



July 22, 2014

## 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



Left: Demonstrating firing a rocket: a child places a cardboard rocket in a rocket launcher while his instructor watches. The exercise was held in a schoolyard (Facebook page of the Khzaa' summer camp, June 13, 2014). Right: A child fieldstrips a rifle in a summer camp held in a school classroom (Facebook page of the summer camps held in the region of Rafah, June 2, 2014).

### Overview

1. Every year summer camps are held throughout the Gaza Strip during the summer vacation, for **the most part organized by Hamas** (a small number are organized by the other terrorist organizations operating in the Gaza Strip and by Islamic associations). **This year more than 120,000 Gazan children and pupils in the eighth through twelfth grades participated.** The camps featured social activities, sports and entertainment alongside radical Islamic Hamas ideological indoctrination and semi-military training (including instruction in firing rockets and abducting IDF soldiers). The activities focused on three areas:

- 1) **Semi-military exercises** – The exercises were an important part of the campers' activities this year as well, and included **uniformed campers crawling on their stomachs, standing in parade formation, firing light arms, simulating firing rockets into Israeli territory, abducting and beating IDF soldiers, etc.** They also studied military theory, such as operating weapons. Their **instructors wore uniforms** and some of them **belonged to the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, Hamas'**

**military-terrorist wing.** Military training is integrated into the Al-Futuwwa<sup>1</sup> program held in the schools during the academic year, introduced into the curriculum by Hamas in 2012, for tens of thousands of Gazan youths who receive theoretical and practical military training as part of their required studies.<sup>2</sup>

2) **Radical Islamic Hamas indoctrination** – Hamas operatives indoctrinate the youths with Hamas' brand of radical Islam. They particularly stress themes of the conflict with Israel, among them the so-called "liberation" of Palestine [i.e., the destruction of the State of Israel], adherence to jihad and the armed terrorist struggle against Israel [the "resistance"] as the only way to resolve the conflict, and the so "right of return" of the Palestinian refugees.

3) **Current events and propaganda** – The activities focus **on solidarity and identification with the Palestinian terrorist operatives imprisoned in Israeli jails.** Especially prominent this year was the hunger strike held by the administrative detainees. The campers prepared displays related to the theme of hunger strikes and similar activities were held. The campers also participated in solidarity marches, walked on Israeli flags and held mock trials for high-ranking Israeli military and political figures.

2. Hamas (and the other terrorist organizations) use the summer camps **effectively to indoctrinate Gazan children and adolescents with the ideology of jihad and radical Islam.** The camps are part of the Gaza Strip's educational system, **in which tens of thousands of Gazan children and youths receive semi-military training in governmental schools.** Hamas uses its educational system to **train new generations of activists, operatives and supporters who will join the Hamas movement and its military-terrorist wing, will take part in terrorist activities against Israel, and ensure Hamas' long-term control over the Gaza Strip.**

3. Summer camp and Al-Futuwwa activities **illustrate how Hamas uses its control over the Gaza Strip's educational system.** In theory, the governmental schools are subordinate to the office of **Khawla Shaksheer**, the Palestinian minister of education (in the recently-formed national consensus government). However, in reality, the educational

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<sup>1</sup> **Al-Futuwwa:** "youth, courage, nobility of spirit."

<sup>2</sup> For further information about Al-Futuwwa 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."

system is controlled and directed by Hamas and the national consensus government in Ramallah has no effective influence on it.<sup>3</sup>



Dr. Ziyad Thabet, deputy minister of education in the Gaza Strip, who supervises school activities (with no effective control) from Ramallah (Website of the ministry of education in the Gaza Strip, July 2, 2014)

## The Hamas Summer Camps

### Overview

4. At the end of April 2014 Hamas announced the opening of its annual summer camps. This year, according to the announcement, the slogan of the camps would be "The torch of freedom," whose objective would be to indoctrinate the youth with the need to preserve "the historical, national rights of the Palestinian people."<sup>4</sup> The summer camps began at the beginning of **June in 17, 2014 refugee camps in the Gaza Strip**. The camps were divided into weekly sessions. **About 100,000 children and pupils in the eighth to twelfth grades participated in the Hamas summer camps**. Most of them were controlled by Hamas, partially because UNRWA, Hamas' main competitor, stopped running camps

<sup>3</sup> **Ziyad Thabet**, deputy minister of education in the Gaza Strip, told newspaper correspondents that his ministry maintained connections with the minister of education of the national consensus government in Ramallah. **However, the connections were weak and impractical**. He said the minister in Ramallah **did not help the ministry in the Gaza Strip conduct its day-to-day activities or allot it funds**. Ministry employees in the Gaza Strip, he said, did not receive salaries from the government in Ramallah, and his ministry had to cancel a large number of programs because of lack of funding (Website of the ministry of education in the Gaza Strip, July 2, 2014).

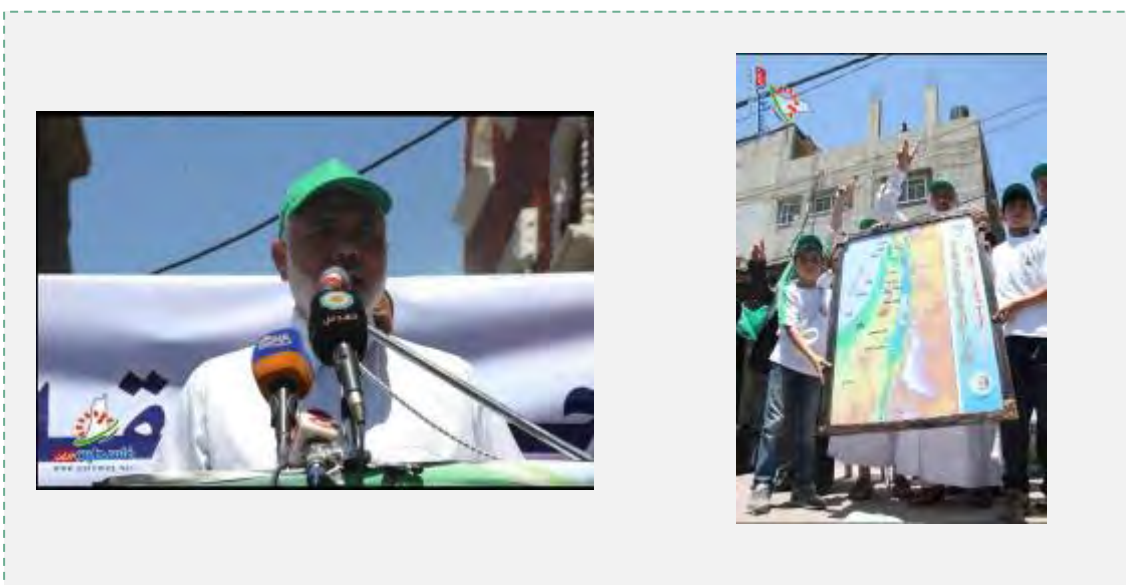
<sup>4</sup> **Musa al-Musak**, chairman of the high camps' committee, said that the objective of the camps was to teach the campers values, morality and patriotism. He said that the slogan this year was meant to "promote the culture of inculcating the national fundamental principles in their hearts and to stress the commitment of the [Hamas] movement to the historical and national rights of the Palestinian people" (Felesteen.ps, June 1, 2014).

because of a budget deficit and because of Hamas' efforts to influence the themes imparted to the campers, as well as physical attacks by Salafist elements.

5. The camps, especially those for boys, **featured extensive semi-military activities** which included theoretical military subjects, learning about weapons and practicing presenting arms. They were divided into groups to learn how to use weapons, how to navigate and run obstacle courses, etc. (Al-monitor.com, June 19, 2014). **Most of the lessons, including those about the use of weapons, were held in schools or mosques.**

### The Objectives of the Camps

6. **The Hamas leadership considers the camps and their activities very important,** and many of them visited the camps in session and participated in the opening and closing ceremonies. **Ismail Haniya**, deputy head of the Hamas political bureau, attended the opening ceremony in the Al-Shati refugee camp. He gave a speech in which he said that **Hamas was educating the Palestinians both ideologically and religiously, and inculcating them with the concept of jihad so that they would be able to release the [Palestinian terrorist] prisoners from Israeli jails.** He also said that **the fact that the camps continued to be held proved that Hamas "adheres to its path of jihad"** (Safa.ps, June 7, 2014). **Khalil al-Haya**, a member of Hamas' political bureau, said that the camps were the **first spark of what he called the "generation of liberation,"** which would bear the task of liberating the prisoners and the holy places (Kotla.ps, june3, 2014).



Left: Ismail Haniya speaks at the opening ceremony of the Al-Shati refugee camp summer camp.  
Right: The opening ceremony in the Al-Shati refugee camp (Paltimes.net, June 6, 2014).

7. **Hamza Ahmed**, an instructor at one of the camps in the Saraya region of the Gaza Strip, said in an interview that **the military exercises corresponded to Hamas' ideology**. He said that because the Palestinians were in a state of conflict with Israel the camps had to hold military activities as well as cultural activities. He said that the younger generation bore a great responsibility for the future, and therefore it had to be **emotionally and physically ready to deal with a military confrontation**. "The Zionist enemy took the land by force and it will only be taken back by force. This is what we teach these boys, who are the future generation..." (Al-monitor.com, June 19, 2014).

8. At the closing ceremony of a camp held for high school students in the Rafah region, **Tawfiq Abu Naim**, a released prisoner, head of the Waad Association for Detainees and Released Prisoners said that "We rely on these young people, who in the future **will liberate Palestine and the holy places and the prisoners**." He added that "We are proud of them because these camps are meant to create a new generation, strong and determined" (Facebook page of the Rafah region's summer camps, June 19, 2014; Safa.ps, June 20, 2014).



**Indoctrinating hatred of Israel: important visitors at the Khan Yunis summer camp are welcomed with a military "honor guard" of youths wearing green Hamas caps as they walk on the Israeli flag (Facebook page of the Khan Yunis region's summer camps, June 16, 2014).**



## Hamas Summer Camp Program

### Examples of Semi-Military Exercises and Training

9. The following are examples of semi-military exercises and training held in summer camps in the Gaza Strip during June 2014. The pictures and inscriptions indicate that **most of them took place in schools, and some of them in mosques.**

10. **In the summer camp held in the town of Khzaa', east of Khan Yunis, semi-military training was held in the schoolyard. The activities included rocket fire practice and navigating an obstacle course of burning tires while in uniform and holding toy guns.** The Hamas instructors also wore uniforms. Hamas flags decorated the area (Facebook page of the Khzaa' summer camp, June 16, 2014).



**Activities in the Khzaa' summer camp, east of Khan Yunis  
(Facebook page of the Khzaa' summer camp, June 16, 2014)**



**Military training the schoolyard during the summer camp held in Khzaa'. A uniformed Hamas instructor teaches the children how to hold rifles; all the rifles are apparently plastic (Facebook page of the Khzaa' summer camp, June 16, 2014)**

11. **Simulating an abduction** – On June 21, 2014, a military exercise was held in a **schoolyard** in the Khan Yunis region. The campers practiced firing rockets and **abducting Israeli soldiers from a jeep and from an Israeli post after a raid** (Gaza Al-'Aan, June 21, 2014). According to the summer camps Facebook page, "a **camp in the central region carried out a 'military raid'... It ended with the abduction of two Zionist enemy soldiers**. They [the campers who carried out the raid] negotiated for their release in return for the release of all our prisoners in enemy jails and in return for recognition of the state of Palestine and its capital, Jerusalem."



**Gazan youths en route to semi-military training walk on the Israeli flag (Facebook page of the Khan Yunis-region summer camp, June 21, 2014)**



**Gazan children with toy rifles take cover behind sand bags. In the background is an "Israeli military post" (Facebook page of the Khan Yunis-region summer camp, June 21, 2014)**



**Gazan children simulate abducting an Israeli soldier from a burning jeep (Facebook page of the Khan Yunis-region summer camp, June 21, 2014)**



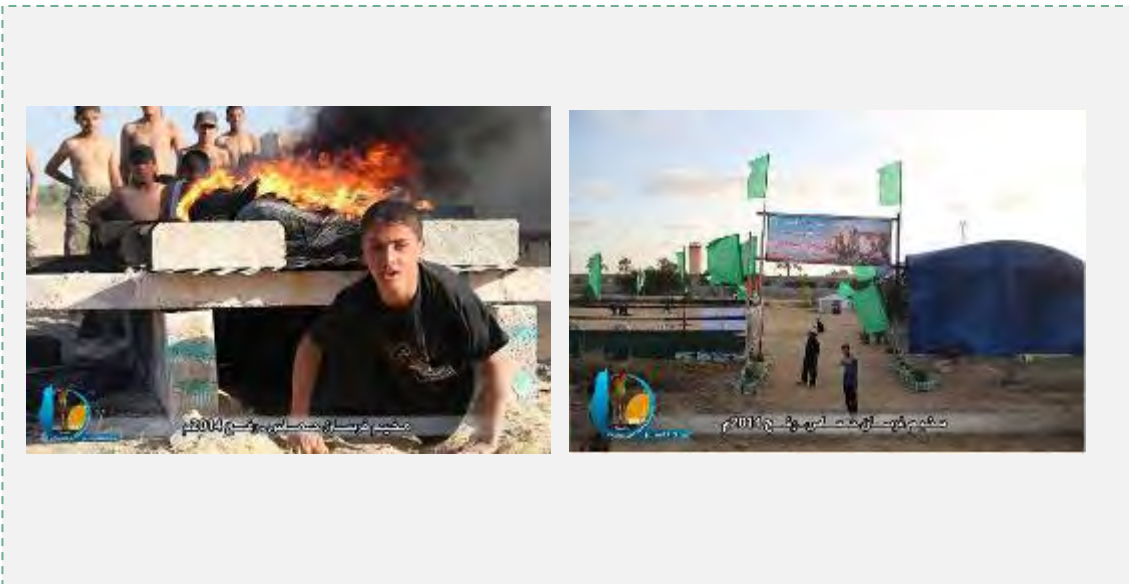


**Smuggling an Israeli into the Gaza Strip through a tunnel. At the right are Hamas rockets  
(Facebook page of the Khan Yunis-region summer camp, June 21, 2014)**

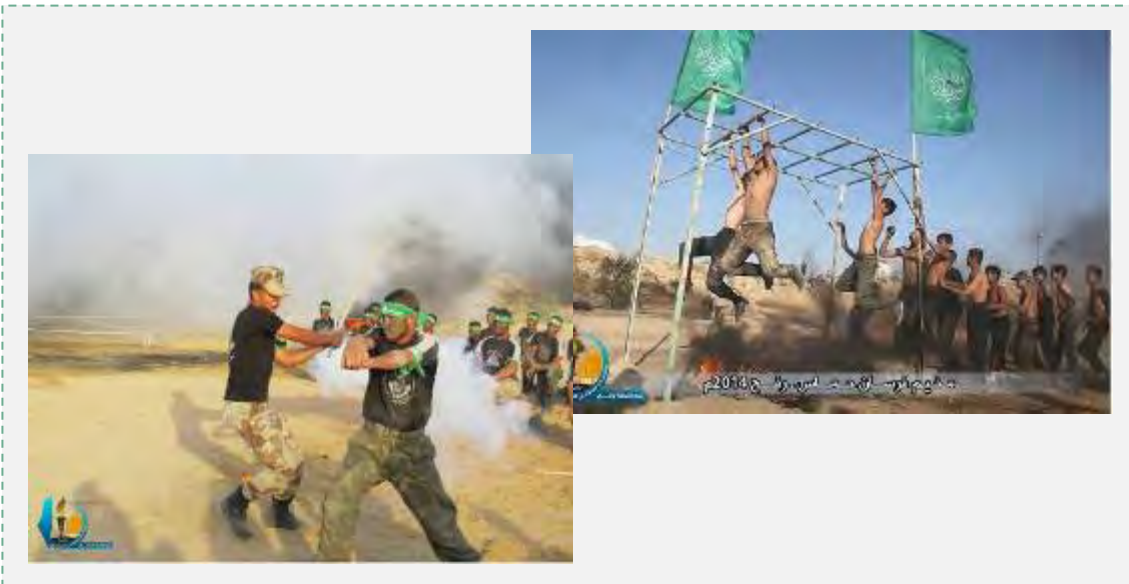


**An exercise simulating beating up "Israeli soldiers"  
(Facebook page of the Khan Yunis-region summer camp, June 21, 2014)**

12. **High school students in the Rafah region** participated in a summer camp called "Knights of Hamas." **There were 250 campers** and they were divided into companies. Each company was named for a senior Hamas terrorist currently imprisoned in Israel. The camp lasted for ten days and campers learned combat skills, underwent military training, and learned to give first aid. The closing ceremony was held in an area marked out for training near the Gaza-Egypt border on June 19, 2014. It was attended by senior Hamas national security apparatus figures, released prisoners, Rafah notables and the campers' families. During the ceremony the campers demonstrated various military exercises they had learned (Facebook page of the Rafah-region summer camp, June 19, 2014; Safa.ps, June 20 2014).



**Left: Campers hold a military exercise. Right: The entrance to the "Knights of Hamas" summer camp (Facebook page of the Rafah-region summer camp, June 21, 2014)**



**Military training at the "Knights of Hamas" summer camp (Facebook page of the Rafah-region summer camp, June 19, 2014)**



**Military training at the "Knights of Hamas" summer camp  
(Facebook page of the Rafah-region summer camp, June 19, 2014)**

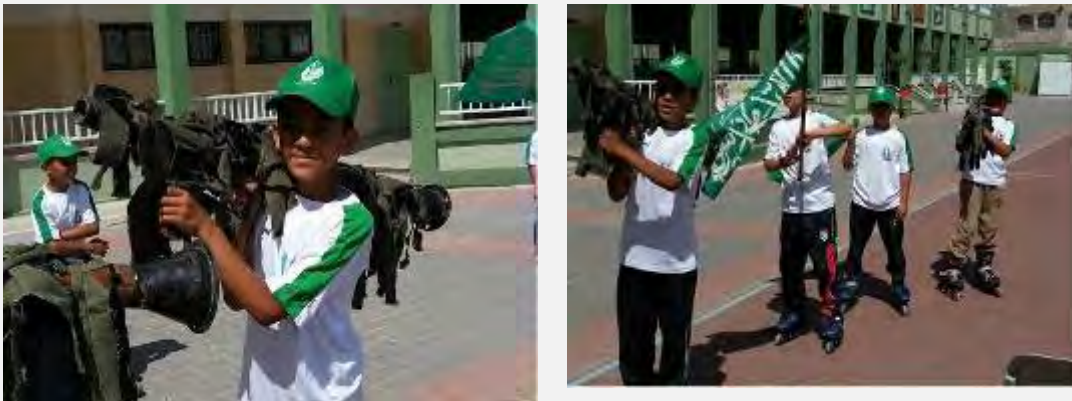


**A boy at a Hamas summer camp holds a toy rifle and wears a mock explosive belt during an exercise held in the schoolyard (June 15, 2014).**





**Boy in a camouflage suit simulates firing a rifle  
(Facebook page of the Rafah-region summer camp, June 21, 2014)**



**Children in a schoolyard at a Rafah-region summer camp carry camouflaged rocket launchers and rifles (Facebook page of the Rafah-region summer camp, June 2, 2014)**

13. Campers at a summer camp in the Ma'an neighborhood near Khan Yunis practiced firing Kalashnikov assault rifles (under the tutelage of Hamas terrorist operatives), and **simulating the takeover of an Israeli military post and of the abduction of a soldier** (Facebook page of the Khan Yunis-region summer camp, June 23, 2014).



A child in the summer camp learns the rules of fire. The first rule is "Trust in Allah"  
(Facebook page of the Khan Yunis-region summer camp, June 23, 2014)



Left: Simulating the abduction of soldiers from an Israeli military post. There are also "dead Israelis" on the ground. Right: Children in one of the summer camps hold toy rifles and hide behind sand bags (Facebook page of the Khan Yunis-region summer camp, June 23, 2014)





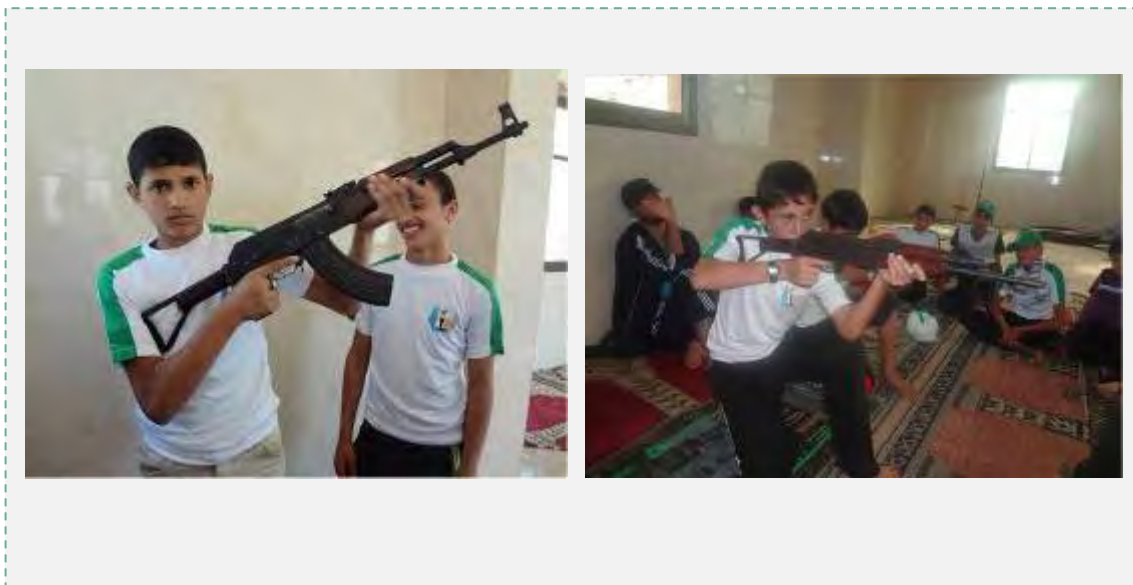
Left: A boy holds a real gun during a lesson held in the camp. Right: A representative of Hamas military-terrorist wing explains the Kalashnikov assault rifle to the campers (Facebook page of the summer camp held in the Al-Amal neighborhood of Khan Yunis, June 4 and 15, 2014)



Children aim toy Kalashnikov assault rifles at a summer camp in Al-Zwaida, in the central Gaza Strip. The pictures were taken inside a mosque (Facebook page of the Al-Zwaida summer camp, June 11, 2014)



Lessons in rifle and RPG fire in the summer camp in the Fakhoura neighborhood of the Jabaliya refugee camp in the northern Gaza Strip. The children learn how to hold a rifle and aim an RPG. The lesson was held in a classroom (Facebook page of the Fakhoura summer camp, June 23, 2014)

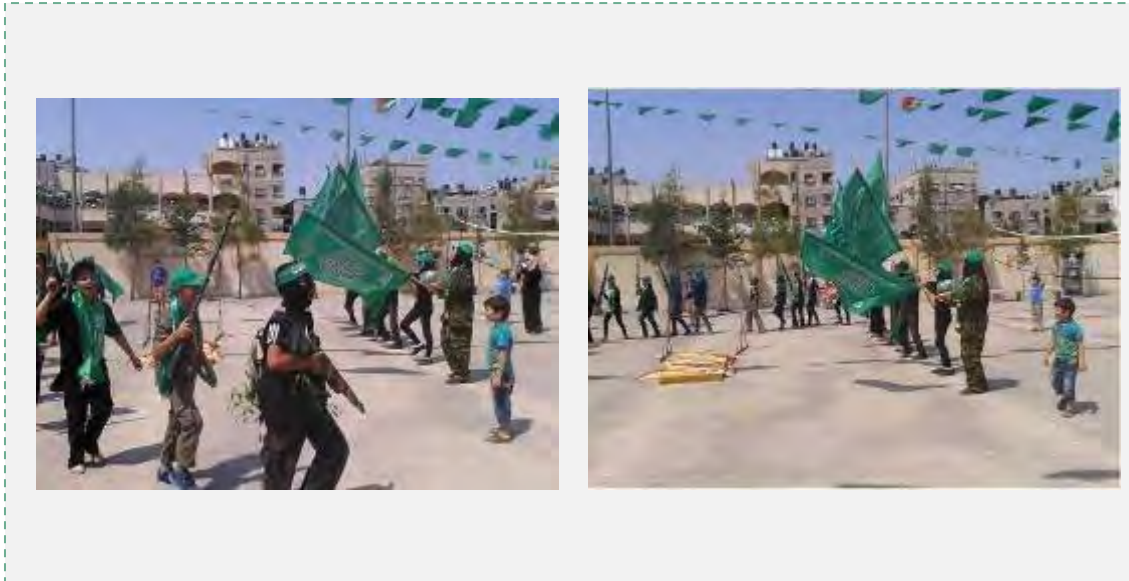


The summer camp in the Al-Tawam neighborhood in the northern Gaza Strip. The children were taught how to hold a Kalashnikov assault rifle; the lesson was held in a mosque (Facebook page of the Al-Tawam summer camp, June 23, 2014)

## Training for Girls

14. Some of the summer camps, attended only by girls, also have semi-military training activities. For example, the girls' camp in the Sheikh Radwan neighborhood of Gaza City they were seen **masked and in uniform** while marching with Hamas flags. They formed themselves into the words "water and salt," the slogan of the hunger-striking Palestinian

terrorists in Israeli jails, as a way of showing their solidarity (Facebook page of the girls' summer camps, June 23, 2014).



Girls in the Sheik Radwan summer camp in Gaza City carry green Hamas-affiliated flags (Facebook page of the girls' summer camps, June 23, 2014)



The girls form the words "water and salt" in solidarity with the hunger-striking detainees in Israeli jails (Facebook, June 12, 2014).

## Inculcating Hamas' Radical Islamic Ideology

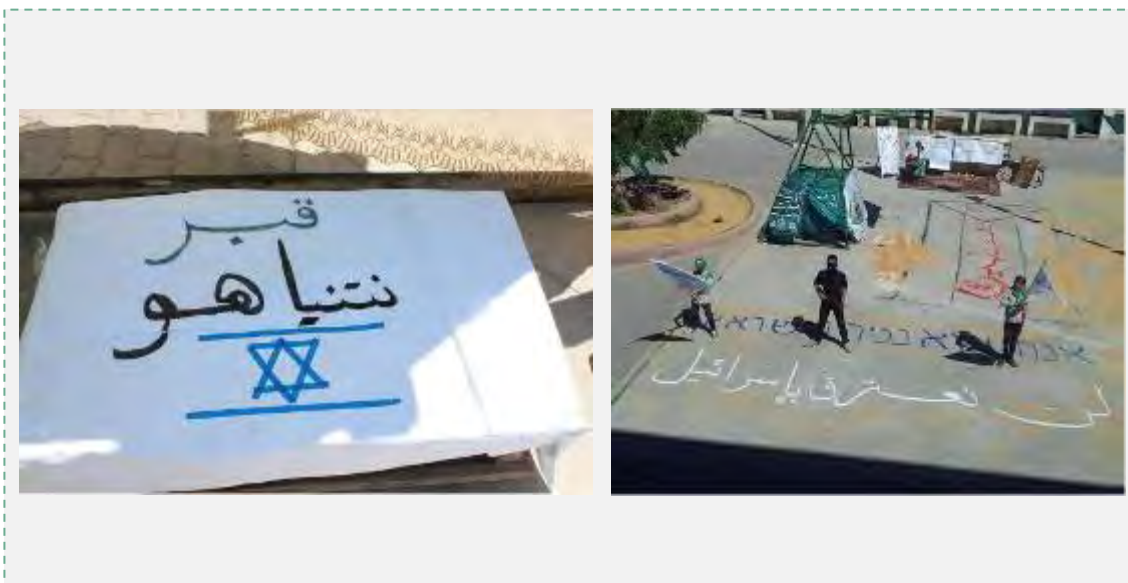
15. As in past years, this year as well the summer camps provided a convenient pulpit from which Hamas could preach its radical Islamic ideology. Among the topics studied were the "themes" of **"the liberation of Palestine"** and **the destruction of the State of Israel**, **adherence to the path of jihad ("the culture of the resistance")**, the cult of the



**shaheeds**, and other aspects of Hamas' ideology and strategy in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Senior activists from Hamas and the other Palestinian terrorist organizations visited the camps and preached politics and Islam to the campers.

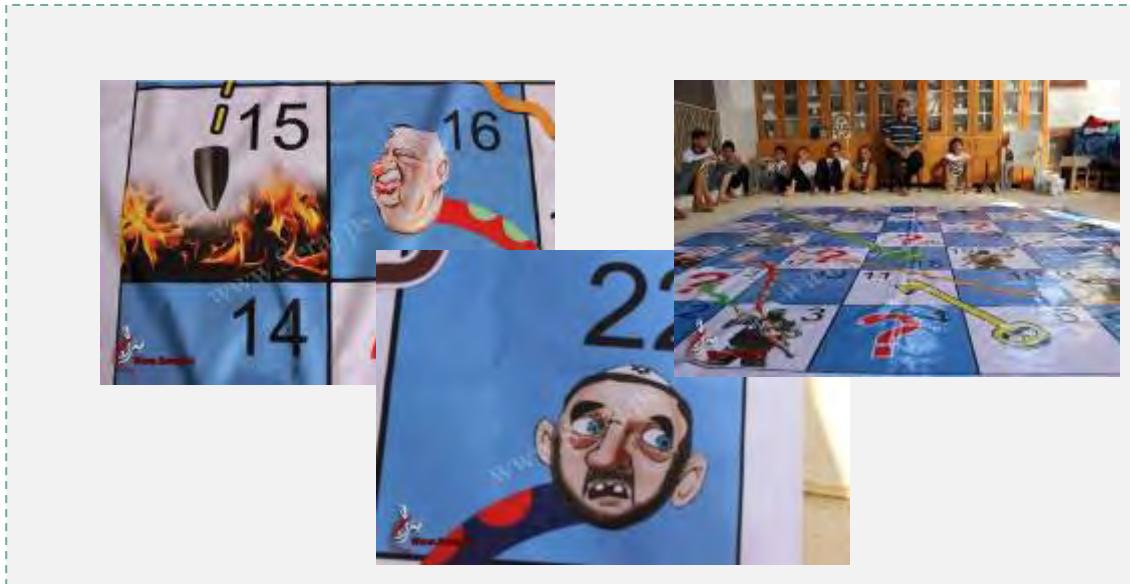


A delegation of senior terrorist activists visits a camp in the center of Khan Yunis. During the visit they walk on the Israeli flag (Facebook page of the Khan Yunis-region summer camps, June 22, 2014)



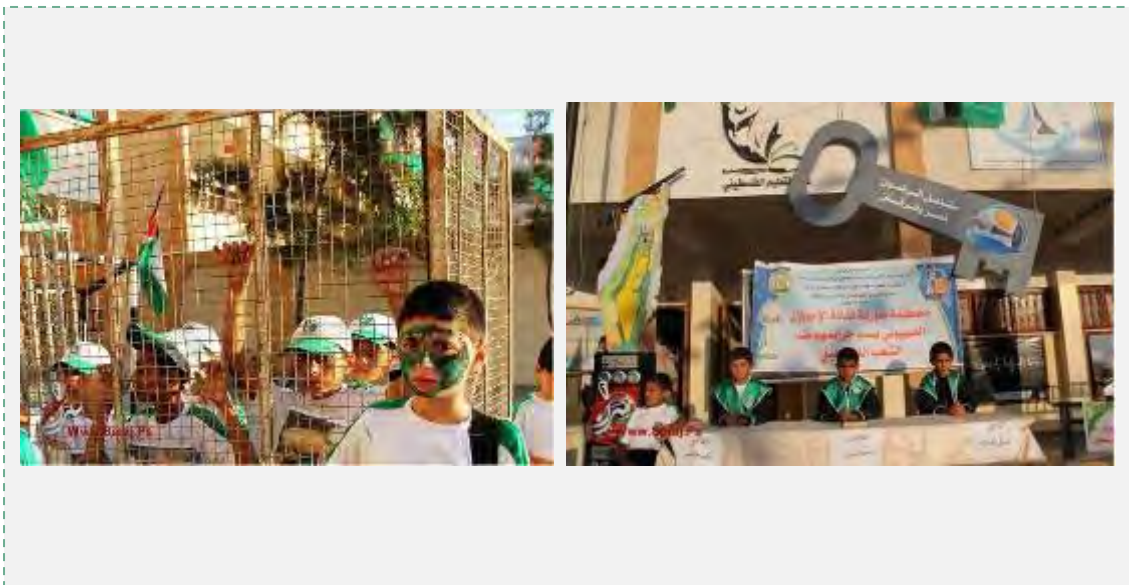
Left: "Netanyahu's grave." Right: Girls at a summer camp and Hamas operatives stand on a sign reading "We will not recognize Israel" in Hebrew and Arabic (Facebook page of the girls' summer camps, June 16, 2014)

16. One of the activities at a summer camp west of Gaza City was the Hamas version of Snakes and Ladders. The snakes were IDF soldiers, Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman and the late Ariel Sharon, while the ladders were rockets. **The aim of the game was to reach Al-Aqsa mosque** (Siraj, June 16, 2014).



The Hamas version of Snakes and Ladders (Siraj, June 16, 2014)

17. At a summer camp held in the Sheikh Radwan neighborhood in the northern Gaza Strip, the campers held a mock trial for **senior IDF officers and Israeli government figures**, trying them for their so-called "crimes against the Palestinian people." **The "criminals" were put into cages, sentenced to death and executed** (Siraj, June 11, 2014).



Left: Left: The cage where the "commanders of the Zionist occupation" were held during the "trial." Right: The trial "judges" sit in front of a poster reader "The mock court for the commanders of the Zionist occupation because of their crime against the Palestinian people." The key symbolizes the so-called "right of return." At the left is the map of "Palestine," from which Israel is, as usual, absent (Siraj, June 11, 2014)





Left: The target is IDF Spokesman in Arabic Major Avihai Edri, and to the right is Shaul Mofaz (Siraj, June 11, 2014). Right: The executions. The pictures are blurred but identifiable as (left to right) Dan Halutz, Benny Gantz, Moshe Yaalon, Shimon Peres, Ehud Olmert and Avigdor Lieberman (Siraj, June 11, 2014).

### Including Campers in Propaganda Events

18. Many campers attended **Hamas rallies and marches**. Particularly conspicuous was their attendance at **events held to show solidarity with the administrative detainees**. For example, there was a solidarity march for the hunger-striking detainees during the Khzaa' summer camp, sponsored by Hamas and its military-terrorist wing. The children marched holding rockets and toy rifles, carrying Hamas flags and pictures of the striking detainees (Facebook, June 17, 2014).





**Solidarity march with the hunger-striking detainees (Facebook, June 17, 2014)**

19. A march was held in the summer camp in the Ma'an neighborhood of Khan Yunis, organized to show solidarity with the hunger-striking detainees and attended by children wearing uniforms, some of them masked. They held rifles and Qassam rockets, and carried pictures of terrorist operatives who had been killed and of Palestinian terrorist prisoners (Facebook page of the Khan Yunis-region summer camps, June 21, 2014).



**Adolescents carry rifles and rockets in Khan Yunis in solidarity with the hunger-striking detainees in Israeli prisons (Facebook page of the Khan Yunis-region summer camps, June 21, 2014)**



The poster marked with an arrow was issued by the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades and is inscribed, "This is our path, jihad and victory" (Facebook page of the Khan Yunis-region summer camps, June 21, 2014)

20. A Hamas-Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades march was held in Khan Yunis to show solidarity with the hunger-striking detainees. It was attended by about 1,000 campers. They carried Hamas flags and pictures of the detainees and Palestinian leaders held in Israeli jails (Facebook page of the summer camps east of Khan Yunis, June 11, 2014)







Shows of solidarity with the hunger-striking detainees  
(Facebook page of the summer camps east of Khan Yunis, June 11, 2014)

## Summer Camps Sponsored by Islamic Associations

21. Various Islamic associations also held summer camps throughout the Gaza Strip for Islamic indoctrination and Qur'an memorization. For example, Dar al-Qur'an wal-Sunna, affiliated with Hamas, held summer camps for Qur'an memorization. According to estimates they were attended by about 20,000 boys (Facebook page of Dar al-Qur'an wal-Sunna in the Rafah region, May 28, 2014). **Separate camps were held for girls** (Al-monitor.com, June 19, 2014).

22. In the Zeitoun neighborhood in the southern part of Gaza City the Islamic Bloc ran a summer camp for girls. The girls wore uniforms at the opening ceremony (Facebook page of the summer camps at Tel al-Islam, June 10, 2014)



**Girls at the Islamic Bloc's summer camp**  
(Facebook page of the summer camps at Tel al-Islam, June 10, 2014)

## UNRWA Stops Running Its Summer Camps

23. This year as well UNRWA will not open its traditional summer camps due, according to the agency, to a lack of resources for funding them. Adnan Abu Hasna, UNRWA's Gaza Strip spokesman, said that the agency had cancelled its camps this year because a financial crisis had rendered it unable to pay for them. He said he hoped next year the camps would reopen.

24. According to a report, many parents who in the past had sent their children to UNRWA camps because they were cheap **were forced this year to send them to camps run by Hamas or the other terrorist organizations**. They said they were surprised to see their sons carrying weapons at camp. However, they also said that despite the fact that they did not agree with the camp activities, the need to give their children something to do during the summer vacation had forced them to send them to camps run by the various [terrorist] organizations.



25. In past years UNRWA camps customarily had more than 250,000 children in attendance, but they have been closed for the past three years. In addition, in ITIC assessment, there are other reasons for their closure, the most salient of which are Hamas' strong criticism of the camps and their accusations of "corrupting the morality of the youth" because the camps were coeducational. Hamas also criticized the camps' educational program, which included issues such as peace and coexistence (See the Appendix for more information).

## Summer Camps in the Gaza Strip in Previous years

### 1. The following is a list of ITIC bulletins relating to summer camps in the Gaza Strip:

- 1) **June 17, 2013** – "[This Year as Well Summer Camps Open in the Gaza Strip, Run Mostly by the Terrorist Organizations.](#)"
- 2) **July 30, 2012** – "[Hamas and the other terrorist organizations' summer camps in the Gaza Strip.](#)"
- 3) **August 7, 2011** – "[This year's summer camps in the Gaza Strip were once again used by Hamas and its military wing to combine social activity with Islamic and political indoctrination and paramilitary training.](#)"
- 4) **May 27, 2010** – "[Educating the younger generation in the Gaza Strip: summer camps organized by UNRWA in "competition" with Hamas, are a target for threats and assaults.](#)"
- 5) **August 17, 2009** – "[Hamas summer camps in the Gaza Strip integrate social activities with political and Islamic indoctrination and semi-military training.](#)"
- 6) **August 28, 2008** – "[Summer camps in the Gaza Strip run by Hamas and other terrorist organizations inculcate youngsters with radical Islamic ideology and the culture of terrorism.](#)"