



April 22, 2016

## Indoctrinating Palestinian Children with Hatred and Violence towards Israel:

Kindergarten and elementary school children in the Gaza Strip wear uniforms and present displays of releasing a prisoner and attacking IDF soldiers with knives.



A display put on at the Annual Palestine Festival for Childhood and Education by kindergarten/early elementary school children. Left: "Releasing Palestinians prisoners from the custody of IDF soldiers." Right: A girl simulates stabbing an Israeli soldier during a display of "releasing Palestinian prisoners" (YouTube, April 19, 2016).

## Overview

1. Every April 5 the Annual Palestine Festival for Childhood and Education is held throughout the Gaza Strip for **kindergarten/early elementary school children**. In one of the events children, accompanied by teachers, out on displays before a large audience. In one of them a **veiled girl simulated a stabbing attack and children wearing uniforms simulated killing IDF soldiers and releasing Palestinian prisoners**, i.e., Palestinian terrorists sentenced to jail terms in Israel.

2. The plays exemplify, once again, **the nature of the "education," both formal and informal, kindergarten and early elementary school children receive in the Gaza Strip.** The educational system in the Gaza Strip is, for the most part, directed and controlled by Hamas, which regards children and youngsters in general as **particularly important target audiences.** Hamas and the other terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip **seek to indoctrinate children with hatred for Israel and violence against it.**

3. The events of the festival were sponsored by two bodies: the **Bank of Palestine,** one of the largest Palestinian banks, whose directorate is located in Ramallah, and the British-based **Interpal Fund,** which was outlawed by Israel and the United States more than a decade ago. However, it continues operating in Britain and has a branch in the Gaza Strip (see the Appendix).



Left: Credits from the video produced for the Palestine Festival for Childhood and Education: Interpal and the Bank of Palestine, the festival sponsors. Right: The Bank of Palestine logo (YouTube, April 4, 2016).

## The Events Held during the Festival

4. On **April 3, 2016,** a ceremony was held at the University College of Applied Sciences in Gaza to announce the beginning of the **Annual Palestine Festival for Childhood and Education.** The opening ceremony was attended by **college's rector, Dr. Refaat Rustom,** members of the faculty, **Ahmed Hawajri, director of guidance and special education** in the department of education in the Gaza Strip, **Imad al-Ghalayini, representing the Bank of Palestine, Mahmoud Lubbad, Interpal representative in Gaza,** and representatives of children's organizations

throughout the Gaza Strip. The festival began on April 3 and ran until April 7, 2016, and organized various activities for children throughout the Gaza Strip.

5. **The high point of the festival during Palestinian Children's Day on April 5. One of the events was held in Khan Yunis**, and was attended by many children and their teachers. Children came on stage in groups and put on shows they had prepared for the audience. There were dances and songs **as well as displays with themes of hatred and violence against Israel**, evidence of the indoctrination received by the younger Palestinian generation. The displays were accompanied by songs with themes of hatred and violence.

6. Three of the plays put on by the children were the following:

a. **A play in which a very young, veiled girl stabs an "IDF soldier" with a knife** – In response the "soldiers" shoot her and she falls motionless to the ground (YouTube, April 19, 2016). The play was related to the release of Palestinian prisoners (see below), and glorified the stabbing attacks which are a prominent form of attack in the current Palestinian terrorist campaign.



**A Palestinian girl simulates stabbing an IDF soldier (YouTube, April 19, 2016).**

b. A play showing a "Palestinian prisoner" incarcerated by "IDF soldiers." A masked child wearing a uniform "shoots and kills the IDF soldiers" and releases the "prisoner". **The play reflects the Hamas' efforts to abduct Israelis as bargaining chips for the release of Palestinian terrorists imprisoned in Israel.**



Simulating the release of a Palestinian prisoner by shooting IDF soldiers (YouTube, April 19, 2016).

c. A display put on by another group of children showing an "IDF soldier" holding an Israeli flag. A little girl knocks him over, **steps on him and picks up a Palestinian flag**. Then she "releases" a Palestinian prisoner (YouTube, April 19, 2016).



A child playing the part of an IDF soldier holds an Israeli flag. A girl knocks him over, steps on the flag, waves a Palestinian flag and releases "Palestinian prisoner" (YouTube, April 19, 2016).

[Click on the link for the video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5zNcXMY1Jw&feature=youtu.be)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5zNcXMY1Jw&feature=youtu.be>

## Appendix

### Festival Sponsors The British-Based Interpal



The Interpal logo

1. **Interpal (the Palestinian Relief and Development Fund)** is a British fund established in 1994 following the Oslo Accords. It formerly belonged to the Union of Good (an umbrella network for Islamic charities and charitable societies affiliated with Hamas which raises money for the organization). In the past the fund played a central role in transferring funds to Hamas' civilian infrastructure (*da'wah*) in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip, and raised funds for Hamas' activities.<sup>1</sup> **Interpal was therefore outlawed in Israel in 1997 and designated as a terrorist organization in 1998.** Furthermore, in the United States it was designated by Executive Order 13224 (August 2003) as an entity that “commits, or threatens to commit or supports terrorism” (US Department of the Treasury, August 22, 2003). **On November 12, 2008, the Union of Good, the umbrella network with which Interpal belongs, was designated by the United States as a terrorist organization funding Hamas in July 2008.**

2. In Britain Interpal's activities are legal. Its main offices are in London and it has branch offices in Birmingham, Manchester, Bradford and Leicester. **It also has a**

<sup>1</sup> Interpal was the most important Palestinian fund operating in Britain in the early 2000s. Interpal (and beforehand under a different name) helped transfer large sums of money collected in Britain and elsewhere to charitable societies and committees operating in the PA-administered territories. However most, if not all, of those charitable societies and committees were actually Hamas-operated and therefore contributed significantly to maintaining the large-scale, local Hamas civilian (and terrorist-operational) infrastructure (*da'wah*).

**branch in the Gaza Strip.** Its chairman, **Ibrahim Brian Hewitt**, a convert to Islam, is involved in the activities of various Islamic organizations in Britain (TheTower.org, October 29, 2015). **UNRWA officially recognizes Interpal as a vital partner in funding its activities in the Gaza Strip.** Since it was designated a terrorist entity in 2008, Interpal cannot use regular banking facilities, which, according to the British media, raises problems for the fund. In 2013, 38 MPs signed formal motion calling on the British government to press the American administration to rescind its "damaging designation of Interpal."<sup>2</sup> The motion was unsuccessful.

**3. The Interpal office in the Gaza Strip opened in November 2009 to liaise between the organization in Britain and the institutions in the Gaza Strip needing donations.** In ITIC assessment, in practice, **the office in the Gaza Strip is also a liaison office for Hamas, which controls the Gaza Strip.** Interpal in the Gaza Strip is headed by **Mahmoud Lubbad**, an engineer with an MBA from the Islamic University in Gaza City (Facebook page of Interpal in the Gaza Strip, May 25, 2014). Between 2009 and 2011 Interpal in Britain was particularly active in the project of dispatching aid convoys called "Miles of Smiles" to the Gaza Strip. The convoys allegedly brought humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip, but possibly also funds for Hamas.<sup>3</sup>



**Mahmoud Lubbad, director of the Interpal branch in the Gaza Strip (Dunia al-Watan, April 3, 2016).**

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/11255294/Why-is-the-Muslim-charity-Interpal-being-blacklisted-as-a-terrorist-organisation.html>

<sup>3</sup> For further information, see the August 11, 2011 bulletin "Seniors in Interpal, a British fund that supports Hamas, play a major role in sending aid convoys to Gaza. South African organizations belonging to the Union of Good are also involved" at <http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/en/article/17866>.



Ismail Haniyeh, at the time head of the de facto Hamas administration in the Gaza Strip, at a press conference held with activists of the "Miles of Smiles 4" convoy, which entered the Gaza Strip on July 31, 2011 (Safa, August 1, 2011). Left to right they are Assam Yusuf, Interpal deputy chairman and general coordinator for the convoy; Ismail Haniyeh and Ibrahim Hewitt, Interpal chairman. Senior Interpal figures met with Ismail Haniyeh during previous "Miles of Smiles" convoys as well.

4. Apparently, during the past few years Interpal has reduced the scope of its relations with Hamas as a result of an investigation being carried out by the British Charity Commission. **A BBC Panorama program** aired in July 2006 called **"Faith, hate and charity"** made Interpal more cautious. It exposed Interpal as a political tool which supported Hamas' civilian infrastructure (*da'wah*), and showed how funds from Interpal were transmitted to "charitable societies" run by Hamas. The societies' activities included indoctrinating the younger generation with Hamas' brand of radical Islamic ideology and fostering the principles of jihad and the shaheed cult. One of the vehicles for indoctrination was the Hamas-affiliated educational system. The program was accompanied by pictures of activities held by the charitable societies which included anti-Israel incitement and preaching terrorism.

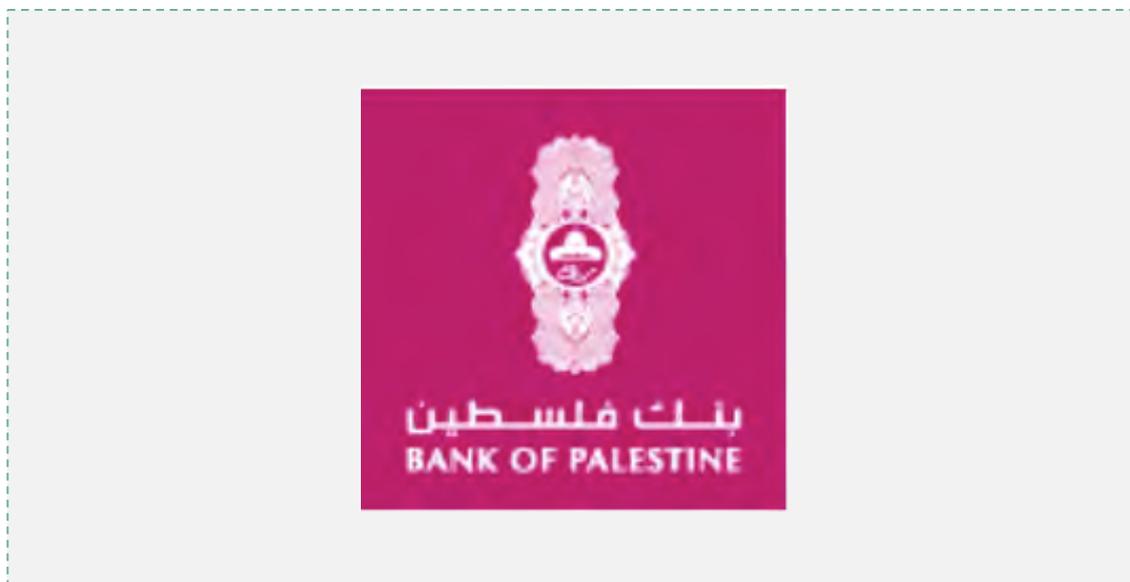
5. Having completed its investigation, **the Charity Commission ordered Interpal to cut off all relations with the Union of Good**. Assam Yusuf, the dominant figure in Interpal, publicly stated that in March 2009 he had cut off all relations with the Union of Good (Islamonline.net/news, May 31, 2009). The ITIC has no verification for the statement. Another difficulty facing Interpal in recent years has been the vigorous activity of the Palestinian Authority (PA) to counter Hamas' charitable societies in Judea and Samaria, **leading Interpal to focus its activities in the Gaza Strip**.

6. The Israeli media recently reported that a formal investigation carried out into radical Islamic activity in British jails revealed that Muslim prisoners in at least four jails were encouraged by Muslim chaplains to participate in collecting contributions for

terrorist organizations, including Hamas and "another organization connected with Interpal... Just last year the UK government named Interpal as being involved in a secretive network of Islamist groups that provide support for the Muslim Brotherhood and its Gazan offshoot Hamas from within the UK."<sup>4</sup> However, the British government has not outlawed Interpal.

7. The displays put on by the children during the Annual Palestine Festival for Childhood and Education show that the sponsorship and support Interpal allegedly provides for worthy causes is in reality also used to increase hatred for Israel and to indoctrinate violence (in both the formal and informal educational systems in the Gaza Strip). Moreover, funds donated by countries and various groups in Western Europe to further formal educational are also exploited to encourage hatred and terrorism.

## The Bank of Palestine



**Logo of the Bank of Palestine**

8. The Bank of Palestine, one of the sponsors of the festival, is one of the PA's largest banks. It was founded in 1960 by Hajj Hashem Atta al-Shawa. Today its directorate is located in Ramallah. It has 54 branches, 43 in Judea and Samaria and 11 in the Gaza Strip. Chairman of the board of directors is Hashem al-Shawa, the son of the bank's founder. The bank has about a thousand employees and its stocks have been traded on the Palestinian stock exchange since 2005 (Website of the Bank of Palestine, April 21, 2016).

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/211179#.Vxsq06N948Y>

## **The University College of Applied Sciences in Gaza**

9. The University College of Applied Sciences in Gaza organized the festival. It is an academic institution established in 1998 and is currently accredited by the Palestinian ministry of education and higher education in Gaza (in practice, under Hamas control). It offers BA and MA degrees in 64 subjects, including medicine, engineering, computer science, industry, management and education. It has a branch in Khan Yunis. There are currently about 8,000 students at the two branches. The university employs 490 teachers, 149 of them with MAs and PhDs, and about 250 administrators (Website of the University College, April 21, 2016).