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Agenda item 9

**Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance, follow-up and implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action**

### **Written statement\* submitted by United Nations Watch, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[27 May 2020]

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\* Issued as received, in the language(s) of submission only.

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## Antisemitism and Terrorist Incitement in Palestinian Education

Antisemitism is on the rise around the world. Several groups have published statistics on the alarming increase in antisemitism, including the European Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) and the Anti-Defamation League (ADL). United Nations Watch is especially concerned by data that the highest rates of antisemitism are found in Middle East and North Africa even though the Jewish population in these areas is almost non-existent, as the majority of Jews were forced out of these countries after the State of Israel was formed.

Widespread antisemitism among Middle Eastern Muslims impacts the safety of Jews worldwide. According to the December 2018 FRA survey, when respondents were asked to identify the perpetrators of antisemitic attacks, the highest number (30%) identified the perpetrator as being someone with Muslim extremist views.<sup>1</sup>

Like elsewhere in the Middle East, no Jews reside in the territories controlled by the Palestinian Authority (PA) and Hamas. Yet Palestinian children are routinely inundated with antisemitic incitement through the education system. This endangers the lives of Israelis.

State parties to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), like the State of Palestine, have an obligation to direct education to “the development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter” and for preparing children to live in “peace, tolerance...and friendship among all peoples.” (Article 29). Instead, Palestinian educational resources are directed for the opposite purpose. Furthermore, inciting children to hatred and violence violates CRC articles 6 (the right to life) and 19 (obligation to protect children from physical or mental violence).

Below are examples of Palestinian misuse of educational opportunities to incite violence in children.

### Incitement by Palestinian Authority (PA) officials and educators

- **Abbas Embracing child terrorist:** Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas has personally encouraged child terrorists. On March 5, 2017 his Facebook page posted a photo of Abbas embracing a 14-year-old injured while attempting to stab Israelis at a bus stop.<sup>2</sup>
- **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 (November 17, 2017).<sup>3</sup>
- **Praising mother of teenage terrorist:** “Mother of [terrorist who threw Molotov cocktail at Israeli military post] from Jerusalem received the news of her son’s death as a Martyr... 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...”, District Governor of Ramallah and El-Bireh Laila Ghannam (August 1, 2017).<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Experiences and perceptions of antisemitism, second survey on discrimination and hate crime against Jews in the EU, European Union Agency For Fundamental Rights (December 2018), p. 53, [https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra\\_uploads/fra-2018-experiences-and-perceptions-of-antisemitism-survey\\_en.pdf](https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2018-experiences-and-perceptions-of-antisemitism-survey_en.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Abbas kisses 14-year-old stabber, PMW (Mar. 5, 2017).

<sup>3</sup> PA education official glorifies Martyrdom at high school event, PMW (Nov. 17, 2017), [http://www.palwatch.org/main.aspx?fi=339&doc\\_id=24244](http://www.palwatch.org/main.aspx?fi=339&doc_id=24244).

<sup>4</sup> PA District Governor of Ramallah praises mothers of teenage “Martyrs,” PMW (Aug. 1, 2017).

- **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 (April 26, 2016).<sup>5</sup>

## Incitement in PA Textbooks

IMPACT-se (The Instituted for Monitoring Peace and Cultural Tolerance for School Education) has published several studies on Palestinian textbooks, all of which found that Palestinian textbooks promote hatred and are anti-peace.<sup>6</sup> Notably, these textbooks are also used in the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) schools. Attempts by UNRWA to change this curriculum have been met with fierce resistance by the PA.<sup>7</sup> In May 2020, the European parliament passed three resolutions condemning the Palestinian Authority for using textbooks that incite hate and violence.<sup>8</sup>

The findings of the September 2018 report by IMPACT-se 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. See examples below:

- 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.”

## Naming schools, summer camps, and youth centers after terrorists

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.<sup>9</sup> According to Palestinian Media Watch (PMW), dozens of PA Ministry of Education schools are named for terrorists.<sup>10</sup>

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.<sup>11</sup> Belgium condemned the use of its funding to glorify terrorists and demanded that the name of the school be changed.

<sup>5</sup> PA Directorate of Education representative at event at school commemorating terrorist who killed 3, PMW (Apr. 24, 2016).

<sup>6</sup> IMPACT-se Reports (last visited Feb. 21, 2019), <http://www.impact-se.org/reports/>.

<sup>7</sup> PA Ministry of Education strongly opposes any attempt by UNRWA to change PA curriculum and schoolbooks, PMW (Nov. 8, 2017), [https://www.palwatch.org/main.aspx?fi=122&doc\\_id=24274](https://www.palwatch.org/main.aspx?fi=122&doc_id=24274).

<sup>8</sup> Marcy Oster, European Parliament condemns PA textbooks that promote hate and violence, Jerusalem Post (May 19, 2020), <https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/european-parliament-condemns-pa-textbooks-that-promote-hate-and-violence-628522>.

<sup>9</sup> See, e.g., Palestinian girl’s goal: “to reach the level” of terrorist who killed 37, PMW (Apr. 14, 2014), [http://www.palwatch.org/main.aspx?fi=157&doc\\_id=11243](http://www.palwatch.org/main.aspx?fi=157&doc_id=11243).

<sup>10</sup> Names of schools in the PA, PMW (last visited Feb. 21, 2019), <https://www.palwatch.org/main.aspx?fi=608>.

<sup>11</sup> Belgium cuts PA funding based on PMW report, PMW (Sep. 20, 2018), [http://www.palwatch.org/main.aspx?fi=157&doc\\_id=26338](http://www.palwatch.org/main.aspx?fi=157&doc_id=26338).

However, one year later, the school name had still not been changed.<sup>12</sup> 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 Education Ministry.<sup>13</sup> PA schools are also named for Munich Olympics mastermind Abu Iyad and Hamas terror leader Ahmed Yassin, among others.

This 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...Norway will not allow itself to be associated with institutions that take the names of terrorists in this way...”<sup>14</sup>

### **Exploiting educational opportunities to train children in terrorism**

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

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.

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. 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.”<sup>15</sup>

We call on the High Commissioner and the Special Rapporteurs on racism and religious freedom, as well as all UN member states, to follow the example of the European Parliament and strongly condemn all incitement to violence in Palestinian education and to demand the Palestinians remove such incitement from their educational system.

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<sup>12</sup> Belgian funded PA school still named after terrorist mass murderer, PMW (July 31, 2018), [http://palwatch.org/main.aspx?fi=157&doc\\_id=26161](http://palwatch.org/main.aspx?fi=157&doc_id=26161).

<sup>13</sup> Belgium ends cooperation with PA education over school named for terrorist, i24 News (Sep. 15, 2018), <https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/middle-east-ar/184247-180915-belgium-ends-funding-to-palestinian-education-over-school-named-for-terrorist>.

<sup>14</sup> Norway freezes funds to UN Women Palestine over center named for terrorist, UN Watch (May 28, 2017), <https://www.unwatch.org/norway-freezes-funds-un-women-palestine-center-named-terrorist/>.

<sup>15</sup> Al-Quds Intifada Summer Camps In Gaza Offer Training in Stabbing, Firearms, Tunnel Combat, MEMRI (Aug. 8, 2016), <https://www.memri.org/reports/al-quds-intifada-summer-camps-gaza-offer-training-stabbing-firearms-tunnel-combat>.