

[Hammas](#)[Human Rights in Gaza](#)[Aid to Gaza](#)[Blockade](#)[FAQ](#)[Gaza Map](#)[Take Action: Help Gaza](#)

HOME: Justice for Gaza

Recent News

June 26, 2011

Gaza education focuses on violence, martyrdom

by Andrew Friedman

Special to Justice for Gaza

The 2010-11 school year was marked by several positive developments for Palestinian children, but general trends of anti-Semitism continued to define the Palestinian Authority and Hamas education systems.

The Hamas-run education system in Gaza uses Palestinian Authority curricula, with an added stress on Islamic values and religion. Observers noted that Palestinian schools in both the West Bank and Gaza have developed quality citizenship and ecology education curricula in recent years. In Gaza, this translated into clear messages of personal discipline, respect for parents, teachers and the elderly, apparently in the context of nation building.

On gender issues, the 2011 school year was marked by an increase in quality gender education between boys and girls, and Gaza students were exposed to ideas about gender equality in the context of Hamas' emphasis on Islamic values. Students there were taught the value of strong gender definition within the Islamic tradition.

In addition, while there's an emphasis on environmental education and the needs to develop alternative sources of energy and to use existing energy sources more efficiently, students also are taught that "the Jews steal our water" and destroy Palestinian resources. They do not, according to officials, learn about the plethora of cooperative ventures in the areas of water conservation, alternative energy or other positive environmental areas.

For Eldad Pardo, a researcher at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem's Harry S Truman Institute for the Advancement of Peace, the ecology issue neatly sums up the overall Hamas approach to education.

"Jews are always shown as aliens who invaded Palestinian land, and horrific cartoons appear in many media using the worst anti-Semitic imagery to reinforce negative stereotypes about Jews," said Pardo.

Pardo said little has changed in the Hamas approach to Jews and to Israel since 2009, when he authored a report about a Hamas Internet magazine called al-Fateh. That report, subtitled "Indoctrination to Jihad, Annihilation and Self Destruction," included such chapters titles as "Racist Demonization of the Jews," "A Call for Violent Jihad to Liberate Palestine" and "Indoctrinating Children to Martyrdom."

Just last month, Israel and the Jews in Present Palestinian Schoolbooks, a report issued by Institute for Monitoring Peace and Cultural Tolerance in School Education (IMPACT-SE), also quoted textbooks in use in Gaza that use classic anti-Semitic terms to describe Jews. One text, for example, teaches, "The Messenger of God [Muhammad] ordered to Zayd Ibn Thabit to learn the language of the Jews in order to be safe from their cheating."

Eighth-graders are taught that, "Your enemies killed your children, split open your women's bellies, held your revered elderly men by the beard, and led them to the death pits."

History lessons include information on World War II, with students learning, according to Eldad Pardo, that Zionists and Great Britain conspired against the Palestinians. There is no mention of concentration camps, persecution and the murder of European Jews or of Palestinian complicity with the Holocaust.

In addition, there are indications that Palestinians are identifying more and more with Islam and that they support a strong push toward the Islamization of the region, said Shelly Elkayam, an educational counselor and CEO of IMPACT-SE. Elkayam said that trend was particularly sharp in Gaza.

A senior journalist, who spoke to Justice for Gaza on condition of anonymity because she didn't want to harm a connection to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency in Gaza, said that the Islamic Bloc — a Hamas front group — controls all 11 seats on the UNWRA teachers council.

Subscribe



Search

Archive

Select Month

"That allows them to install their agenda on the schools, so students continue to learn about the supremacy of sharia law, to dream about martyrdom and death and to glorify violence against Jews," said the source.

On the ground, it is not clear what affect these messages are having on the Palestinian public. Via phone with individuals inside Gaza, ordinary Palestinians have repeated a recurring theme vis-a-vis Israel: They do not hate Israel, they do not celebrate terror attacks, they do not want to push the Jews out of the country. People have told this reporter that they have no more than the same dreams as Israelis: Economic opportunity, education for their children and peace.

Those messages might suggest the Palestinian Authority and Hamas education campaign of delegitimization and violence promotion may be less than effective. Not so, said Shelly Elkayam.

"All education works," said Elkayam. "Anti-Semitic education works, peace education works. It all depends on where you put your focus. You can teach peace education and tolerance, but they have a tendency to blame Israel for everything, and to ignore improvements that have been made.

"It takes time. Today's education will be the reality on the ground in 20 years from today," she said.

Andrew Friedman is a Jerusalem-based journalist.

Share:

0

Share

Email

Share

education, Gaza, Hamas

Read more from **Recent News**

← **U.S. to activists: Do not participate in flotilla**

Building boom in Gaza's ruins belies misery that remains →

Like

Be the first to like this post.

Comments are closed.

Recent News

How to help Gaza



RSS



RSS - Posts

Twitter

@Justice_Gaza

Theme: **Traction** by **The Theme Foundry** **Fonts on this blog.**

Blog at WordPress.com.

↵