



**Hamas announced the opening of summer camps for children and adolescents in the Gaza Strip. This year summer camps are inspired by the "return marches," and include military training as they do every year**

July 18, 2018

## Overview

On July 14, 2018, the central committee of Hamas' summer camps in the Gaza Strip held a press conference to announce **the opening of its summer camps**. The theme this year is "I am returning to my homeland," **inspired by the "return marches."** Aspects of the marches have been integrated into camp activities, including launching balloons, throwing stones, collecting tires and glorifying the shaheeds killed during the "marches." In addition, as they do every year, **campers undergo military training**, in ITIC assessment with Hamas instructors (disassembling and reassembling weapons, simulating the abduction of Israelis, rifle practice, etc.) Pictures from the camps indicate that **most of the military training is held in the classrooms and schoolyards of schools in the Gaza Strip.**



**Right: Gazan youths march with wooden rifles at the opening ceremony of the summer camps (Facebook page of the summer camps committee in Khan Yunis, July 14, 2018). Left: Weapons training in the summer camp in the al-Qarara neighborhood in the eastern part of Khan Yunis (Facebook page of the summer camps committee in Khan Yunis, July 15, 2018).**

► Summer camps are held every year throughout the Gaza Strip, **attended by tens of thousands of children and adolescents.** Most of the camps are organized by Hamas. Some of them are held by other terrorist organizations and various institutions (in the past UNRWA was active in organizing summer camps, but stopped because of budget constraints). Campers enjoy a wide range of activities. **Every year a considerable amount of time is devoted to military training and Hamas ideology indoctrination.** Hamas considers the camps as **important tools for exerting its influence over the younger generation and**

preparing a cadre of supporters and operatives for its military wing and movement institutions.

## Opening Ceremony of the Summer Camps

- ▶ On July 14, 2018, the central committee of Hamas' summer camps in the Gaza Strip held a press conference in the "return camp" in Khirbat Ikhza'a east of Khan Yunis. At the press conference Hamas announced the opening of its summer camps. Their slogan is "I am returning to my homeland" [i.e., to Israel], inspired by the "return marches."
- ▶ **Amjad Mazid, chairman of the central committee of Hamas' summer camps**, said **the camps would be held for a month in cycles of a week. The objective of the camps, he said, is to inculcate the "concept of return" among the campers and to educate them to adhere to the Palestinians' principles and rights** (Facebook page of the summer camps committee in Khan Yunis, July 14, 2018). Also present at the opening ceremony was **senior Hamas figure Hamad al-Raqab**. He gave a speech **praising the "shaheed heroes," the wounded and the prisoners**. The ceremony ended with youths laying memorial wreaths for the shaheeds killed during the "return marches." Balloons were also launched with slips of paper bearing the names of cities and villages in Israel from which the Palestinians fled in 1948 (Facebook page of the summer camps committee in Khan Yunis, July 14, 2018).



**Right: The press conference announcing the opening of the summer camps. Right: Amjad Mazid (Facebook page of the summer camps committee in Khan Yunis, July 14, 2018). Left: The slogan of the summer camps, "I am returning to my homeland," and the logo, showing the key (the symbol of the "return" of the Palestinian refugees) and a map of "greater Palestine" from which all mention of Israel is absent (Facebook page of the central committee of the Hamas summer camps, July 14, 2018).**



Youths launch balloons at the opening ceremony. Slips of paper are attached to the balloons with the names of the camps and of the cities and villages the Palestinians fled from in 1948. Right: A balloon with "Isdud" (the southern Israeli city of Ashdod). Left: A balloon with Jaffa (Facebook page of the summer camps committee in Khan Yunis, July 14, 2018).

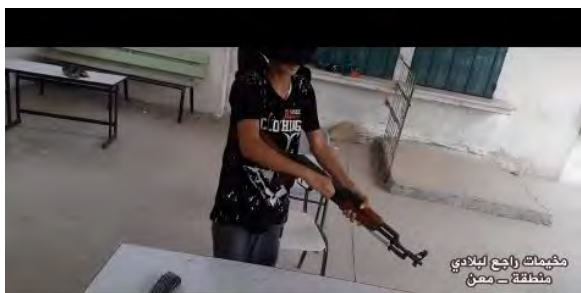


Hamas notice announcing the opening of the summer camps in the eastern part of the Jabalia refugee camp in one of the governmental schools (the Nuseiba Bint Ka'ab girls' elementary school) (Facebook page of the summer camps committee in the northern Gaza Strip, July 15, 2018).

## Military Activities in the Summer Camps

► The activities in the camps include **military training for children and adolescents**. They receive military and semi-military training according to their ages. On July 17, 2018, the third day of the camps, Hamas members of the Palestinian Legislative Council visited the camp in the Qarara neighborhood of eastern Khan Yunis. During the visit the campers put on a **display, simulating the storming of an IDF post and abducting an Israeli soldier** (Facebook page of the summer camps committee in Khan Yunis, July 17, 2018).

## Weapons training



Right: A lesson in a Ma'an summer camp (a neighborhood in southwestern Khan Yunis). Left: A lesson in disassembling and reassembling a rifle. The lesson took place in one of the classrooms in a local school (Facebook page of the summer camps committee in the Ma'an area, July 14 and 15, 2018).



Weapons training in the summer camp in the Qarara neighborhood of eastern Khan Yunis (Facebook page of the summer camps committee in Khan Yunis, July 15, 2018).



Right: Weapons training. Left: Display of firing positions and camouflage during a visit of a Hamas delegation to a camp in Khan Yunis (Facebook page of the summer camps committee in Khan Yunis, July 17, 2018).



**Weapons training in a Hamas summer camp in the al-Amal neighborhood of the Khan Yunis refugee camp (Facebook page of the summer camps committee in Khan Yunis, July 17, 2018).**

### Abducting Israelis



**Training in overpowering and abducting Israeli civilians (Facebook page of the summer camps committee in the Ma'an region, July 14 and 15, 2018).**

### Display of simulating the storming of an "IDF post" and abducting a soldier during a visit of senior Hamas figures



**Beginning to move towards storming an "IDF post" (Facebook page of the summer camps committee in Khan Yunis, July 17, 2018).**



**Simulating the abduction of an IDF soldier from a post  
(Facebook page of the summer camps committee in Khan Yunis, July 17, 2018).**

## Aspects of the summer camps inspired by the "return marches"

- The summer camps opened during the violent "return marches," which are held every Friday near the border security fence. Apparently, inspired by Hamas the camps absorbed the atmosphere of the "return marches" and many aspects of the campers' activities have been influenced by them. They include the slogan of the camps, "I am returning to my homeland" and holding the press conference announcing the opening of the camps in one of the "return camps." In addition, the campers visited the border fence and learned about the cities and villages the Palestinian refugees fled from.

## Brainwashing campers with the "right of return" of the Palestinian refugees



**Right: Balloons launched at the opening ceremony of the summer camps. They carry the names of the camps as well as the names of the cities and villages from which the Palestinians fled in 1948 (Facebook page of the summer camps committee in Khan Yunis, July 14, 2018). Left: A map of "greater Palestine" helps brainwash children with the concept of the so-called "right of return" of the Palestinian refugees at the camp in Khan Yunis. The map is marked with the names of the cities where Palestinians lived until 1948, with no mention of Israeli cities (including Tel Aviv) (Facebook page of the summer camps committee in Khan Yunis, July 16, 2018).**



**Campers in the Qarara neighborhood patrol near the security fence in eastern Khan Yunis (Facebook page of the summer camps committee in Khan Yunis, July 17, 2018).**

## Specializing in using slingshots and slings to hurl stones



Practicing using slings and slingshots to hurl stones in the Ma'an region / the Abu Obeida branch in Khan Yunis (Facebook page of the summer camps committee in the Ma'an region, July 15, 2018).

## The use of tires



Collecting tires and hiding behind piles of tires to use slingshots in the Ma'an region / the Abu Obeida branch in Khan Yunis (Facebook page of the summer camps committee in the Ma'an region, July 16, 2018).



## Glorifying the shaheeds killed during the "marches"



Glorifying shaheeds killed during the "return marches." Pictures of shaheeds from the Jabalia refugee camp in the summer camp held in a Hamas school in the eastern part of the Jabalia refugee camp (Facebook page of the summer camps committee in the northern Gaza Strip, July 16, 2018).

## Religious content



Mass prayers held in the summer camp in the town of Khirbat Ikhza'a, east of Khan Yunis (Facebook page of the summer camps committee in Khan Yunis, July 17, 2018).



Qur'an memorization at a summer camp in the Khan Yunis refugee camp in cooperation with the Dar al-Qur'an wal-Sunna association (Facebook page of the summer camps committee in Khan Yunis, July 16, 2018).