

## Children Suicide Bombers In The Middle East: The role of education and society

Psychology of Terrorism

## Historical background

- The beginning of Intifada II (October, 2000) marked the beginning of using children in terrorists' activities

## The Laws about children



- The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC, 1989), Additional Protocols to the four Geneva Conventions of 1949, Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court 1998 set **15 as the minimum age for recruitment or use in armed conflict.**
- Art.4 (CRC): "armed groups that are distinct from the armed forces of a state should not use children in armed conflict."

## Palestinian Authority, 2002

- Palestinian, 17 years old, attacked at the hitchhiking stop in the French Hill (June 19, 2002). 7 citizens were killed and 37 injured.



- 17 years old teens carried out a suicide attack (January 25, 2002) 23 people were injured.

## Palestinian Authority, 2002 (continued)

- A 15 year old girl (April 2002) planned to carry out a suicide attack with the help of her uncle who recruited her to the Fatah's Al-Aqsa Brigades.
- A 13 year old youth is suspected of having been recruited (March, 2002) in order to perpetrate a suicide attack within Israel. The attack was prevented



A school backpack containing explosive devices ready for use

These examples are only a few elements of the systematic preparation of children to carry out terrorists' attack.

## Analysis of the causes of children terrorism in Palestinian Authority

- Mass Media
- Education process
- Culture
- Political leadership
- Religious leadership
- Economic factors
- Approval from family members



## Mass-Media Influence

- clear-planned propagation of film-clips for children, teaching them that violence and Shahada are role models which are expected of them.



## Mass Media Influence

### Children's Internet magazine "Al-Fateh"

"Suicide Bomber Zainab Abu Salem: Her head separated from her pure body, and her Ra'ala (Muslim headscarf) remains to decorate (her face). Her place is in paradise, where in the highest heavens, Zainab ... sister (who has been raised to the level) of men."

## Educational process



- Textbooks
- Class lessons
- Summer camps
- University

## Educational process

"The Poem of the Shahid" :

"By your life! I see my death, but I hasten my steps towards it .. By your life! This is the death of men, and who asks for a noble death – here it is..."

From schoolbooks for grades 5, 6, 7, and 12.

## Educational process (continued)

### Summer camps

- The camp's participants come to the home of the Shahids
- Displaying the pictures of "martyrs" during teaching history of Islam
- Train in the use of weapons for future terrorist attacks.
- Phenomenon of children participating in parades while dressed as "martyrs"



## Culture

- Songs
- Necklace-pendants with pictures of Palestinian suicide bombers



The text on the posters reads: "The Fatah Movement ... proudly eulogize their heroine Martyr, from the Alamari refugee camp, the martyr Wafa Idris."

## Political leadership

- Yasser Arafat presented the actions of children who intentionally died as Shahids as model of behaviour



## Political leadership Yasser Arafat's words:

**"this child, who is grasping the stone, facing the tank, is it not the greatest message to the world when that hero becomes a Shahid? We are proud of them..."**

## Parent's approval Shahid Mothers' words

Mother of 17-year-old Shahid, who killed 5 Israeli teenagers:

"If I allow my son to change his mind it would not be right. I do not want to follow mother's feelings. I mean, I sacrificed him for something greater. Even something like this is connected to motherhood. How? Because I love my son..."



## Religious leadership

- Through religion classes and televised sermons children are called to kill Israelis, especially through suicide bombings.
- Teaching that seeking death for Allah as a Shahid is every Moslem's duty



## Religious leadership

“we blow ourselves up willingly and as our duty ...’  
We will blow Jews up... so that Allah will make us masters over this riff-raff  
We will fight against them and rule over them

Blessings upon he who educates his sons in the path of Jihad and Shahada!”

Source:

Dr. Muhammad Ibrahim Madi, Friday sermon, PATV, (August 3, 2001)

## Economic factor

- Existing of unemployment and poverty of the majority of the Palestinians (annual income of the PA is \$1,350)

Arab Liberation Front, a Palestinian group pays:

- \$500 for a wound
- \$1,000 for disability
- \$10,000 to the family of each martyr
- \$25,000 to the family of every martyr suicide bomber..

## Analysis of the causes of children terrorism in Palestinian Authority (continued)

- None of listed theories can't be correct taken separately from others
- Terrorism is caused by negative influence in all spheres of social life.



## Prospective connection of terrorism in PA with other countries

To support PA's annual budget PA receives:

- From the EU \$600 million
- From the US \$400 million
- Summer camps named after Shahids were funded by UNICEF ("Shahid camp in Dir Al-Ballah", "Shahids of Chattin")



## The Palestinian children attitude to the Intifada: Sociological polls



- Sociological polls on 1,000 teenagers between the ages of 9–16 in the Gaza Strip:
  - April, 2001 Dr. Fatsil Abu Hin, produced a poll carried out in the Islamic University
  - 2002

## First poll: April, 2001

- 49% claimed to have taken an active part in the intifada
- 90% expressed their desire to participate in intifada activities
- 73% expressed the desire to be a "shahid"

## Second poll in 2002



- An increase of children's aspiration for becoming shahids by 6-7%!

## Preparation children to terrorist's activity

Israeli Defence Force's (IDF) data of the involvement of Palestinian children in suicide bombings:

- 40 prevented suicide attacks
- 31 suicide attacks (20% of all) were not prevented
- 22 shootings attacks and attacks using explosive devices.

## Preparation children to terrorist's activity

New York Times reports:

“25,000 children were trained to use of firearms, the making of Molotov cocktails, the methods of kidnapping”.

Source: New York Times ( Aug. 3, 2000)

One omissions in IDF's data:

- the IDF has killed 550 children compared to only 106 Israeli children killed by Palestinians.

Source: “ Palestinians Again Use Children for Terror Against Israel”, Israel News Agency Staff,  
<http://www.israelnewsagency.com/palestinianterrorismchildren120314.html>

## The reactions

- Human Rights Organization: "Using children to carry out or assist in armed attacks of any kind is an abomination. We call on the Palestinian leadership to publicly denounce these practices..."
- UN, Sweden condemned using children by terrorist's groups
- PA does little to destroy the phenomenon.



## Summary

- Using children as suicide bombers doesn't cause great military damage
- The goal isn't to kill as many as possible
- The goal is to manipulate local and global public opinion

## What can be done?

### Necessary to:

- Destroy “the culture” of children terrorism.
- Create a law which would impose a penalty for propagation of terrorism and hatred against other
- Create some control of the educational process by correcting the content of the courses and raising the level of teacher’s training

## What can be done?

- Orientate children to the fact that Koran forbids suicide
- Overcome economic problems (appropriate distribution of aid, loans.