**Hamas uses Gaza schools for military-terrorist purposes**

July 22, 2014

Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs

http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/ForeignPolicy/Terrorism/Pages/Hamas-uses-Gaza-schools-for-military-terrorist-purposes.aspx

During Operation Protective Edge, UNRWA announced in a press release that on July 16, 2014, 20 rockets were discovered hidden in a vacant school in the Gaza Strip (the name and location of the school were not mentioned). Immediately after the rockets were found UNRWA reported the incident to "the relevant parties" (no specifics given) and "took all necessary measures for the removal of the objects in order to preserve the safety and security of the school."

UNRWA, according to the press release, "strongly condemns the group or groups responsible for placing the weapons in one of its installations." Calling the incident "the first of its kind in Gaza," UNRWA said it "endangered civilians including staff put at risk UNRWA’s vital mission to assist and protect Palestine refugees in Gaza." UNRWA said it had "launched a comprehensive investigation into the circumstances surrounding this incident."

[Image: http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/data/articles/Art\_20680/120\_14\_01\_1048923654.jpg Caption: [UNRWA condemnation](http://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/press-releases/unrwa-strongly-condemns-placement-rockets-school) of rockets hidden in one of its schools in the Gaza Strip (July 17, 2014)]

**On July 22,**[**UNRWA issued a statement regarding a second case**](http://www.unrwa.org/NEWSROOM/PRESS-RELEASES/UNRWA-CONDEMNS-PLACEMENT-ROCKETS-SECOND-TIME-ONE-ITS-SCHOOLS)**in which a UN school in Gaza was exploited by terrorists to hide rockets.** Although the school was vacant, it was located between two other schools which currently house 3,000 Palestinians.

**On July 23, the**[**Spokesman for UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon issued the following statement**](http://www.un.org/sg/statements/index.asp?nid=7885)**:**

"The Secretary-General is alarmed to hear that rockets were placed in an UNRWA school in Gaza and that subsequently these have gone missing. He expresses his outrage, and regret, at the placing of weapons in a UN-administered school. **By doing so, those responsible are turning schools into potential military targets, and endangering the lives of innocent children**, UN employees working in such facilities, and anyone using the UN schools as shelter.

The Secretary-General notes that this is inconsistent with UN Security Council Resolution 1860 (2009), which calls for the prevention of arms smuggling. **He demands that militants groups, who are responsible must stop such actions and should be held accountable for endangering the lives of civilians in this manner.**

The Secretary-General has asked for a full review of such incidents and how the UN responds in such instances. The United Nations is taking concerted action to increase its vigilance in preventing such episodes from happening again. To this end, the Secretary-General has directed the UN Department of Safety and Security (DSS) and the UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS) to immediately develop and implement an effective security plan for the safe and secure handling of any weapons discovered in UN premises..."

[Video: <https://youtu.be/8s_Bv9wKdw0>]

This case of placing rockets in an UNRWA school was not the first incident of its kind in Gaza, because Hamas and the other terrorist organizations routinely and systematically use educational installations (many of which belong to UNRWA) in the Gaza Strip for military-terrorist purposes. By doing so they endanger the children and teaching staff, and grossly violate the international laws governing war.

Hamas and the other terrorist organizations do not hesitate to establish their military facilities in close proximity to schools, mosques and various governmental institutions, or to launch rockets and mortar shells from areas close to educational installations. The extent of the practice was exposed during Operation Cast Lead (See below). During Operation Protective Edge the IDF attacked a military facility belonging to one of the terrorist organizations which was located near a school (IDF Spokesman, July 9, 2014).

[Image: http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/data/articles/Art\_20680/120\_e\_1513051395.jpg Caption: **Attack on a military facility near a school (IDF Spokesman, July 9, 2014)]**

In addition, Hamas also uses school in the Gaza Strip during the summer vacation as training camps, where its military-terrorist operatives instruct youths in military subjects. For example, the [semi-military training held in summer camps in 2014 included rocket fire and the techniques for abducting an Israeli soldier](http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/en/article/20528) through a tunnel and bringing him into the Gaza Strip. In addition, in 2013 and 2014, Hamas introduced a new syllabus in its schools (the [Al-Futuwwa program](http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/en/article/20511)) in which every year tens of thousands of school children receive military training as part of their studies.

**Semi-Military Activity on School Grounds**

[Image: http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/data/articles/Art\_20680/120\_14\_03\_1580476119.jpg Caption: **Semi-military training at a school in the Khazaa summer camp. A uniformed Hamas operative teaches children how to hold a rifle. The children are using toy guns (Facebook page of the Khazaa summer camp, June 16, 2014).]**

**[Image: http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/data/articles/Art\_20680/120\_14\_04\_1880144408.jpg Caption: Children at a summer camp near Khan Yunis simulate the abduction of an IDF soldier from a burning jeep (Facebook page of the summer camp in the Khan Yunis region, June 21, 2014).]**

**[Image:** <http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/data/articles/Art_20680/120_14_05_1154229347.jpg> **Caption: Uniformed Al-Futuwwa students photographed during the simulation of an attack on an IDF post and the abduction of an IDF soldier (Facebook page of the Al-Futuwwa project, March 28, 2013)]**