**Captured Hamas Combat Manual Explains Benefits of Human Shields**

IDF Blog

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[https://web.archive.org/web/20160503090045/https://www.idfblog.com/blog/2014/08/04/captured-hamas-combat-manual-explains-benefits-human-shields/](https://web.archive.org/web/20160503090045/https%3A//www.idfblog.com/blog/2014/08/04/captured-hamas-combat-manual-explains-benefits-human-shields/)

**IDF forces in the Gaza Strip found a Hamas manual on “Urban Warfare,” which belonged to the Shuja’iya Brigade of Hamas’ military wing, the Al-Qassam Brigades. The manual explains how the civilian population can be used against IDF forces and reveals that Hamas knows the IDF is committed to minimizing harm to civilians.**

Throughout [Operation Protective Edge](https://web.archive.org/web/20160503090045/http%3A/www.idfblog.com/blog/2014/06/28/live-updates-gaza-terrorists-fire-rockets-israel/), Hamas has continuously used the civilian population of Gaza as [human shields](https://web.archive.org/web/20160503090045/http%3A/www.idfblog.com/blog/2014/07/14/hamas-use-human-shields-war-crime/). The discovery of a Hamas “urban warfare” manual by IDF forces reveals that Hamas’ callous use of the Gazan population was intentional and preplanned.

This Hamas urban warfare manual exposes two truths: (1) The terror group knows full well that the IDF will do what it can to [limit civilian casualties](https://web.archive.org/web/20160503090045/http%3A/www.idfblog.com/blog/2014/07/16/idf-done-minimize-harm-civilians-gaza/). (2) The terror group exploits these efforts by using civilians as human shields against advancing IDF forces.

**The Manual:**





In a portion entitled “Limiting the Use of Weapons,” the manual explains that:

*The soldiers and commanders (of the IDF) must limit their use of weapons and tactics that lead to the harm and unnecessary loss of people and [destruction of] civilian facilities. It is difficult for them to get the most use out of their firearms, especially of supporting fire [e.g. artillery].*

Clearly Hamas knows the IDF will limit its use of weapons in order to [avoid harming civilians](https://web.archive.org/web/20160503090045/http%3A/www.idfblog.com/blog/2014/07/20/exclusive-interview-iaf-pilots-limit-casualties/), including refraining from using larger firepower to support for infantry.

The manual goes on to explain that “the presence of civilians creates many pockets of resistance against advancing [IDF] troops, and this causes difficulties, such as:

*(1) Problems opening fire
(2) Problems controlling the civilian population during operations and afterward
(3) Providing assistance and first aid to civilians”*

Lastly, the manual discusses the benefits for Hamas when civilian homes are destroyed:

*The destruction of civilian homes: This increases the hatred of the citizens towards the attackers [the IDF] and increases their gathering [support] around the city defenders (resistance forces[i.e. Hamas]).*

It is clear that Hamas actually [desires the destruction of homes](https://web.archive.org/web/20160503090045/http%3A/www.idfblog.com/blog/2014/08/04/hamas-fires-rockets-everywhere-gaza/) and civilian infrastructure, knowing it will increase hatred for the IDF and support their fighters.

**Why Shuja’iya is Important**

It is also of no small importance that this manual belongs to the Shuja’iya Brigade. The IDF fought a major battle in the [neighborhood of Shuja’iya](https://web.archive.org/web/20160503090045/http%3A/www.idfblog.com/blog/2014/08/04/map-exposes-hamas-fortress-shujaiya-neighborhood/), which had been turned into a terrorist stronghold. The discovery of this manual suggests that the destruction in Shuja’iya was always part of Hamas’ plan.

