Experts: Over 200 US-approved Textbooks Teach Palestinians to Kill Jews

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Over 200 US-government- approved textbooks used in hundreds of Palestinian UNRWA-sponsored schools are reportedly teaching Arab children between the first and ninth grades to kill Israelis, and sacrifice themselves as martyrs to drive Jews out of the country.

The violent narrative can be found in 240 books – ranging from civics to mathematics – in over 400 UNRWA schools in the West Bank, Gaza and east Jerusalem, said experts at a Tuesday conference for the Center for Near East Policy Research in downtown Jerusalem.

David Bedein, who heads the research institute and Israel Resource News Agency, said the disputed books were purchased from a warehouse owned by the Palestinian Authority and then carefully vetted by a team of researchers.

Despite repeated reassurances from the Palestinian Authority’s minister of education that all the textbooks would teach a “united curriculum,” Bedein said the findings showed a central theme: “the preparation of the children for war.”

Indeed, among the myriad of examples presented from the books, one is a math word problem asking students to use variables, including the number of Jews killed during the first and second intifadas.

Another was the following excerpt from a poem:

*Hearing [weapons] clash is pleasant to my ear*

 *And the flow of blood gladdens my soul
As well as a body thrown upon the ground
Skirmished over by the desert predator
By your life! This is the death of men
And whoever asks for a noble death – this is it!”*

“We have copies of the books and went through them, and what’s happening is very clear.

The American government told Israel that it had checked out the school books and that everything is fine, but it’s not,” said Bedein.

“In all the books you have right of return and armed struggle being taught. Even in math books.”

Moreover, Bedein claimed that when the findings were to be presented to the US Congress in March by Dr. Arnon Groiss, former director of research for the Institute for Monitoring Peace and Cultural Tolerance in School Education, the White House responded that the hearing was “unnecessary.”

“When we brought Dr. Groiss to testify, the Obama administration issued a memo saying there is no problem with the books, and that the hearing was not necessary,” he said. “We have in writing from a White House spokesperson, who sent a memo to all members of Congress, that everything is fine.”

Groiss, who has closely analyzed PA textbooks for years, and holds a PhD in Near Eastern Studies from Princeton, said that despite the US’s approval, the books used to teach 25% of all Palestinian students in UNRWA schools in Gaza, the West Bank and east Jerusalem, are indeed riddled with incitement.

“The books present Israel as the ‘Jewish other,’ and are based on three fundamental principles introduced by Yasser Arafat when he took over the educational system in the West Bank and Gaza,” said Groiss.

“They include: the delegitimization of Israel and Jews in this country; no recognition of any Jewish holy places; and the demonization of Israel and Jews.”

Groiss said none of the books he reviewed advocate peace or coexistence.

“They encourage violent struggle for the liberation of Palestine, which they consider all of Israel – including Haifa and Jaffa – and the right of return, which is also violent,” he explained.

“Within that curriculum – which is not restricted to the West Bank and Gaza – they use traditional Islamic concepts such as jihad, martyrdom and ribat, which means to stand with God against Islam’s enemies.”

The textbooks in question range from history, geography, Islamic education, language exercises, national education, and Christian education, said Groiss.

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) was established by UN General Assembly resolution 302 (IV) in 1949 to carry out direct relief and works programs for Palestinian refugees.

UNRWA is funded almost entirely by voluntary contributions from UN member states, and offers services encompassing education, health care, relief and social services, camp infrastructure and improvement, and emergency assistance, including in times of armed conflict.

It does not produce its own textbooks, and relies instead on the PA to provide them.

In a short film presented at Tuesday’s conference, Palestinian children as young as five can be seen advocating for the death of Jews, and destruction of Israel.

Christopher Gunness, an UNRWA spokesman and director of Advocacy and Strategic Communications, patently denied the allegations against the agency.

“Independent reviews, including those commissioned by the US State Department, have highlighted the absence of incitement to terrorism and no presence of the dehumanization of the ‘other,’ as often portrayed in articles and media,” he said in a statement on Tuesday.

“The findings of the 2013 Israeli/Palestinian joint review – conducted by Israeli and Palestinian academics, and funded by the US Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor – corroborate this. Other independent studies conducted by the Israel/Palestine Center for Research and Information between 2003 and 2006 also support these findings.”

Gunness added: “The government of Israel also authorizes the use of the PA curriculum in the schools in occupied east Jerusalem, which it administers.”

A government official, who requested anonymity, deemed any suggestion that books teaching incitement are “authorized” as “absurd.”