

Israel: Use of Palestinian Children Bombers Barbaric



**Palestinians use their children as human bombs and human shields.
The above photo was taken yesterday by AP at an Israeli security checkpoint.**

By Israel News Agency Staff

Jerusalem----March 25.....Alert IDF soldiers manning the Hawara Israeli security checkpoint near Nablus prevented Husam Abdu, 14, who was wearing a belt of explosives, from blowing himself up on Wednesday.

"He was fully aware of what he was to do and told us he received NIS 100 and was instructed to blow himself up near Israeli soldiers," said battalion commander Lt.-Col. Guy. "The soldiers' quick action not only saved their lives but those of 200 Palestinian men, women, and children who were at the roadblock."

The terror belt contained eight kilograms of explosives, plus bolts and screws. It was later blown up by Israeli sappers.

The Palestinian teenager wore an oversized red jersey as he approached Israeli soldiers who had gotten a tip about a suicide bomber at this crowded checkpoint Wednesday. Suddenly the soldiers saw something bulge under his top.

"I wouldn't be surprised if the terrorists attempt to dispatch a pregnant woman wearing explosives next," Guy said. "It is hard to believe how low the Palestinian terrorists are willing to stoop. They have no morals."

It was the second time in 10 days that the Fatah Tanzim terror organization in Nablus attempted to turn children into human bombs. On March 15, Abdullah Kuran, 11, was asked to carry several bags through the Israeli roadblock and hand them to a woman waiting on the other side for NIS 5.

Unaware that one of the bags contained a 10-kilo bomb, he was stopped by soldiers who discovered it during a routine inspection. When Kuran's dispatchers saw he had been stopped, they attempted to detonate the bomb by cellphone, but failed.

The following day security forces discovered a 10-kilo bomb hidden in a truckload of merchandise at a roadblock on the other side of Nablus. It had been buried among rolls of cloth, sweets, and other goods.

"My soldiers spotted Abdu as he pushed through the line of Palestinians waiting to undergo inspection and began racing toward them," said Guy. "He was four or five meters from them.

"Noticing that his shirt was padded, they called out to him to halt. They took cover, aimed their weapons at him, and told him to raise his hands. Then they asked him to lift his shirt and saw the belt of explosives. Seeing the soldiers' weapons, he became frightened and told the soldiers he was scared."

"He told us he didn't want to die. He didn't want to blow up," said Lt. Tamir Milrad.

Members of the al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades terror organization in the Balata refugee camp next to Nablus claimed responsibility for the latest in a series of foiled terror attacks on Israel by Palestinian youths. Al-Aqsa is loosely linked to Yasser Arafat's Fatah terror organization.

The family of the Palestinian child, identified as Hussam Abdo, said he was gullible and easily manipulated.

"No matter how many times Israel learns of the use of children for suicide bombings, it is shocking on each occasion. Israelis do not understand how Palestinians are willing to sacrifice their own children in order to kill ours."

- Dore Gold, former UN Ambassador and an adviser to Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon.

"No matter how many times Israel learns of the use of children for suicide bombings, it is shocking on each occasion," said Dore Gold, former UN Ambassador and an adviser to Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. "Israelis do not understand how Palestinians are willing to sacrifice their own children in order to kill ours."

Physicians for Human Rights also condemned the terrorist's use of children, calling it "illegal and immoral."



Yassar Arafat has glorified the use of Palestinian child terror bombers

Samir Khiwairah, a Nablus journalist who personally knows the boy's family said that the boy's mental capacity to distinguish things is very low. "I don't completely rule out the possibility that some evil person gave him the explosive belt and told him he would become a hero."

Soldiers also moved the Palestinians at the roadblock away. Abdu stood in isolation with his hands raised until Israeli sappers dispatched a robot carrying scissors to him and instructed him to cut the shoulder straps holding up the belt and to slip it off.

He was then told to strip to insure that no additional explosives were strapped to him.

He cut off part of it and struggled with the rest. "I don't how to get this off," he said.

"It is sad and tragic," said Guy. "He was fully aware of his actions and wanted to blow up, as he was promised 72 virgins in heaven and NIS 100," Guy said.

Abdu, who lives in Nablus, told Israeli interrogators he was jeered at by his friends who made fun of him, and decided to take advantage of the offer.

"Blowing myself up is the only chance I've got to have sex with 72 virgins in the Garden of Eden," Abdu said his handlers had told him. "Abdo said he wanted to reach paradise, which he was taught in school was the reward for suicide bombers."

Israeli Security officials have not ruled out the possibility that the same cell is responsible for dispatching both would-be bombers and that Hizbullah instructed it to launch the attacks.

Israeli officials noted that terrorist organizations are encountering difficulties in launching attacks from the city and are using children, who they believe will be less likely to be inspected.

Guy said that following the capture of Kuran, officials studied ways of enhancing security at roadblocks around the city, taking into account that terrorists might again attempt to use children.

Thirty-one suicide bombers have been children younger than 18, and more than 40 minors who were actively involved in planning suicide bombings have been arrested. Since May 2001, 22 shootings and bombings were perpetrated by minors.



Palestinian children being instructed in how to use M-16's.

Israeli officials expressed shock at the second use of a young boy as a suicide bomber.

Abdu's family said the teenager was not affiliated with any group, but went to rallies and identified with whichever group had carried out the latest attack.

They said he acted strangely Tuesday, giving out candy to his family and neighbors and refusing to explain why. He got his hair cut in the style his mother, Tamam, likes and told her he would do anything she wants.

"You never are like this," she said "What happened?"

"I just want you to be happy with me," he responded.

He left his house Wednesday morning saying he was going to school, but never arrived there.

Hosni Abdu said he was furious with whomever persuaded his brother to become a suicide bomber. "The ones who sent him are stupid, because the army will give him two slaps and he will tell them who sent him," he said.

IDF Major Sharon Feingold, an army spokeswoman, said reporters were not allowed to question the youth "for intelligence reasons." An inquiry was under way, she said, "to find out who sent this boy and why they did it. Naturally this a monstrous doing of evil people, sending young children and turning them into human bombs. It's horrid and terribly worrisome."

Reporters were allowed only to ask his name, age and grade.

Abdo's family said the teenager was not affiliated with any militant group, going to rallies for all of them and identifying with whichever one carried out the latest attack on

Israelis.

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"The ones who sent him are stupid, because the army will give him two slaps and he will tell them who sent him," Hosni Abdo said.

The Israelis dashed behind concrete barricades, pointed their guns at the youth and ordered him to stop. On their instructions, he took off his jersey, revealing a bulky, gray bomb vest — and setting off a tense encounter captured in exclusive Associated Press Television News footage.

"He doesn't know anything (about politics), and he has the intelligence of a 12 year old," said his brother, Hosni.

Abdo, though 16, looked far younger, and the Israeli military initially said it believed he was 10. His family said he acted strangely Tuesday, giving candy to them and to neighbors and refusing to explain why.

Since the Israeli assassination of Hamas spiritual leader Sheik Ahmed Yassin on Monday, Israel has been on high alert. Hamas has killed hundreds of Israelis in suicide bombings and other attacks in recent years.

Wednesday's confrontation began about 4 p.m. when soldiers at the Hawara checkpoint outside Nablus received intelligence a bomber was there. They shut down the crossing and began searching hundreds of people there, the military said.

Suddenly Abdo, wearing the jersey, approached them.

"We saw that he had something under his shirt," Milrad said.

The soldiers, taking cover behind the barriers, sent a yellow army robot to bring scissors to the child so he could cut off the vest.

Abdo, visibly frightened and confused, cut off part of the vest and struggled with the rest. "I don't how to get this off," he said in frustration before successfully removing it.

Israeli soldiers ordered him to take off his undershirt and pull down his jeans to make sure he had no other weapons. Then they arrested him.

Demolitions experts blew up the vest, which the army said was an 18-pound bomb. The military said Abdo's mission was to kill soldiers at the crowded checkpoint.

"In addition to the fact that he would have harmed my soldiers, he would have also harmed the Palestinians waiting at the checkpoint, and there were 200 to 300 innocent Palestinians there," said the commander of the checkpoint, who identified himself only as Lt. Col. Guy.



Several teenagers have carried out suicide bombings over the past 3 1/2 years, and there has been recent concern that militant groups were turning to younger attackers to elude Israeli security checks.

On March 16, Israeli troops stopped an 11-year-old boy allegedly trying to smuggle explosives through the same checkpoint. Israel said militants had given the boy the explosives without his knowledge, either to ferry across the checkpoint or to be blown up by remote control when he got near soldiers.

Palestinians and the boy disputed this, claiming the bag he was carrying — which was blown up by army bomb experts — contained auto parts.

Last month, Israeli police arrested three Palestinian children, aged 12, 13 and 15, who said they were on their way to carry out a shooting attack in Israel.

After the incident Wednesday, the IDF brought out Abdo, who appeared shaken but defiant, to be photographed by the media.

Watching the television coverage of the daily Palestinian riots, known as the Al-Aqsa intifada, one is immediately struck by the near total absence of adults. Indeed, most of those hurling Molotov cocktails and stones are Palestinian children. Intoxicated by the challenge of becoming a hero, lacking the maturity to calculate the dangers they are assuming, these young people are easily motivated to place themselves in harm's way.

Since the recent wave of terrorism against Israel began, media reports have often highlighted instances in which Palestinian children have been killed or injured by Israeli troops or policemen. These reports have generated much criticism of Israeli policies, although few in the Western world have thought through the chaos they see on the news to consider whose interests are served by the violence. Even fewer have access to the information necessary to place in legal and historical context these weeks of death and disorder.

The appearance of Palestinian children in these riots is not accidental. The Palestinian Authority has intentionally mobilized Palestinian children to man the front line in its struggle against Israel, frequently using them as shields to protect Palestinian gunmen. This mobilization of Palestinian youth has, moreover, been facilitated by the long-term impact of Palestinian Authority (PA) curricula, government-controlled media,

and summer camp programs, which indoctrinated the youth for armed confrontation with Israel even prior to the current crisis.

The utilization of children in armed conflicts has been increasingly condemned by the international community. It is barred by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and recent UN Security Council Resolution 1261, which specifically described the use of children as soldiers as a "violation of international law."

Amnesty International issued the following news release today:

Amnesty International is gravely concerned about reports that earlier today a 14-year-old Palestinian child was found to be carrying explosives when attempting to pass through the Israeli army checkpoint at Huwara, at the entrance of the West Bank town of Nablus.

Reports indicate that the boy was wearing an explosive belt, which would suggest that he was knowingly carrying it. According to Israeli army reports the boy may have intended to detonate the explosive belt, and thus commit suicide, near soldiers manning the checkpoint.

Last week, Israeli soldiers discovered a bag of explosives in the possession of an 11-year old Palestinian child at the same checkpoint. The boy, who regularly carried bags for travellers from one side of the checkpoint to the other, was reported not to have been aware that one of the bags on his cart contained explosives.

"Amnesty International has repeatedly condemned suicide bombings and other attacks against civilians by Palestinian armed groups as crimes against humanity. 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."

"Palestinian armed groups, including Hamas, Islamic Jihad and al-Aqsa Martyrs's brigades, must put an immediate end to the use or involvement of any kind of children in armed activity."

Over 970 Israelis have been murdered in Palestinian terror attacks in the past three years.

As Israel was fighting off the barbaric efforts of Palestinians to use children as human bombs, 6,000 miles away in New York, Israel was fighting off Palestinian political verbiage which was defending terrorism at UN Security Council.

"There was a lot of rhetoric and it ended with nothing," said Israel's ambassador to the UN Dan Gillerman. "We regard it is a very big victory for Israel," he said.

Israel was condemned for Monday's anti-terror missile attack on Hamas terror leader Achmed Yassin in Gaza at the nearly five-hour meeting, which was attended by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

At the New York meeting, while several nations noted Hamas's record of terror attacks

against Israeli civilians, most member states – some of which are fighting their own wars on terror with little regard for international law – described the targeting of a terrorist leader an unwarranted use of force and a breach of international law.

During his speech, Gillerman held a nearly 200-page document documenting the 425 Hamas terrorist attacks perpetrated since September 2000, which have killed 377 Israelis and wounded more than 2,000.

"Following a sad and familiar pattern, the council convenes. Why? Not to condemn the terrorism, not to honor the memory of the hundreds murdered by it, but to come to the defense of one of its prime perpetrators, a godfather of terrorism," Gillerman said. "This is not a message of which the council can be proud. Frankly, it is an outrage. It is the ultimate hypocrisy."

Describing Yassin as "a roadblock on the road map to peace," Gillerman urged council members to ensure they didn't send a message tacitly endorsing terrorism in the Middle East.

"Time and again, while Israeli mothers were in excruciating pain, burying their babies and widows mourning their husbands, Sheikh Yassin's gloating face appeared on every TV screen, exalting the murderers as martyrs," Gillerman said.

"What we did was an important stride forward in the march against fundamentalist terrorism in our region."

The Palestinian-authored text before the council eulogized Yassin as a spiritual leader without mentioning Hamas or terrorist activities. "To characterize him as a spiritual leader is to attempt to characterize Osama bin Laden as a Mother Teresa," said Gillerman.

"By any reasonable standard of international law, Israel has a legitimate right, in fact a duty, to defend itself against those illegal combatants and their commanders who are committed to murder as many of its civilians as possible."

"Events must be considered in their context, and as we consider the killing of Sheikh Yassin, we must keep in mind the facts. Sheikh Yassin was the leader of a terrorist organization, which has proudly taken credit for attacks on innocent civilians," said US ambassador John Negroponte.

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