

**Written Submission of United Nations Watch to the 83rd Session and
Pre-Sessional Working Group of the Committee on the Rights of the Child
for its review of “State of Palestine”**

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INTRODUCTION

United Nations Watch presents this submission to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (“Committee”) for its review of the compliance by the “State of Palestine” with the Convention on the Rights of the Child (“CRC”) at the Committee’s 83rd session and pre-sessional working group. The “State of Palestine” purported to accede to the CRC in April 2014.

The CRC obligates state parties to:

- recognize the “inherent right to life” of every child and ensure “to the maximum extent possible the survival and development of the child” (Article 6);
- encourage mass media to “disseminate information and material of “social and cultural benefit to the child” to promote the child’s “spiritual and moral well-being and physical and mental health” (Article 17);
- take all appropriate measures to protect the child from “all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation...” (Article 19);
- agree that children’s education should be directed to, *inter alia*, “development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations,” preparing the child for a responsible life in the spirit of “peace, tolerance...and friendship among all peoples” (Article 29);
- ensure that no child is subject to “torture, or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishments,” or be “deprived of his liberty unlawfully or arbitrarily” (Article 37); and
- “ensure respect for the rules of international humanitarian law” with regard to children in armed conflict, including by taking measures “to ensure the protection and care of children who are affected by armed conflict” (Article 38).

However, the Palestinian Authority (“PA”) and Hamas routinely violate these provisions by inundating children with messages of hate and violence, encouraging them to kill Israelis and become martyrs in the struggle to liberate all of Israel (from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea) for Palestine.

The PA and Hamas spread this incitement through a variety of tools, including statements by government officials, the media, the curriculum and other educational materials, and the practice of naming schools, camps, and youth activities after terrorists. In addition, both the PA and Hamas commit other violations of the CRC, including failing to protect both Palestinian and Israeli children in armed conflict, and subjecting Palestinian children to arbitrary detention and torture.

Significantly, Palestinian incitement to violence also violates their obligations under other international treaties, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention on Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

Moreover, Palestinian incitement is linked to atrocity crimes such as genocide. “Atrocity crimes,” in the words of UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, “do not generally happen suddenly or spontaneously. The processes leading to them take time to unfold... One of the most common of these signs is the dissemination of hate speech — messages in public discourse and the media, including social media, which spread hostility and encourage people to commit violence against specific communities, often based on their identity.”¹

Disturbingly, in its report to the Committee, the PA repeatedly blames Israel for violating the rights of Palestinian children in enforcing Israel’s security and defense policies, but without addressing the PA’s own underlying violations. For example, the PA submission complains about “the execution of Palestinian children by the Israeli occupation forces: children are targeted by the daily attacks carried out by the Israeli occupation forces...” (p. 27). However, the PA submission ignores that these children were targeted because they committed or attempted terrorist attacks incited by the PA.

Complaints about Israel are appropriately addressed by the Committee in its review of Israel. The committee’s last report on Israel addressed many of the issues raised against Israel in the PA’s present report.² By using its own treaty body review as a second opportunity for lodging complaints against Israel, the PA is attempting to avoid its own responsibility. Moreover, the PA is exploiting and abusing the treaty body review process and wasting the Committee’s valuable time.

In this regard, United Nations Watch is troubled by the 2018-2022 UNDAF agreement,³ between the PA and 17 UN agencies, which budgets \$18 million for the strategic priority titled “human rights mechanisms are increasingly engaged to hold Israel accountable for its obligations under international law.” This funding is earmarked for “documenting and reporting on grave violations [by Israel] of child rights...” and building capacity of government and civil society organizations to monitor and report on Israel’s alleged violations of the rights of children in armed conflict.

Allocating UN resources for one-sided advocacy at international bodies against a UN member state directs UN agencies to side with one of the parties to hostilities—the Palestinians against Israel in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and thus is contrary to the principle of UN neutrality.⁴

This politicized funding also completely ignores the numerous violations of children’s rights by the Palestinian Authority and Hamas, most outrageously their failure to protect children from the impact of armed conflict by inciting them to engage in violence and become martyrs, using them as human shields and targeting them in hostilities.

To the extent any of the UNDAF-budgeted funds were utilized in any way in preparing the PA’s report to the Committee, including through UN agencies or NGOs who contributed data to the report, this is a gross misuse of scarce UN resources.

We hope the Committee will avoid being drawn into the politics of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, save any comments or criticisms about Israel for Israel's review, and use this review to address only Palestinian compliance with the CRC.

JURISDICTION

There are serious questions about the legitimacy of the PA and its current leadership under President Mahmoud Abbas to represent "State of Palestine." Under the Oslo Accords, the PA is the governing body of specified areas of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.⁵ In 2005, Israel completely withdrew its armed forces and civilian population from Gaza. In 2006, Hamas was elected to power, and in 2007 it violently seized control of the territory from the Fatah party, leading to the current *status quo* where Hamas controls Gaza and the Fatah-led PA only controls the West Bank.

In addition, Abbas's four-year presidential term ended in 2009, and the mandate of the PA parliament—the Palestinian Legislative Council ("PLC"), which has been paralyzed since the Hamas take-over of Gaza in 2007—expired in 2010. Elections have been repeatedly postponed as a result of the inability of Hamas and the Fatah-led PA to reconcile, and the insistence of both sides that free and fair elections are not possible due to intimidation of opponents by the other side in the territory each party controls.⁶

While the PA purportedly acceded to 15 international treaties in April 2014, including the CRC, it is questionable whether it had the authority to do so.

In any event, any review of Palestinian compliance with the CRC, must include a review of both the PA and Hamas. Violations of the CRC, both by the PA and Hamas, are numerous. This report provides some examples for each violation but is not exhaustive. This report does not address the Palestinians' use and recruitment of child soldiers, as that is covered by the Optional Protocol on Children in Armed Conflict which has a separate review process.

FACTUAL BACKGROUND 2014-2017

The period since the PA acceded to the CRC in April 2014 has been marked by several waves of Palestinian terrorism and violence, resulting in both Palestinian and Israeli children being killed. Israeli civilians, including children, were the specific targets in many of the terrorist attacks.

Just two months after the PA joined the CRC, Hamas terrorists kidnapped and brutally murdered three Israeli teenagers (two of them under age 18). This incident was followed by the summer 2014 Gaza war, an intense seven-week conflict in which hundreds of Gaza rockets were indiscriminately fired at Israeli cities, many launched from in or near schools or other civilian infrastructure putting both Palestinian and Israeli children at risk. The only reason Israeli civilian casualties were so low is because of the extensive measures Israel takes to protect its citizens, for example, by building bomb shelters, deploying the iron dome missile defense system, and blaring warning sirens of incoming rocket attacks. Despite these measures, just a few days before the end of that war, 4-year-old Israeli Daniel Tragerman, unable to reach the shelter in time, was

killed by a mortar fired from Gaza. Shockingly, the lethal mortar was launched from near a school being used to shelter Palestinian civilians.⁷

In September 2015, a new wave of terror attacks commenced featuring stabbings, shootings, car ramming attacks, and one suicide bus bombing. According to Israel's Foreign Ministry, since October 2015, 76 people were killed and 1187 were wounded in terror attacks. During this time, there were 202 stabbing attacks, 147 attempted stabbings, 221 shooting attacks, 73 car ramming attacks, 316 roadside bombs, and 1,223 rocket and mortar attacks from the Gaza Strip.⁸

One disturbing aspect of this wave of terror is the numbers of child perpetrators. A recent report found that 174 Palestinian children carried out 142 separate terrorist attacks during this period, killing 7 Israelis and wounding 58.⁹

These child terrorists were responding to pervasive anti-Israel incitement and glorification of martyrdom coming from Palestinian leaders, on Palestinian television, and in the Palestinian education system. For example:

- Morad Bader Abdullah Adais, the 16-year-old terrorist who brutally stabbed to death 38-year-old Israeli Dafna Meir in front of her horrified children was acting in response to Palestinian television shows that portrayed Israel as killing and humiliating young Palestinians. Adais told investigators that if allowed to go free he “would go to Al-Aqsa mosque, even if I was killed, and on the way I would kill as many Zionist Jews as I could.”¹⁰
- Hussein Muhammad Abu Ghush, aged 17, posted the following on Facebook one day before carrying out a fatal stabbing attack: “History will write that we faced Israel with a stone, a knife, explosive devices, weapons, and our hearts, and we offered blood of Mujahideen as sacrifice for the place from which the Prophet ascended to heaven. May God accept us as martyrs in paradise.”¹¹
- One week before stabbing to death a 13-year-old Israeli girl, her 17-year-old attacker posted on Facebook about wanting to be a martyr: “death is a right and i am asking for my right.”¹²
- In another case, a 15-year-old would-be stabber was motivated to become a “martyr” by Palestinian media coverage of recent stabbing attacks.¹³
- After being released from Israeli prison in 2018, 17-year-old Ahed Tamimi pledged “to continue on the path of the martyrs, so that their blood will not have been shed in vain. We shall always continue on their path. I have pledged to continue to make sacrifices, even sacrificing my life, for the sake of liberating Palestine.”¹⁴

These are not isolated examples. They reflect the pervasive culture of hatred and violence inculcated in Palestinian youth from a very early age. Through the education system and the media, children are taught that Israel has no right to exist because Israel proper really belongs to

Palestine. Children are encouraged to follow in the footsteps of famous terrorists, who are honored and glorified. Israel, Israelis, and Jews are routinely demonized.

PA AND HAMAS VIOLATIONS OF THE CRC

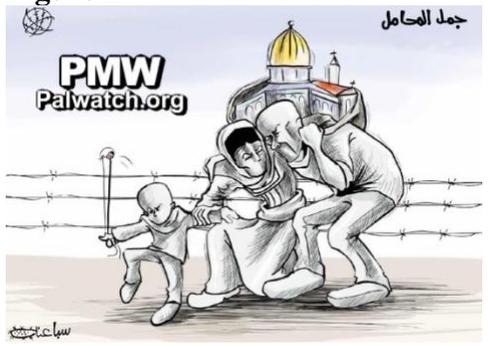
I. MEDIA (Articles 6, 17)

Recognizing “the important function performed by the mass media,” the CRC obligates States to ensure that children have access to material that promotes their “social, spiritual and moral well-being.” (Article 17). In its report, the PA touts its radio and television programs for children. In fact, however, the PA and Hamas routinely use their state-controlled mass media (television, radio, print, and social media) to celebrate martyrdom and incite terrorism, including in media specifically aimed at a child audience. PA and Hamas media also expressly encourages children to engage in violence by using images of children committing violence to promote such activities, and by hosting children who profess support for martyrdom through poems, songs, and statements. In addition to violating CRC Article 17, this also violates the right to life and survival and development of Palestinian children (Article 6).

- *Children celebrate martyrdom and violence on official PA television.*
 - In the presence of the PA Minister of Education, a Palestinian boy recites a poem on a PA TV children’s program, calling for war and vengeance against Israel—**“To war that will smash the oppression and destroy the Zionist’s soul…”** The television presenter responds encouragingly: “Bravo!” (March 17, 2017).¹⁵
 - Young children recite a poem promoting escalation of violence from rock throwing to the use of an AK-47 weapon on a PA TV children’s program “World, hear and see, **my rock has turned into an AK-47** [assault rifle].” The host responds “Bravo! You’re so talented!” (Jan. 20, 2017).¹⁶
 - Palestinian boy recites poem on PA TV calling to “pick up your rifle, resist and terrify...**Destroy, shock, burn, and set fire,**” and to sacrifice oneself for the “homeland,” by protecting it “with your blood.” (Sep. 16, 2014).¹⁷
- *Hamas TV children’s program teaches rejection and hate*
 - Hamas TV children’s program interviews young children dressed in military fatigues. One child says he wants to be an engineer when he grows up **“so that I can blow up the Jews.”** Another child recites a poem about liberating Jerusalem. The child host responds “Keep waging Jihad...when you grow up you will wage resistance against the Jews...” (Sep. 4, 2015).¹⁸
 - Hamas TV’s Tomorrow’s Pioneers teaches rejection of Israel by asking young girl about capital cities in the Middle East, when she gets to Israel, the child

responds: “**There is no Israel – Palestine.**” The host responds “Superb,” and tells the child she is “so clever.” (May 23, 2014).¹⁹

- **The PA uses images of children throwing rocks to promote rock throwing.** Rock throwing can be deadly. A number of Israelis have been killed by rock-throwing, including four-year-old Adele Biton. The five Palestinians convicted of murdering Adele were all teenagers.

<p>Figure 1</p>  <p>Poster guide to rock-throwing with written instructions, concluding “if you did not understand this... here is an example picture for you,” posted to Official Fatah Twitter account December 16, 2017.²⁰</p>	<p>Figure 2</p>  <p>Cartoon published in official PA daily Al-Hayat Al-Jadida in September 2015 shows a mother and father carrying Jerusalem on their backs, as their child swings a slingshot.²¹</p>
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- **Fatah incites children to violence with images of children holding guns.**

<p>Figure 1</p>  <p>Photo posted to official Fatah Facebook page in July 2014 with the caption “My mother taught me that my stone is my weapon; that I am Palestinian only through my struggle.”²²</p>	<p>Figure 2</p>  <p>In April 2015 Fatah posted to Facebook music video with armed child soldier undergoing military training singing praise for terrorism.²³</p>
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- *The PA promotes artwork of children who glorify violence.*

<p>Figure 1</p>  <p>In November 2017, Fatah posted to its official Facebook page a girl’s drawing depicting the founder of Hamas, Ahmed Yassin, and former PLO and PA Chairman, Yasser Arafat, together with three rifles in the background.²⁴</p>	<p>Figure 2</p>  <p>In October 2016, Fatah posted to its official Facebook page student drawings which included images demonizing Israel using anti-Semitic motifs, and images promoting violence. One drawing showed a hand making a victory sign against the background of a pencil, a rifle, the Palestinian flag, and a key (the symbol of “return,” a euphemism for the destruction of Israel).²⁵</p>
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RECOMMENDATIONS: The PA and Hamas must end all incitement to hatred, violence and martyrdom in the media, including the broadcasting of children espousing hatred or violence on TV; exploiting images of children throwing rocks or holding weapons to encourage children to commit violence; and praising and rewarding children for expressing support for violence through poetry, songs, and artwork.

II. EDUCATION (Articles 3, 6, 19, 29)

Instead of using the educational system to train the next generation in “human rights...the principles of the UN Charter...peace, tolerance...and friendship among all peoples,” the PA and Hamas direct all of their educational resources for the opposite purpose. This is evident from statements by PA officials and educational staff inciting children to terrorism, the hateful content of the PA curriculum, the naming of schools, summer camps, and educational activities after terrorists, and the use of educational activities and events to promote violence.

In its report, the PA proudly notes that its Children’s Law in Article 4 requires “best interests of the child”—deemed by CRC Article 3 a “primary consideration” for all actions concerning children—be considered by all “legislative bodies, courts, administrative or public social welfare, or private authorities...” However, the opposite is true. PA education violates CRC Articles 6 (right to life, survival and development), 19 (obligation to protect children from physical or mental violence), and 29 (education should teach respect for human rights, peace and tolerance).

In its report, the PA also touts its campaigns to reduce child suicide and curb violence in schools, suggesting that school violence is attributable to the “occupation,” and taking no responsibility for the fact that it teaches children to pursue violence. In any event, such efforts are doomed to fail so long as the PA and Hamas continue to encourage children to commit suicide in pursuit of martyrdom and to otherwise commit terrorist violence against Israel.

A. Statements by PA officials and educators inciting martyrdom and rejecting Israel’s right to exist

PA officials and educational staff routinely praise and honor terrorists at school events, inciting the children to become martyrs, and at the same time reject Israel’s right to exist, claiming Israel as Palestine. In this regard, United Nations Watch published several reports about UNRWA educational staff spreading antisemitism and terrorist incitement to students via social media. The most recent report from April 2017 presented 60 such examples.²⁶ Thus, instead of protecting children from violence, these caregivers are driving children to terrorism and martyrdom.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas has personally encouraged child terrorists. On March 5, 2017 his Facebook page posted a photo of Abbas embracing 14-year-old Osama Zeidat who was injured while attempting to stab Israelis at a bus stop.²⁷ In September 2015, Abbas hosted an event for 12-year-old Palestinian rock-thrower Muhammad al-Tamimi, praising the boy and his family for their so-called “peaceful resistance.”²⁸



Below are some additional examples of PA officials and educators inciting children to hatred and violence:

- **Rejecting Israel’s right to exist:** Emphasizing the importance of “instilling the ideology that Palestine from the [Mediterranean] Sea to the [Jordan] River is Arab and Jerusalem its eternal capital.” Secretary of the Teachers’ Office of the Fatah Movement, Tawfiq al-Haj Muhammad (Dec. 27, 2017).²⁹

- **Glorifying martyrdom:** “The Palestinian keffiyeh has been colored with the purest blood, the blood of Martyrs (Shahids) of Palestine during their resistance to the occupation, and the keffiyeh has become the shroud of the Palestinian fighter who has sacrificed his soul for the homeland.” Director of the Qalqilya Directorate of Education (a branch of the PA Ministry of Education) Naela Fahmawi (Nov. 17, 2017).³⁰
- **Praising mother of teenage terrorist:** “Mother of Martyr Laith Al-Khaledi [terrorist who threw Molotov cocktail at Israeli military post] from Jerusalem received the news of her son’s death as a Martyr on the same day that they announced the results of the matriculation exams, and said: ‘May Allah spread his mercy over my son. There is nothing better than sons who have died as Martyrs.’ This is an example of a Palestinian woman who stands firm, as the occupation wants to kill our dreams of freedom and independence, but it will not succeed in doing so as long as there are mothers like them, and the list is growing.” District Governor of Ramallah and El-Bireh Laila Ghannam (Aug. 1, 2017).³¹
- **Honoring terrorists:** “It is a joy for all of us to mark Prisoners Day as part of our national obligation,” emphasizing that “we are standing by the prisoners in the battle that they are waging under the leadership of fighter Marwan Barghouti [terrorist who orchestrated three shooting attacks killing five]...” School Principal Sa’eda Qatanani (April 19, 2017).³²
- **Praising martyrs:** “We are unable to speak when among us are the fathers of two young wonderful Martyrs (Shahids), who gave their lives as a gift to the homeland, as a gift so that you...will enjoy freedom. They are praised and distinguished, and Paradise is their place.” PA Directorate of Education representative at school event (Apr. 26, 2016).³³
- **Glorifying martyrdom:** Expressing “appreciation of the sacrifice of our people, and their efforts to support the heroic epic battle in Jerusalem...” and sending “greetings of admiration for the Martyrs (Shahids)...Glory and eternity to our pure-hearted Martyrs, a speedy recovery to our injured, and freedom to our prisoners.” PA Ministry of Education Press Release (Oct. 8, 2015).³⁴
- **Inciting violence:** “We will redeem the Al-Aqsa [Mosque] with our souls...the Palestinian people will sacrifice its soul and blood for the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque.” Head of PA teachers’ union Ahmed Sahwil at student demonstration in support of Al-Aqsa Mosque (Sep. 21, 2015).³⁵
- **Inciting martyrdom:** “These [young] generations must be molded according to those principles, so that they will continue walking the path of the Martyrs (Shahids).” Fatah leader at youth event (Feb. 12, 2015).³⁶

B. The PA’s curriculum of hate

Several recent studies of PA textbooks show that the Palestinian curriculum does the opposite of promoting peace and tolerance, and instead radicalizes Palestinian children. IMPACT-se (The

Instituted for Monitoring Peace and Cultural Tolerance for School Education) has published several studies on Palestinian textbooks in recent years, all of which found that Palestinian textbooks promote hatred and are anti-peace.³⁷ In September 2017, the Simon Wiesenthal Center published its study of 150 Palestinian textbooks, which found that “there was no hope for peace in the region.”³⁸ Among other things, the textbooks claimed Jews have no rights in Palestine, deny the existence of Jewish holy places there and delete Israel from the map. The books also promote violent struggle as the path to liberation. In March 2017, an investigative report by the British newspaper, Mail on Sunday, revealed that Palestinian educators systematically circumvent donor guidelines (by European and other donors) seeking to control the curriculum.³⁹

Notably, the PA textbooks are also used in UNRWA schools. Attempts by UNRWA to change this curriculum have been met with fierce resistance by the PA. This led to a falling-out between UNRWA and the PA in April 2017, after which UNRWA’s Commissioner-General Pierre Krähenbühl emphasized that “UNRWA is completely committed to the Palestinian curricula, and that no change will be made to these curricula.”⁴⁰ In November 2017, responding to a statement from UNRWA Spokesman Chris Gunness, the PA Ministry of education reiterated that it categorically opposes any attempt by UNRWA to make any change to the curriculum that would contradict the philosophy of the PA with respect to Palestinian national identity and heritage, *i.e.*, the belief that Jews have no rights in Palestine and that Palestinians will one day return to their former homes in Israel.⁴¹

The findings in the latest report by IMPACT-se published in September 2018 should be alarming to anyone who supports the Israeli-Palestinian peace process and the two-state solution. The report found that Palestinian textbooks radicalize Palestinian children by severely demonizing Israel, glorifying martyrdom, teaching that Palestinians will “return” to Israel proper, and that the Palestinians will defeat Israel in a Crusader-like conquest over the territory. Furthermore, hate is at the center of the curriculum, which contains no respect for the Israeli/Jewish other.⁴² Western governments, including the EU, UK, and US were outraged to learn their funds were being used to teach hate, and are demanding change.⁴³

Below are some examples from the IMPACT-se study.

- Eleventh grade history book openly endorses the Munich Massacre in which 11 Israeli Olympic athletes were killed by Fatah’s Black September group. It is referred to as the “Munich operation,” and presented as a good example for justifying Palestinian warfare against “Zionist interests abroad.”
- Third grade Arabic language textbook teaches violent poem calling for “sacrificing blood” to remove the Israeli enemy from the land by eliminating “the usurper,” and “exterminate[ing] the remnants of the foreigners.”
- Fifth grade Arabic textbook glorifies the terrorist Dalal Mughrabi who perpetrated the 1978 Coastal Road massacre in which 37 Israelis were killed, stating: “And she irrigated the land of Palestine with her pure blood; to create a flourishing revolutionary history that will never calm down;” and inviting the children to follow in her footsteps—“And the youth offer their

pure souls in defense of the dignity and honor of their homeland. There is nothing unusual about it.”

- Seventh grade science book teaches about the spine using an example of a boy who was absent due to a spinal injury caused by “remnants of the Zionist aggression on Gaza.” This is followed by questions about the importance of the spine and spinal cord, as well as a question on “What is the impact of the Zionist aggression on both environment and health?”
- Sixth grade math textbook teaches about rations using the map of Israel without referencing Israel or Israeli cities, and claiming the entire territory belongs to Palestine. The textbook contains the following activity: “The Negev Desert is an integral part of the land of Palestine. Its area is around fourteen thousand square km. Calculate the ration of this desert from the area of Palestine, which is twenty-seven thousand square km.”

C. Naming schools, summer camps, and youth centers after terrorists makes the terrorists role models for children to emulate

The PA has a practice of using school names to honor terrorists and glorify martyrdom, thus turning terrorists into role models for children. Children studying at these schools have expressed the aspiration to “reach the level” of the terrorist for whom the school is named.⁴⁴ According to Palestinian Media Watch (PMW), dozens of PA Ministry of Education Schools are named for terrorists.⁴⁵

In September 2017, a scandal erupted when PMW exposed that a PA elementary school named after the terrorist Dalal Mughrabi (leader of a terrorist attack that killed 37 Israelis, including 13 children) was funded with money from Belgium.⁴⁶ Belgium condemned the use of its funding to glorify terrorists, stating it “will not allow itself to be associated with the names of terrorists in any way,” and demanded that the name of the school be changed. However, one year later, the school name had still not been changed.⁴⁷ Finally, after being exposed again, the PA renamed the school “The Belgian School,” but transferred the name Dalal Mughrabi to two other schools. This time, Belgium withdrew its cooperation from the PA Ministry of Education and released this statement: “As long as school names are used to glorify terrorism, Belgium can no longer cooperate with the Palestinian Education Ministry and will not give out budgets for the constructions of schools.”⁴⁸ PA schools are also named for Munich Olympics mastermind Abu Iyad and Hamas terror leader Ahmed Yassin, among others.

This abhorrent practice is not limited to schools. Palestinian youth centers, summer camps, and sporting events also are frequently named for terrorists. In May 2017, Norway froze all new funding agreements with UN Women Palestine, after Norwegian funds were used to build a youth center named after Dalal Mughrabi. Norwegian Foreign Minister Børge Brende strongly condemned the incident stating: “The glorification of terrorist attacks is completely unacceptable, and I deplore this decision in the strongest possible terms. Norway will not allow itself to be associated with institutions that take the names of terrorists in this way. We will not accept the use of Norwegian aid funding for such purposes.”⁴⁹

In 2016, Hamas gave its summer camps names like “Knife Camp,” “Soldiers of Al-Quds,” and “Baha Aliyan,” one of the terrorists who carried out the October 2015 combined shooting and stabbing attack on bus 78 in Jerusalem, killing three and wounding nine.⁵⁰ There are numerous other examples of summer camps and camp activities being named for terrorists.⁵¹

D. Educational opportunities are exploited to train children in terrorism

Both the PA and Hamas turn educational activities into platforms to teach hate and violence.

In March 2017, First place prize in a PLO sponsored “What is a Fighting Women in Your Eyes?” competition was awarded to 17-year-old high school student for her drawing depicting a Palestinian family holding an AK-47 next to a map of “Palestine” erasing Israel. Disturbingly, the contest was supported by US and EU funding.⁵²



In school plays, child actors pretend to be Palestinian victims of Israeli aggression who fight back with weapons. One school play from 2016 demonized Israel, having Israeli soldiers frame a Palestinian youth as a stabber by planting a knife next to him and then shooting him in cold blood. Another school play from 2016 had a boy wearing a ribbon of the Palestinian flag preparing to “execute” another child dressed as an Israeli soldier.⁵³

In the summer of 2016, the “Pioneers of Liberation” camps of Hamas’s military wing, attended by 30,000 children, were dedicated to the theme of the “Al-Quds [Jerusalem] Intifada,” the Palestinian’s name for the wave of terror against Israelis that year. The camp symbol was an image of a hand holding a rifle as the flag post for the Palestinian flag with the Al-Aqsa mosque in the background.



Camp activities included weapons and other military training, civil defense exercises, and lesson in religion and battle heritage. They also included tours of real Hamas terror tunnels.⁵⁴ According to Hamas military wing officials “the goal of the camps is to stoke the embers of jihad among the generation of liberation, to include Islamic values and to prepare the army of victory for liberating Palestine.”⁵⁵

In February 2015, Hamas’s military wing used camps to train 17,000 youths (aged 14-21) in weapons and ambush techniques. According to Hamas, teaching children to fight is legitimate “resistance” to the Israeli occupation.⁵⁶ Below are photos of the camp graduation ceremony.

Figure 1



Figure 2



General community activities also promote violence and martyrdom to children. A YouTube video from a 2016 Islamic Association child festival in Gaza displayed images of young boys dressed as Hamas fighters exiting a Hamas tunnel with rifles, dancing with their rifles, and capturing Israeli soldiers. A girl narrates, encouraging children to die as martyrs: “Forward, my child, to the duel. You will die as a Martyr (Shahid) and blow up the enemies.”⁵⁷

Figure 1



Young boys dressed as Hamas fighters exiting a tunnel at Gaza child festival

Figure 2



Young boys dressed as Hamas fighters capture boy dressed as Israeli soldier at Gaza festival

Similarly, at a Fatah ceremony in Bethlehem celebrating the launch of the first Intifada, children marched in the procession holding RPG's and explosive belts, and wearing T-shirts honoring 19-year-old Jihad Al-Jaafari as a martyr for being killed after throwing a Molotov cocktail at Israeli soldiers.⁵⁸

Figure 1



Child holding RPG at Fatah ceremony

Figure 2



Child wearing explosive vest at Fatah ceremony

RECOMMENDATIONS: The PA and Hamas must end all violations of Palestinian children's rights to education, and to be free from violence and abuse. The PA and Hamas must eliminate all hatred and terrorist incitement from the educational system, including from: the statements of government officials and educators; the curriculum; names of schools, youth centers, summer camps, and educational activities; children's activities in schools and at other communal events.

III. TORTURE AND ARBITRARY DETENTION (Articles 6 and 37)

Both the PA and Hamas routinely engage in arbitrary detention and torture, including for children, in blatant violation of CRC Article 37 (“No child shall be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment”; “No child shall be deprived of his or her liberty unlawfully or arbitrarily”; “every child deprived of liberty shall be separated from adults”). Watchdog groups like HRW, Amnesty International and others have reported cases of Palestinian child victims of arbitrary detention and torture, including:

- ***Hamas fighters torture 13-year-old boy for hitting son of Hamas military leader.*** The boy told PA television how he was beaten and tortured by six Hamas fighters—“They started to hit me with daggers and a whip. He broke my finger... When one finished or tired out, another came and continued to hit me with a belt. They broke iron on my neck...” (Aug. 22, 2018).⁵⁹
- ***PA security forces detain and torture 17-year-old boy accused of theft.*** Among other things, they shackled his hands behind his back and slowly raised them, and hit his legs and feet repeatedly with a baton. They also denied him access to a lawyer for the first three days and denied family visits. The boy was held for one week and was released on bail after he confessed to stealing agricultural equipment. (Apr. 2017).⁶⁰
- ***Hamas in Gaza detains six children ages 15-17 for one night or longer*** at police stations across Gaza instead of at facilities approved for juveniles, and subjects three of them to torture. In one case, a 16-year-old boy tortured by Hamas police guards and fellow adult prisoners commits suicide by hanging himself above a toilet in the Beit Lahia police station on September 22, 2017. (Jan.-Oct. 2017).⁶¹
- ***PA police detain and beat 14-year-old Palestinian child*** who got into a fight with other kids outside of a wedding party. The boy was accused of attacking the police officer who beat him. He suffered a broken arm and contusions and was held in a prison facility in Jericho for more than one week. (Sep. 2015).⁶²
- ***PA security forces hold hostage 16-year-old boy to pressure the boy’s father to turn himself in.*** Boy is released three days later, after boy’s father surrenders himself to security forces. During the boy’s detention, he is not informed of the reason for his detention or permitted contact with his family. (Dec. 2014).⁶³

The detention and torture of these children violated the PA’s own juvenile protection law, referenced in its report to the Committee, which allows only the juvenile prosecutor to order a child’s detention, and the Palestinian juvenile police to carry out the arrest. If a child is arrested by another body while actively committing a crime, the child must be quickly handed over to the juvenile police. Strangely, in its report to the Committee, the PA claims that it is not aware of “any documented cases of children who reported being tortured by the Palestinian security services during 2014-2015.”

In addition to the above, during and after the 2014 Gaza war, Hamas subjected its rivals to a massive campaign of arbitrary arrests, torture, and summary executions, and exposed Palestinian children to these horrific acts. In one case, Hamas publicly executed six men outside a mosque in front of hundreds of spectators, including children.⁶⁴ In another case, Hamas tortured political prisoners in a building next to a girls' school in Khan Younis, spreading fear among the students who were subjected to horrifying shrieks from the prisoners.⁶⁵

RECOMMENDATIONS: The PA and Hamas must end arbitrary detention and torture for children. The PA and Hamas must enforce the Juvenile Justice law by providing training to the various police and security forces, and subjecting violators to disciplinary and/or criminal proceedings. The PA and Hamas must have effective systems in place to address and remedy victims' complaints, to compensate victims, and to provide them with necessary medical and psychological treatments.

IV. CHILDREN IN ARMED CONFLICT (Articles 6, 38)

Aside from the issue of child soldiers, which is covered by the separate reporting process of the Optional Protocol on Children in Armed Conflict, and therefore is not addressed herein, the PA and Hamas have an obligation under Article 38(4) to “protect the civilian population in armed conflicts,” including to “ensure protection and care of children who are affected by an armed conflict.” However, the PA and Hamas routinely endanger both Palestinian and Israeli children. They cynically exploit Palestinian children as human shields, and at the same time shamefully target Israeli children in indiscriminate rocket and other terrorist attacks. This also violates CRC Article 6 (right to life).

A. Using Palestinian children as human shields

Palestinian militants have learned how to exploit international humanitarian law to their advantage. Understanding that the Israeli army must conduct itself according to international law, which includes protections for civilians, they deliberately exploit children as a cover for their militant activities. Hamas use of Palestinian children as human shields during the 2014 Gaza war is well-documented.

In its report, the PA accuses Israel of attacking UNRWA schools in Gaza without acknowledging Hamas's exploitation of these schools as cover for its attacks, thus justifying Israel's actions. The UN itself found that Gaza militants had used UNRWA schools to launch and store rockets in a report published in April 2015 about the 2014 Israel/Gaza conflict.⁶⁶ According to that report:

- ***Hamas and/or Islamic Jihad stored rockets in UNRWA schools.*** In the case of the UNRWA Jabalia Elementary “C” and Ayyobiya Boys School, referring to the discovery of weapons there on 22 July 2014, “it was highly likely that a Palestinian armed group might have used the premises to hide weapons.”
- ***Hamas and/or Islamic Jihad stored rockets in schools that were in active use by children.*** Regarding the UNRWA Gaza Beach Elementary Co-educational “B” School on 16 July 2014, the UN Board of Inquiry noted that the school gate was unlocked during the

period leading up to the incident “in order to allow children access to the schoolyard.” School was out, but UNRWA was inviting the children back in to play.

- ***Hamas and/or Islamic Jihad fired rockets from UNRWA schools.*** In the Jabalia school listed above, “it was highly likely that an unidentified Palestinian armed group could have used the school premises to launch attacks on or around 14 July.” Similarly, concerning weaponry stored at the UNRWA Nuseirat Preparatory Co- educational “B” School, “the premises could have been used for an unknown period of time by members of a Palestinian armed group” — and “it was likely that such a group may have fired the mortar from within the premises of the school.”

Even after the end of the 2014 Gaza conflict, Hamas continues using UNRWA schools to shield its militant activities. In 2017, two separate terror tunnels were found under UNRWA schools, in June and October, respectively.⁶⁷ The purpose of these terror tunnels is to infiltrate Israel and kill or kidnap Israeli soldiers or civilians.

Palestinian militants continue to use human shields both in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. One of the Gaza rioters from the “march of return” who was arrested after crossing into Israel, said: “They [Hamas] tell women to go forward. ‘You are a woman, go forward, the army does not shoot women.’ They tell young children to go forward ‘the army does not shoot young children.’ They tell the child to go forward, and he does. They trick him.”⁶⁸ According to the IDF, Hamas is sending children as young as eight to the front lines of the protests and promising to pay them NIS 300 (\$83) if they get injured.⁶⁹

My Truth, an Israeli NGO, recently published testimonies by IDF soldiers who encountered this tactic first-hand—both in the West Bank and Gaza.⁷⁰

- ***March of return.*** “After they deployed and gathered they would start moving towards the fence while throwing stones and rocks and of course launching the notorious ‘terror kites.’ From such a close range we could clearly see, even without our sniper gear, that armed Hamas activists were hiding among the civilian crowd that included many women and children.” R.T., Gaza (2018).
- ***West Bank riot.*** “In front of us were waiting 1,000-2,000 people, with little children [aged 10-11] situated in the front as a buffer, acting as a human shield... Every person who wanted to perform a more violent attack, such as throwing a Molotov Cocktail, prepared the bottle at the back and then started moving forward... after surrounding himself with children, knowing we would not hurt him.” Hagai Altshuler, Bethlehem (2017).
- ***Gaza rocket.*** “We identified a rocket launched placed in the middle of a kindergarten playground... The entire incident was documented by drone and we recorded the launch coming straight out of the kindergarten.” Yonatan Branski, Gaza (2014).

B. Indiscriminately firing rockets at Israel

In addition to exploiting and abusing its own children, Hamas and other militants in Gaza endanger Israeli children when they indiscriminately fire rockets and other explosives at Israel. These rockets cannot be aimed precisely at a particular target. They are fired in the direction of civilian population centers with the intent to cause maximum death and property damage, and to terrorize the civilian population. In addition to violating the CRC, this also violates the Laws of Armed Conflict. Since 2012, more than 2,900 rockets and mortars fired from Gaza have hit Israeli civilian areas.⁷¹ During the 2014 Gaza war alone, more than 4,500 rockets were fired at Israel from Gaza, some of which killed or injured Israeli children.⁷²

More than 1,000 rockets were fired from Gaza into Israel in 2018.⁷³ In addition, since March 30, 2018, Gaza rioters have indiscriminately launched hundreds of explosive kites and balloons into Israel.⁷⁴ Several of them have landed inside kindergartens.⁷⁵ The kites have sparked fires that have destroyed thousands of acres of forests and farmland, causing millions of shekels in damages.

In addition to physical harm, rocket attacks also cause psychological trauma. Every time Gaza rockets are fired, sirens blare in Israel warning residents to run to shelter. Those living close to the border have only 15 seconds to reach shelter before the rocket hits. This is terrifying, particularly for children. According to one report, some 40% of Israeli children in the Gaza border city of Sderot suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, a rate three to four times higher than for the rest of the Israeli population.⁷⁶

C. Terrorist attacks against Israeli children

Hamas and other militant groups also target Israeli children in terror attacks all over Israel. In addition to the pervasive incitement for such attacks by government officials, the media, and the education system, these attacks are further encouraged through financial rewards. In 2018, the PA allocated \$355 million to fund payments to terrorists' families.⁷⁷ Below is a non-exhaustive list of terror attacks in which Israeli children were killed or injured (either physically or psychologically). The fact that many of the attacks were carried out by Palestinian teens proves the link between the massive PA and Hamas incitement of children and Palestinian youth acting on those messages to go out and murder Israelis.

- Only two months after the Palestinians joined the CRC, three Israeli teens—Eyal Yifrah (19), Gilad Sha'er (16), and Naftali Fraenkel (16)—are kidnapped and murdered by Hamas terror cell in the West Bank. Although the three were murdered within minutes after being abducted, their bodies were hidden and not found for close to three weeks. During this time, the families of the boys did not know if they were alive or dead. On August 21, 2014, senior Hamas official Salah Arouri admitted Hamas was behind the attack, stating "It has been said that it is an Israeli conspiracy, and I say it isn't... The al-Qassam's mujahedeen were the ones to carry out [the abduction]..." (June 12, 2014).⁷⁸
- Three-month-old baby Chaya Zissel Braun is killed in a car ramming attack on the Jerusalem light rail station at Ammunition Hill. As her parents embark from the light rail pushing her

stroller, a car driven by a Hamas terrorist intentionally rams into the crowd, and the baby is thrown ten meters into the air. (Oct. 23, 2014).⁷⁹

- Eleven-year-old Ayala Shapira is seriously wounded when her car is attacked by a firebomb. She suffers third degree burns over most of her body and face, which are described by hospital staff as “life-threatening.” The perpetrators were two Palestinian teenagers. (Dec. 25, 2014).⁸⁰
- Israeli couple, Eitam and Na’ama Henkin, is shot dead in front of their four young children (ages nine months to nine years) by Hamas terrorists in a drive by shooting. The children are orphaned and traumatized. Hamas spokesman praises the “heroic” attack by the “brave resistance.” (Oct. 2, 2015).⁸¹
- Thirteen-year-old Jewish boy is critically injured in a stabbing attack committed by Palestinian children (aged 13 and 15). The boy, who was clinically dead on arrival, is hospitalized for two weeks after the attack. PA President Mahmoud Abbas uses the terror attack to further incite against Israel by accusing Israel of executing one of the terrorists—13-year-old Ahmed Manasra—who was hit by a car while trying to flee and recovering in the hospital (October 12, 2015).⁸²
- Fifteen-year-old Eden Dadon is seriously injured in a Hamas suicide bombing on a Jerusalem bus. Hamas “welcomed” the bombing. (April 18, 2016).⁸³
- Thirteen-year-old Hallel Yaffa Ariel is stabbed to death in her bedroom as she sleeps. Before the attack, the 17-year-old Palestinian terrorist posted about his dream of martyrdom on Facebook. Both the official PA news agency (WAFA) and Fatah honor the terrorist by calling him a martyr, entitling him to the PA’s stipends for terrorists.⁸⁴ (June 30, 2016).
- Fourteen and fifteen-year-old Israeli children are wounded in a drive by shooting attack on their vehicle. The children’s father, Rabbi Miki Mark, is killed in the attack, and their mother is seriously wounded. Hamas praises the attack. (July 1, 2016).⁸⁵
- Three members of the Salomon family (a father and two adult children) are brutally stabbed to death in their home on Sabbath eve with other family members present, including five young children whose father is killed in the attack. Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh calls the attack “heroic,” saying the assailant (19-years-old) “lifted the heads of the nation high.” (July 21, 2017).⁸⁶
- Twelve-year-old Israeli boy is knocked unconscious and falls into a spring after being hit in the head by a stone from a Palestinian assailant. The boy is rescued by friends and taken to the hospital. (Oct. 21, 2017).⁸⁷
- Thirty-week fetus delivered by emergency c-section after mother is shot in the abdomen by Hamas terrorists while waiting at a bus stop dies. Four Israeli teenagers (aged 16) were wounded in the attack. Hamas praises the attack. (Dec. 9, 2018).⁸⁸

RECOMMENDATIONS: The PA and Hamas must end all violations of the rights of Palestinian and Israeli children in armed conflict, including use of children as human shields, indiscriminate rocket attacks, and terrorist attacks. The PA and Hamas must stop inciting terrorism and martyrdom by praising attacks and providing financial rewards to terrorists. They must also hold perpetrators to account.

CONCLUSION

This submission details multiple gross violations of the CRC by the PA and Hamas, most of which are completely ignored by the PA in its report to the Committee. Even worse, the PA attempts to shirk its own responsibilities for the welfare of Palestinian children, by blaming Israel for their deaths, although these children were incited to risk their lives as martyrs by the PA and Hamas. The misuse by the PA and Hamas of education and the media to radicalize Palestinian youth and propel them to martyrdom must be stopped. Children exposed to the levels of hatred and violence present in the PA and Hamas controlled territories, not only risk a violent death (by martyrdom), they also suffer severe psychological and emotional damage. Moreover, the hatred and violence harms Israeli children who are killed, injured, and terrorized by Palestinian attacks. The only way that the next generation of Palestinians can be expected to pursue peace with Israel is if they are given an education that fosters peace rather than hatred and violence. We hope that the CRC will address these important issues in its review.

ANNEX: PROPOSED LIST OF ISSUES

1. Please provide detailed information concerning the educational and psychological criteria for children's radio and television programs, specifically when these programs incite violence and glorify martyrdom. Please also provide detailed information on measures taken or envisaged to eliminate incitement and hatred from Palestinian media (radio, television, print, and social media).
2. Your report references provisions of the Palestinian Children's Law, which obligate the government to protect children's rights to survival and development, ensure children enjoy a life of freedom and safety, and to prepare children for a responsible free life in society based on the values of "justice, equality, tolerance, and democracy," please describe what measures are being taken to ensure that Palestinian education is in line with these goals?
3. What measures are being taken to ensure that Palestinian children are not encouraged or incited to commit terror attacks against Israelis?
4. Your report mentions campaigns for suicide prevention, and curbing violence in schools, please explain how these programs are being implemented, whether they address martyrdom suicides, or the violent discourse in Palestinian schools related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and if so, how.
5. Please provide updated data on rates of violence among Palestinian youth, including data on children who have perpetrated attacks against Israelis, and children who have participated in violent protests, and what is being done to prevent these children from engaging in violence.
6. Are any steps being taken to ensure the psychological and emotional protection of Palestinian children, specifically to reeducate and rehabilitate child victims of terrorist propaganda and brainwashing? If so, please explain.
7. What measures are being taken to prosecute and hold accountable Palestinian perpetrators who have injured or killed Israeli children in terrorist attacks, or who have attempted, or aided and abetted such acts?
8. What is being done to ensure that military operations, in particular rocket and mortar attacks from Gaza, are not indiscriminate, and do not target civilians, especially children?
9. What measures are being taken to protect Palestinian children in armed conflict, specifically: (a) to ensure that civilian installations including schools, hospitals and mosques are not used to store weapons or launch attacks against Israel, and (b) to prevent Palestinian children from being used as human shields by Hamas and other militant groups in Gaza or the West Bank?
10. Please provide detailed information about cases of arbitrary detention and torture of children by the PA and/or Hamas, and what measures are being taken to document these cases, and to encourage families to report violations.
11. What steps are being taken to enforce the Juvenile Protection Law in both the West Bank and Gaza? Specifically, to ensure that children are: (a) not subjected to physical or mental abuse by authorities; (b) separated from adults in places of detention; (c) permitted

contact with their families; (d) provided with adequate legal aid; and (e) receive due process protections.

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