



## Fatah summer campers in the Nablus district undergo military training

July 28, 2022

### Overview

► The Nablus branch of Fatah recently held summer camps for children and adolescents in the village of Bayta, south of the city. Videos of camp activities posted to the Palestinian social media **showed the youth, some of them armed with rifles, undergoing military training, including urban warfare tactics, hand-to-hand combat and negotiating obstacle courses. They were trained by operatives of the Palestinian security forces and local armed Fatah operatives, who remained masked for the pictures.**

► Every year, tens of thousands of children and adolescents attend summer camps in the Palestinian Authority (PA). In recent years most of the camps have been held in the Gaza Strip, conducted and supervised by the military-terrorist wings of Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), with a small number run by civilian NGOs. The camps are widely covered by the Palestinian media, and their activities include sporting events, art, computers and trips. They also include ideological indoctrination (according to organization affiliation), glorification of the terrorist operatives and shaheeds, and military training.

► Apparently, the Fatah camp in Bayta was held because of the increasing participation of Fatah and its military-terrorist wing in the recent violent clashes between the Israeli security forces and Palestinians (Operation Wave Breaker) in Jenin and Nablus. The violence is encouraged by the PA and Fatah, including their leadership. In addition, Bayta was apparently not randomly chosen as the venue for the summer camps. During the past year the region has been a focal point for riots between Israeli security forces and Palestinians from the village and its immediate surroundings, who protest the establishment of the Eviatar outpost (which was evacuated a year ago and is currently a closed military site.)

### The Summer Camp in Bayta

► On June 26, 2022, Fatah's summer camp for the Nablus district opened for campers between the ages of 13 and 17. It is located in the government elementary school for boys in

Bayta and called "al-'Asafa youth," the name of Fatah's first military wing (Bayta al-Sumoud Facebook page, June 26, 2022; al-'Asafa youth – Bayta Facebook page, June 29, 2022).

►According to the camp's Facebook page, the objective of the camps is to restore the role of Palestinian youth to the foreground; they are coordinated by a group of officers and specialized instructors for various subjects. The first camp was held in Bayta. Its objective was to reinforce the concept of revolution within the younger generation by preserving the legacy of the shaheeds and their "struggle" (al-'Asafa youth – Bayta Facebook page, July 3, 2022).

►The Palestinian social media posted videos of camp activities. The counselors wear Fatah armbands and coordinate the campers' military training (Facebook page of Ibrahim Khwaiter, of Fatah's Information and Cultural Department, and @wafa\_at8 Twitter account, July 25, 2022). Fatah's official Facebook page posted a similar video, showing campers undergoing military training (July 25, 2022).



**Armed campers train in urban warfare (@wafa\_at8 Twitter account, July 25, 2022).**



Learning how to shoot (@wafa\_at8 Twitter account, July 25, 2022).



Military training (al-'Asafa youth – Bayta Facebook page, July 5, 2022).



Armed, masked Fatah operatives accompany a march of campers (al-'Asafa youth – Bayta Facebook page, July 6, 2022).



**Right: Camper wearing a military vest. His headband reads, "Nablus branch, Fatah, al-'Asafa youth summer camp" (al-'Asafa youth – Bayta Facebook page, July 26, 2022). Left: Two of the children in the picture are the sons of shaheeds from Bayta. The guns are real (Official Fatah Facebook page, July 25, 2022).**

- ▶ An armed camper (al-'Asafa youth – Bayta Facebook page, July 14, 2022).
- ▶ One of the camp's activities was a three-day visit to al-Istiqlal University, the PA security academy in Jericho, between July 23 and July 25, 2022. They were received by **Tawfiq al-Tirawi, a member of Fatah's Executive Committee and university president**. They were given guns, vests and military training.



**Campers with Tawfiq al-Tirawi (al-'Asafa youth – Bayta Facebook page, July 23 and 24, 2022).**

# Appendix

## The Palestinian summer camps

► For the past several years summer camps have been held in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip, attended by tens of thousands of Palestinian children and adolescents. In the past the camps were organized by the PA, UNRWA or civilian social institutions.

► In the Gaza Strip, where the largest number of camps are held, UNRWA used to organize most of the campers' activities, but in recent years financial problems ended the agency's involvement. The vacuum was filled by Hamas and the PIJ, which expanded the camps' activities, introducing the al-Futuwwa<sup>1</sup> program, already taught in the schools, and transferred the organization of the camps to their military-terrorist wings. That had a direct influence on their programs, and much greater emphasis was put on ideological indoctrination and military training.

► Most of the summer camps have activities designed to indoctrinate "Palestinian national identity." The camps have symbolic names, from Palestinian history, often the names of shaheeds. In addition to ordinary summer camp activities, campers undergo ideological indoctrination. The so-called "right of return" is emphasized, the terrorist operatives and shaheeds are glorified and the "struggle against Israel" is a prominent theme. Most of the camps have military training instructed by operatives of the organization's military wings, which regard the camps as breeding grounds for future operatives.

► For Hamas and other terrorist organizations<sup>2</sup> in the Gaza Strip the indoctrination of children, adolescents and young adults, from kindergarten to university, is of considerable importance. It assures a new generation of activists and operatives who will integrate seamlessly into the organizations' political, military and governmental activities.

To the best of the ITIC's knowledge, Fatah does not often conduct camps in Judea and Samaria. There was one in the al-Fawwar refugee camp, south of Hebron, in August 2016. It

---

<sup>1</sup> **Al-Futuwwa** ("youth, heroism") is a military training program for high school students in the Gaza Strip. It is overseen by officers in the national security forces, which belong to the ministry of the interior in the Gaza Strip and operated by the Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades, Hamas' military-terrorist wing. The students learn military theory and undergo weapons training and practical combat tactics, integrating them into the routing activities of the military-terrorist wing. For further information see the November 29, 2018 bulletin, "Hamas continues military training for students in government high schools in the Gaza Strip to prepare them to join its ranks."

<sup>2</sup> Even Hezbollah conducts summer camps for children and adolescents every year, where they are indoctrinated with the organization's ideology and undergo military training.

was named for Muhammad al-Shubaki, who was shot and killed after carrying out a fatal stabbing attack at the entrance to the al-Fawwar refugee camp on November 25, 2015. At the camp's final meeting a speech was given by Isma'il al-Shubaki, Muhammad's father, and the campers put on a "show" about how the guards in Israeli jails allegedly treat Palestinian prisoners (Dunia al-Watan, August 12, 2016).



**The show put on at the end of Fatah's summer camp in the al-Fawwar refugee camp (Dunia al-Watan, August 12, 2016).**