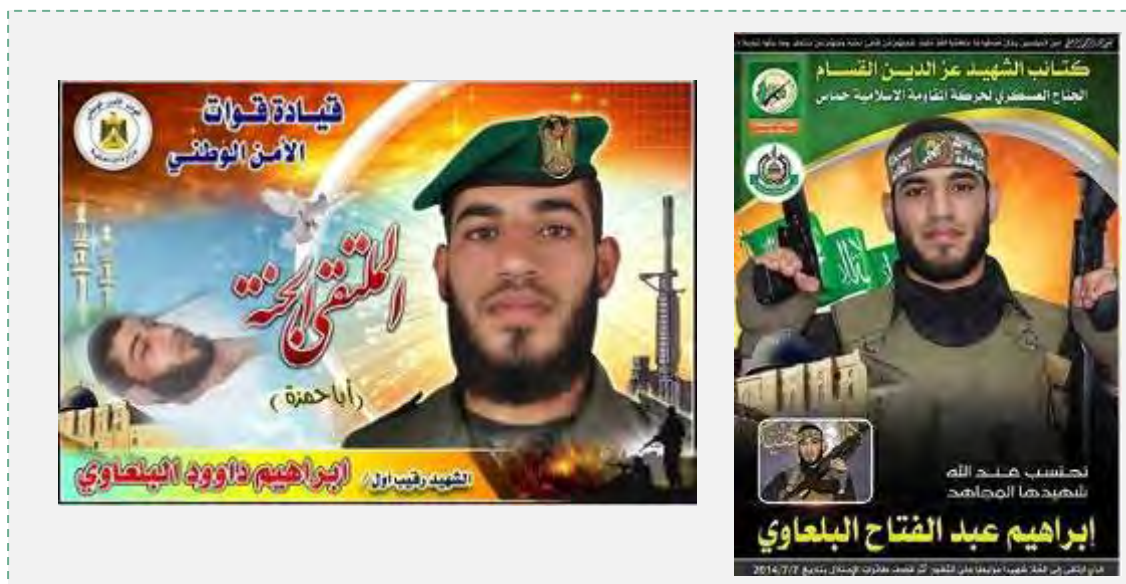
National security force operatives after the simulation of taking over an IDF post. An Israeli flag flies at the left (Facebook page of PALINFO, December 23, 2014).



National security force operatives simulate storming an IDF post (Nsf.gov.ps, December 23, 2015).

5. The national security forces have strong ties to the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, Hamas' military-terrorist wing. National security force operatives train at Hamas training facilities. Some of them have double identities and are also Izz al-

Din al-Qassam Brigades operatives. That was revealed by an ITIC examination of the names of operatives killed in IDF operations (Operation Protective Edge, Operation Cast Lead and Operation Pillar of Defense). **Double identities enable Hamas to employ many military-terrorist operatives in its security services, the national security forces among them,** and give its operatives governmental cover and salaries.



Left: National security force death notice for Ibrahim Abd al-Fattah Daoud al-Bala'awi, killed in Operation Protective Edge (Facebook page of the national security forces in the Gaza Strip, July 8, 2014). Right: Hamas death notice for Ibrahim Abd al-Fattah Daoud al-Bala'awi.



Correspondent from Hamas' Al-Aqsa TV covers the military exercise held at the graduation of a national security force officers' training course. Behind him to the left is a picture of Ibrahim Abd al-Fattah Daoud al-Bala'awi, who was also an operative in the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades and was killed in Operation Protective Edge (Al-Aqsa TV, December 2014).