



## Presentation of classified EU report presents Israeli textbooks as Palestinian

Two-year, €220,000 study plagued by mistakes and delays

*A presentation of the EU's Interim Report on the Palestinian Curriculum reveals that researchers positively reviewed Israeli Arabic textbooks, presenting them as being from the Palestinian Authority curriculum • Translation incorrect in research introduction: women who accompany Muslim believers in paradise mistranslated as "Horoscope"; Shimon Peres is translated as the "piers" constructed over water • Report now classified by EU • [Here's what should be in the report.](#)*

- **EU researchers review the wrong books:** A [presentation](#) of the [EU's Interim Report](#) on the Palestinian curriculum praises the Israel's Jerusalem Municipality [Arabic textbooks](#), presented by the researchers as Palestinian Authority textbooks.
- **The EU Interim Report on the Palestinian Curriculum is plagued by poor comprehension of Arabic, missing terminology and factual inaccuracies:** The [introduction](#) to the EU's Palestinian textbook research project, finally released after two years following a [Freedom of Information Request](#) application, contained basic Arabic translation errors, left out key words, showed a lack of familiarity with Palestinian culture, and quoted references to research that does not actually exist. The institute that has undertaken the project has no previous experience in reviewing the full Palestinian curriculum. Three-quarters of the researched textbooks in the Interim Report are not taught in Palestinian schools.
- **Long awaited report on PA textbooks constantly delayed – and then classified:** Over two years on from the announcement of a Palestinian curriculum review, [costing](#) the UK and EU over €220,000, the Interim Report on the PA curriculum is still being withheld from the scrutiny of legislators, media and academics. The EU has committed itself to [classifying](#) the Interim Report, despite calls by the UK government to publish.
- **Snapshot of what should be in classified interim report:** Donor governments, legislators and the media remain none the wiser as to what the interim report contains. [Our independent review](#) covers the grades in the EU Interim Report and was conducted according to the researchers' own methodology. It shows an overwhelming amount of incitement to violence, terror, martyrdom, jihad and antisemitism.

Marcus Sheff, CEO of IMPACT-se:

*This is really regrettable. The European Union and the UK had the opportunity to add to our collective understanding of these extreme textbooks and to fulfil their duty of care to Palestinian students.*

*Instead, the review has been a comedy of errors from start to finish. The researchers have reviewed the wrong textbooks, taking textbooks for Israel's Arab schools in Jerusalem, earnestly praising them and presenting them as coming from the Palestinian Authority's curriculum.*

*The researchers' introduction contains embarrassing mistranslations of basic Arabic, a lack of familiarity with Palestinian culture and, bizarrely, the citing of non-existent research. This is not a particularly complex project. It is hard to fathom how it went so wrong.*

*Adding insult to injury, this report has been plagued by delay. The British government clearly wants it made public as soon as possible, but the EU has declared it is staying under wraps. Frankly, given the debacle this research project has become, one can understand why.*

## **Further detail**

### **1. EU researchers review the wrong books (slides 51-54, 74, 109)**

Referring enthusiastically to "School textbooks in transition", the presentation says on slides 51-54:

*"In the Life Science textbook of the 8th grade (part 1), changes have been made to the version of 2018 – in comparison to the version of 2017 – replacing 5 (out of 8 references in this textbook) real-life connections that address the Israeli-Palestinian conflict with other examples that promote peace or show tolerance towards Israeli individuals. These differences indicate the serious involvement of the textbook's editors with conflict-related connections in the school textbooks and a careful consideration and differentiation towards the Israeli individuals.*

**It is Israeli editors, not Palestinian editors as the research suggests, who have a "serious involvement...with conflict-related connections...and a careful consideration and differentiation towards the Israeli individuals".**


**The researchers would not find this material in the actual Palestinian textbooks.**

*Co-training of Israeli and Palestinian firefighters: An Israel is portrayed in an everyday context with no reference to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and in a cooperative activity with Palestinians and Europeans. The fire fighter is in his civil role as a non-military rescuer is a reference to commonality and a peaceful everyday occurrence. This example promotes tolerance towards Israeli Individuals.*

There is no positive portrayal of the Israeli-Jewish other “in an everyday context” in the real Palestinian curriculum. This example has been taken from an Israeli Arabic textbook (available [here](#) on p. 15), not a Palestinian Authority textbook, as is suggested.


**Israeli textbook**

Slide 52



**a co-training of Israeli and Palestinian firefighters.**

An Israel is portrayed in an **everyday context** with no reference to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and in a **cooperative activity** with Palestinians and Europeans. The fire fighter is in his **civil role** as a non-military **rescuer** is a reference to commonality and a peaceful everyday occurrence. This example promotes tolerance towards Israeli individuals.



**Palestinian textbook**

*Another real-life connection is explicitly promoting Peace by bringing up the bows and the arrows – to explain the potential energy – as an Olympic Game, and not as a “self-defence weapon” used during the Intifada. The Olympic Games reference criticizes quarrels and promotes understanding.*

**The real Palestinian textbooks feature slingshots, not Olympic values. This example (available [here](#) on p. 52) is taken from an Israeli Arabic textbook, not from the Palestinian Authority.**


**Israeli textbook**

Slide 53

**Olympic Games**

Another real-life connection is explicitly **promoting Peace** by bringing up the bows and the arrows – to explain the potential energy – as an Olympic Game, and not as a “self-defence weapon” used during the Intifada.

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**Palestinian textbook**

The reviewers present a map (slide 109) with the name “Israel” on it stating that:

*Israel mentioned as a Country - “Two States for two different people”  
the present state of affairs and conditions attributed to the conflict, however an absence of  
conflict-supportive narratives stimulates the peace-narratives that trace the resolutions,  
conferences, events and public talks, that were/are supposed to guarantee peace and sustain it  
via the post-Oslo engagement in peace-building.*

**No such map exists in the Palestinian Authority curriculum.**

The Arabic-language media has [widely covered](#) Israel’s Arabic textbooks for Jerusalem schools. As former Palestinian Minister of Education, Dr Sabri Saidam, announced that “*the occupation Israelizes the Palestinian curriculum by printing an altered version of the entirety of it.*”

## **2. Interim report is based on poor comprehension of Arabic, factual inaccuracies, and reviewers’ lack of experience**

Following a successful Freedom of Information Act application, the introduction to the research project (the inception report), carried out by the Georg Eckert Institute (GEI), was made public, two years after the project commenced.

[The report](#) which we review here - [Problems in the EU’s Inception Report](#) - struggles with contemporary Arabic in its semantic world bank (p. 17, 26) that served as a basis for the study.

**The phrase for women who accompany Muslim believers in paradise (حور العين) is mistranslated as “Horoscope”. Shimon Peres became “piers” that are constructed over bodies of water. The very well-known Palestinian phrase for rock-throwers - The Children of the Stones – becomes “children stones.” It is not at all clear what these are. The widely used “Naksa Day” was misunderstood as “remembrance”.**

Many words that should be included in the quantitative report word bank are omitted – **Nakba, sacrifice, soldier, Hamas, Al Haram Al-Sharif, war and martyrdom**, among others.

Only 24% (21 out of 85 books researched) covered in the grade 8-10 interim report are currently taught in the 2019-20 school year - 76% of the researched textbooks are no longer taught or used in PA schools.

## **3. Long awaited report on PA textbooks constantly delayed – and then classified**

In April 2018 the UK government [initiated](#) a review of the Palestinian textbooks following IMPACT-se’s report of the Palestinian textbooks stating it was “*very concerned at some of the findings of the report and has met with IMPACT-SE to investigate the issue further.*”

The following April, Vice-President of the European Commission, Federica Mogherini, [announced](#) EU participation. She stated the report would be conducted ‘*with a view to identifying possible incitement to hatred and violence and any possible lack of compliance with UNESCO standards of peace and tolerance in education.*’ There are no mentions of UNESCO standards within the inception report.

The UK Department for International Development (DFID) [announced](#) the review would be completed by September 2019. However, [contractual disputes with the reviewing institute](#) alongside a Palestinian cabinet reshuffle meant that the work only began in September.

The British government has gone [on record](#) on four separate occasions this year, and as late as 17 June, to say that it “*repeatedly lobbied the EU to push for publication of the interim report.*” And that they continue to “*favour transparency*”.

Despite the calls by the UK government, the EU [stated](#) on 1 July 2020 that the interim report will not be published. In an answer to Parliamentary question to the European Commission asking for the date of publication of the study’s ‘interim results’, and asking whether they will be made available, the European Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement, Olivér Várhelyi, replied, on behalf of the Commission, that the publication “*is not foreseen.*”

However, the EU has in fact published interim reports that it commissioned in the past, making them available for peer review and monitoring purposes.

It is not clear if the interim report has been completed. The British government has [gone on record](#) citing several dates for completion. On 11 May 2020, the Minister of State for the Middle East and North Africa, James Cleverly MP, [named June 2020](#) as the final completion date for the interim report, with the full report set to be completed “*later in the year.*” But on 27 July 2020 he [noted](#) further delays due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Both governments initiated the reviews following IMPACT-se’s [report](#) into the new Palestinian Authority textbooks, and following the subsequent parliamentary demands for a review into how taxpayer money has been spent on extremist teaching materials in the Palestinian Authority and UNRWA.

#### **4. Snapshot of what should be in classified interim report**

[Here is a review of the Palestinian curriculum, grades 8-10 – the books covered in the classified report.](#) **The review follows the exact methodology proposed by the reviewers. This is what we would expect to see in the EU report.**

- A reading comprehension exercise contains a story which describes the incineration of Jewish passengers on a civilian bus with Molotov Cocktails, near the West Bank city of Ramallah, using the expression “barbecue party” [haflat shiwa’]

- Arabic language is taught through a violent and gruesome story promoting suicide bombings. In the Battle of Karamah, Palestinians “*wore explosive belts, thus turning their bodies into fire burning the Zionist tank*”. An accompanying illustration depicts Israeli soldiers in a tank, shot dead by a Palestinian gunman.
- Terrorism against civilians, such as the PLO civilian aircraft hijackings, are openly supported and described as "operations against Zionist targets."
- Children are encouraged to initiate jihad to protect the homeland and repel the enemies as they are "*the safety valve of society*."
- Jews control global finance, media, and politics, and use all for their own benefit.
- Out of the 25 science and math textbooks in grades 8-10, 84% (21 textbooks) include violent and/or violence-promoting conflict-related examples.
- Violence is inserted into science textbooks when teaching about elastic and potential energy by giving the example of a slingshot that is accompanied by an image of rioting. Specific questions follow on the usefulness of the slingshot and the transfer of energy of the stone shot from the slingshot.
- Newton's laws of physics are taught through a violent example of a young girl using a slingshot. Students are asked what the rock's acceleration would be "*if the young girl doubles the slingshot's speed, but the radius stays constant*".
- Statistics is taught using a frequency table featuring numbers of martyrs killed by Israel.
- All textbooks (100%) in humanities subjects contain at least some problematic content. Not a single textbook in the corpus is free of violent connotations, incitement to violence, hatred of the other, and radical or disturbing content.
- Out of 169 chapters in Arabic, Social Studies, and Geography and History of Palestine in the Modern Age, 121 chapters include problematic content (71% of the chapters) either partially or in full.
- The word "Peace" in its political context and the term "Two State Solution" only appear in a negative context (i.e. not promoting peaceful conflict resolution) throughout grades 8-10 and only mentioned in 6 out of 4503 pages (0.133%).
- There are no positive descriptions of Judaism or Israel in all 4503 pages that promote tolerance and understanding.
- Yasser Arafat’s call for a new era of coexistence, peace, and non-violence with Israel appears to be intentionally deleted from letters of mutual recognition.
- All peace agreements, summits and proposals with Israel post the Oslo Accords, that were previously seen in Palestinian schoolbooks, have been removed and do not appear in the current 2019-20 curriculum.
- The name Israel appears on none of the 104 maps in the entire grade 8-10 textbooks.

- A vivid (and completely fictional) story of a “Zionist officer” who unjustly shoots a fisherman in Gaza in front of his son (who is then arrested) as a punishment for being late to return to shore is used as part of a reading comprehension.
- An instance of Israeli soldiers “giggling” while killing Palestinians is found in a chapter that depicts Israelis as “*criminal murderers*” who look like “*the face of death.*”