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1 July, 2021

**Subject: Hamas & Palestinian Islamic Jihad
Child Soldier Training Camps in Gaza Strip**

The International Legal Forum is an Israel-based network of over 3,000 lawyers and activists in over 40 countries, committed to fighting antisemitism, terror and delegitimization of the State of Israel, as well as promoting peace and human rights in the Middle East.

We are writing to express our grave concern over reports that Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), which are both widely recognized as terrorist organizations, are recruiting and training young children to serve as soldiers in the Gaza Strip. ***We request that UNICEF immediately look into and investigate these allegations and prevent the exploitation and abuse of Palestinian children.***

According to a report in the Jerusalem Post from June 27th, 2021¹:

Hamas is holding its annual summer camps to recruit child soldiers. The terrorist group says the youth need to be ready to make “sacrifices” which appears to be the language used to describe recruiting them to be killed ... the camps include religious indoctrination and “security” training.

We enclose* a selection of disturbing images from these ‘camps’, which clearly show Gazan children and teenagers receiving military terror training by Hamas and PIJ. This is an abhorrent form of child abuse, that exposes these children to violence, exploitation and potential death.

UNICEF rightfully recognizes that such “recruitment and use of children by armed forces or armed groups is a grave violation of child rights and international humanitarian law.”

Specifically, Hamas and PIJ are committing a war crime under customary and treaty international law as appears in the Rome Statute (Article 2(b)(xxvi) and Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child regarding the involvement of children in armed conflict, *inter alia*.

¹ *The Jerusalem Post*, ‘Hamas continues recruiting child soldiers: Where is the condemnation?’
<https://www.jpost.com/arab-israeli-conflict/hamas-continues-recruiting-child-soldiers-so-where-is-the-condemnation-672163>





There is further evidence² suggesting that some of the civilian casualties in Gaza during the recent May 2021 conflict, were child soldiers recruited and forced to fight for the Palestinian terror groups. If so, Hamas and PIJ bear direct responsible for the deaths of these Palestinian children as well.

As an organization committed to protecting and defending child rights, it is incumbent upon UNICEF to act immediately and without reservation to prevent the continuation of such unconscionable atrocities and abuse of children in Gaza, as well as to hold Palestinian terror groups Hamas and PIJ, accountable for these heinous crimes.

We are happy to further discuss the issues of concern contained in this letter directly with you, and otherwise await your response.

Sincerely,

Russell Shalev, Advocate
The International Legal Forum



[Image 1](#): Registration for Hamas Summer Camp



[Image 2](#): PIJ Summer Camp in Gaza



[Image 3](#): PIJ Summer Camp in Gaza



[Image 4](#): Hamas Summer Camp in Gaza

² *The Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center:*

<https://www.terrorism-info.org.il/en/another-gazan-boy-who-according-to-the-new-york-times-list-died-in-operation-guardian-of-the-walls-was-found-to-be-an-operative-in-hamas-military-terrorist-wing-the-times-list-also-included-the/>

