

The Occupying Authority's Allegations of Violence Incitement in Palestinian Curricula and Non-Adherence to UNESCO Standards

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Abstract:

This paper addresses a critical issue concerning the violations committed by the Occupying Authority against Palestinian education. The authority has employed various research institutions in an attempt to delegitimize Palestinian curricula, particularly those developed since 2016. Its goal is to erode Palestinian consciousness and suppress the national narrative through numerous tactics, including distorting and falsifying educational content. These efforts form part of a broader strategy to «Israelize» education in Jerusalem. The authority has accused Palestinian textbooks of inciting violence and terrorism, claiming that they fail to meet UNESCO standards—allegations that bear no relation to reality. This study aims to dismantle the huge false accusations made by the occupying authority regarding Palestinian curricula. It highlights the mechanisms used to develop these curricula, which are dynamic, adaptable, and subject to frequent updates based on feedback from the Palestinian educational community and experts. These curricula are designed to meet international standards and support the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), embedding values of justice, tolerance, and genuine peace—principles that the State of Palestine has pledged to uphold in line with UNESCO guidelines. Additionally, the study aims to categorize these false claims, reveal how they mislead international public opinion and key stakeholders, and uncover the true nature of the violations targeting the cultural and educational integrity of the Palestinian curriculum.

The paper concluded that supporting government initiatives in alignment with a national plan is essential to counter the ongoing incitement and demonization campaign against education in Palestine, particularly in Jerusalem. It called for launching advocacy efforts to protect education, drafting scientific documents to refute the occupation’s claims in multiple languages, and continuously updating curricula and teaching methods. These updates should align with technological and cognitive advances while integrating efforts with academic institutions and civil society to resist the systematic assault on Palestinian curricula. The development of these curricula, the paper emphasized, must always remain a sovereign national decision, rooted in the Palestinian narrative and principles. Succumbing to external pressures, it warned, would only embolden pressure

groups to exert more influence. Achieving a genuine educational renaissance through a comprehensive and pragmatic approach to reform is a national obligation.

Introduction

The occupying authority's violations against education in Palestine are intensifying, severely hindering the sector's ability to exercise its right to educate. These violations undermine the sovereignty of Palestinian education and its mission to cultivate human potential. They range from restricting student access to schools to deliberately demolishing educational institutions and their facilities, thereby damaging the learning environment. The psychological toll on students is profound, exacerbated by invasions of towns, arrests of students and their families, and the incitement against Palestinian curricula. These acts include distorting school books, threatening schools in Jerusalem with the forced adoption of altered texts, and pressuring them to implement occupation-approved educational programs.

Abu Labdeh (2017) noted that the occupation authority falsely attributes resistance operations to «incitement» in Palestinian curricula, overlooking the real cause—its persistent violations against the Palestinian people. The occupation authority even lodged a complaint with the United Nations, accusing Palestinian curricula of incitement, despite the evident promotion of hatred towards Arabs and Palestinians in Israeli curricula, which at times calls for violence against non-Jews. In contrast, Palestinian curricula emphasize values, ethics, and loyalty to national principles.

In 2023, the Ministry of Education reaffirmed that educational curricula are not only a national and sovereign matter but also a humanitarian one, deeply tied to the Palestinian narrative and identity. The Ministry's position is anchored in national laws and international agreements that affirm the right to choose the type of education provided to children. This includes Article 24 of the 2003 Palestinian Basic Law, the 1988 Declaration of Independence, and international covenants such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 26) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Article 13). These laws underscore parents' right to determine their children's education. This wave of incitement against Palestinian textbooks coincides with a study

released by the Israeli institute IMPACT-SE, which scrutinizes school curricula for content related to religion, culture, human rights, and societal integration. The institute alleges that recent Palestinian textbooks contain radical content opposing the occupation, a claim supported by Abu Amer (2022). Notably, these attacks have escalated, driven by the unwavering support of the United States for the occupation, including its recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital. The head of the occupation government, Netanyahu, further inflamed tensions during a 2023 press conference on Al-Jazeera by accusing Palestinian curricula of promoting hatred against Israel, stating: «No civil authority should teach its children to eliminate the State of Israel.»

A series of recent reports submitted to the European Union, including one from the George Eckert Foundation, have intensified calls for changes to Palestinian curricula, including those taught in UNRWA schools. The foundation, associated with the Leibniz Institute for Jewish History and Culture, was commissioned by the EU to analyze Palestinian textbooks, further fueling international scrutiny of the education system.

These reports analyze the content of Palestinian curricula, including those of UNRWA schools. The findings are used as a pretext to withhold aid to Palestine, part of a broader effort to undermine educational funding by inciting opposition to the curricula (Hamad, 2022). Dio (2024), in an article titled European Parliament Denounces UNRWA Role in Inciting Violence, Antisemitism (published on April 15, 2024, in The Algemeiner), noted that the European Parliament passed a resolution claiming that anti-Semitic content and glorification of terrorism in Palestinian schoolbooks produced by UNRWA fueled the violence in southern Israel on October 7. The resolution calls for stricter oversight of Palestinian education, urging that anti-Semitic elements be expunged as long as European aid continues to support these educational institutions. German MEP Niclas Herbst praised the resolution, while The Algemeiner previously reported that UNRWA textbooks are among the most inciting in the world, covering subjects from mathematics to theology, literature, and science.

Study Problem

The core issue of this study revolves around a central question: What are the claims of the occupying power (Israel) regarding Palestinian curricula, specifically the accusations that they incite violence and terrorism and do not meet UNESCO standards? From this main question, several sub-questions arise:

1. How were these curricula prepared and developed?
2. What are the occupation's claims against the Palestinian curricula, and how has Palestine responded?
3. What violations does the occupation commit against a curriculum that embodies cultural and educational values?
4. How does the occupation's agenda seek to «Israelize» education in Jerusalem?
5. How has the Palestinian Ministry of Education countered the incitement against its curricula?

Study Objectives

This study aims to uncover the nature of the occupation's claims against Palestinian curricula and identify how these claims have been refuted. It also seeks to demonstrate the invalidity of such accusations, assess the extent to which Palestinian curricula adhere to UNESCO principles, and explore how these curricula can be further developed and improved.

Importance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in its exploration of how external forces influence education, particularly in cultural and ethical contexts. It sheds light on efforts to distort Palestine's historical and cultural narratives while seeking to unify resistance against the occupation's false narrative. The study exposes the campaigns of misinformation and incitement against Palestinian education and highlights the need to protect Palestinian educational sovereignty, free from conditional funding. Additionally, it underscores the vital role curricula play in shaping the awareness and identity of future generations, safeguarding the legacy of Palestinian resistance against Zionist settler colonialism, and preserving Palestinian identity and inalienable rights.

Study Limitations

This study focuses on a specific set of documents, including schoolbooks, reports from the Impact Foundation (spanning 2016-2023), and other documents and position papers related to how the Ministry of Education has responded to incitement against Palestinian curricula. The study employs a document-based analytical approach across five key areas: the preparation and development of Palestinian curricula, ongoing incitement against these curricula, violations by the occupation of a curriculum rich in cultural and educational content, the Israelization of education in Jerusalem, and the efforts to confront incitement.

First Axis: Preparing and Developing Palestinian Curricula

The Palestinian educational system is designed to meet the needs of society in all its diversity and contribute to the full development of the child, fostering independence, unlocking potential, and cultivating an integrated sense of self. This development occurs without diminishing the child's deep connection to Palestinian identity. In line with this vision, the Ministry of Education initiated the development of new curricula at the start of the 2015/2016 academic year. By January 2016, the general framework documents for the new curriculum were completed, and over four hundred textbooks covering all subjects and grades were produced (Ministry of Education, 2022).

In response to the evolving educational needs of society, the Curriculum Center undertook a meticulous and structured review of school textbooks. This process was shaped by feedback from educators and numerous analytical studies carried out by experts, academics, and national partners. A comprehensive archive was established to categorize this feedback, after which specialized teams—composed of highly qualified professionals—were tasked with reviewing and making appropriate revisions. Updated versions of the textbooks were released at the beginning of each academic year, and the process of refining the curricula remains ongoing. However, the combined impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and financial constraints hindered the extent of this review process (Ministry of Education, 2022).

The Ministry of Education (2020) stated that the textbook review plan relied on various sources of feedback, including public outreach via the media. A dedicated email was created to collect comments, supplementing the official ministry email. Contributions were also solicited from key stakeholders,

including educational institutions, parents, and civil society.

Additionally, technical committees—composed of experts from universities, civil society, and educational supervisors—were formed to guide this review. Supervised by a ministerial committee, the review unfolded in two stages: the first focusing on humanities and concluding by March 2020, and the second addressing scientific subjects before the 2021/2022 academic year.

By 2022, the Ministry had gathered feedback from over 200 educational field reports and more than 7,000 notes submitted via ministry platforms. A comprehensive study by the Arab-European Foundation (2019) evaluated Palestinian curricula for grades 1-9, examining them against standards for quality, environmental consciousness, human rights, and gender. Additional reviews included the Civil Society Organizations Network’s report (2018) titled “Review and Special Reading of the New Palestinian Curriculum”, which covered four key areas: disability, identity, civil culture and democracy, and educational sciences and gender. The Independent Commission for Human Rights (2019) also contributed a study analyzing the content of school textbooks from a human rights perspective, particularly focusing on Arabic Language and Sciences for grades 1-9. Meanwhile, Salah’s (2017) study affirmed the presence of national constants within school books, and Rafidi’s (2019) critical work, “The Palestinian Narrative of History: A Forgotten History and Deleted Components”, provided an incisive reading of historical textbooks.

Principles Guiding Book Review

The Palestinian curriculum is continually refined to meet national needs and respond to educational advancements. The Ministry of Education, in its 2022 “Curriculum Review and Development Summary”, outlined key principles governing this review process, as approved by the Ministerial Committee for Curriculum Review:

1. Ensuring Content Accuracy and Relevance: The curriculum must provide up-to-date knowledge and relate it to real-world contexts. Creative approaches are encouraged, particularly in integrating technology and advancing sustainable development goals—especially the fourth goal. Emphasis is also placed on universal issues, such as energy, environmental awareness, climate change, and

desertification.

2. Incorporating Cultural and Historical Heritage: Educational content should draw from the nation’s rich cultural, religious, and historical heritage, aligning with the goals set for each topic.

3. Promoting National Unity and Civil Peace: The curriculum must reflect the unity of Palestine’s national and social fabric, avoiding any content—whether in written text, illustrations, or activities—that could damage it.

4. Respecting Religious and Cultural Diversity: The curriculum must honor religious and ethnic diversity, uphold intellectual pluralism, and foster respect for different cultural perspectives.

5. Emphasizing Human Rights: School textbooks must incorporate human rights concepts in ways that resonate with the societal context and respect national laws, international law, and human rights standards—even during armed conflicts. This includes rights related to women, children, the disabled, labor, the environment, and the prohibition of racial discrimination.

6. Addressing Gender Roles: The curriculum should reflect balanced gender roles across various fields—professional, political, historical, social, and national—while respecting gender-specific privacy and roles.

7. Catering to Developmental and Psychological Needs: Textbooks should be developmentally appropriate, considering the psychological and social needs of the target age group, and should avoid promoting violence.

8. Avoiding Controversial Topics: Content that could harm national unity or conflict with national constants must be avoided.

9. Ensuring Clarity in Texts: Texts should be carefully constructed to prevent misinterpretation or harm to others, ensuring their meaning is clear and unambiguous.

This thoughtful approach to curriculum development reflects Palestine’s commitment to producing educational content that is not only intellectually enriching but also socially responsible.

The Second Axis:

Continuous Incitement Against Palestinian Curricula

The Ministry of Education (2018) noted that incitement against Palestinian

curricula began soon after work commenced on the first national curriculum in the late 1990s. This systematic campaign, which continues to this day, targets the core components of the Palestinian narrative—particularly its portrayal of history, geography, Jerusalem, refugees, the occupation, settlements, and resistance.

Incitement gained momentum with the introduction of the second national curriculum in 2016, spearheaded by pressure groups aligned with the occupation. These groups organized well-coordinated efforts, disseminating biased reports and bulletins, while ramping up incitement through an unprecedented media campaign, especially among lawmakers and decision-makers in Europe and the United States. The primary aim of this incitement has been to distort the Palestinian narrative, vilify the curricula, and accuse them of promoting violence, hatred, and denial of the “other.” It also intensified political pressure on the Palestinian people, particularly through efforts to tie foreign educational funding to curricular amendments.

One of the leading sources of this incitement is the organization IMPACT-se, which goes beyond its stated role of monitoring Middle Eastern curricula. A report by Eldad (2017), titled “The Palestinian Authority Curricula 2016-2017: Radicalization and the Revival of the PLO Program”, compared this curriculum with earlier ones. The report argued that the newer curriculum is even more radical, teaching students to embrace martyrdom, reject negotiations, demonize Israel, and focus solely on the «return» to a Palestinian homeland.

In a subsequent report by Eldad (2018), “The New Palestinian Curriculum – Updated 2018-19 – Grades 1-12”, the textbooks for the 2018-2019 academic year were described as embracing a radical voice that reflects a broad spectrum of nationalist and extremist Islamic ideologies prevalent in both Gaza and the West Bank. The report further claimed that these textbooks include anti-Semitic motifs and emphasize themes of struggle, heroism, and martyrdom.

An anonymous report (2019), “The New Palestinian Curriculum: A Quantitative Analysis of Textbooks from the Current Palestinian Ministry of Education Curricula, Applying UNESCO-Derived Peace and Tolerance Standards”, analyzed textbooks from the first semester of the 2019-2020 academic year. This report identified content that allegedly promotes violence, incites hatred, and

includes extremist or disturbing elements.

Another report (2019), “Rejecting Peace: Removing Peace Agreements, Israel, and the Jews from the Palestinian Curricula”, asserted that the newer Palestinian Authority curricula represented a regression towards the extremism found in earlier textbooks. The updated IMPACT-se study from May 2021 analyzed 222 textbooks used in the 2020-2021 school year. Of these, 105 remained unchanged from 2019, and the report concluded that there had been no substantive positive changes to the Palestinian curriculum. It claimed that textbooks continued to feature anti-Semitic content, glorify violence, jihad, and martyrdom, while failing to promote peace as either preferable or possible.

This persistent incitement against the Palestinian education system reflects a broader effort to undermine the narrative, while placing undue political pressure through the manipulation of international opinion and funding.

The anonymous report (2022) analyzed the new textbooks and study cards produced by the Palestinian Authority for the 2021-2022 academic year, and indicated that contrary to the assurances provided by the Palestinian Authority to its international partners that improvements would be made quickly to improve the 2020-2021 curriculum, no amendments were made to the Palestinian Authority curriculum for the current 2021-2022 academic year. In addition, there were no reviews of the textbooks, and supplementary online educational materials, called study cards, published the same content, in violation of international standards for peace and tolerance.

The anonymous report (2023) reviewed the Palestinian high school exams for June 2023 and indicated that students are being tested on materials that deny Jewish history in Jerusalem, express rejection of Israel, including its right to exist, and indicate that non-recognition of Israel, the use of violence against it, and the promotion of jihad and martyrdom are the focus of the Palestinian curriculum. After analyzing the reports that this institution objects to from 2016-2023, these allegations can be classified and responded to as follows:

First - The claim that the national narrative and constants encourage hatred and violence, and the refutation of this comes according to the following

The report prepared by the George Eckert Foundation showed the truth of the inclusion of Palestinian school textbooks of all human rights principles in a

comprehensive manner, in all grades, educational stages and subjects, and clearly indicated the comprehensiveness of school textbooks of human values according to international standards; tolerance, justice, respect for peoples, promoting positive dialogue, respect for others, the right to difference and political pluralism, ethnicity, and interfaith dialogue. It also highlighted the promotion of school textbooks of the idea of citizenship, universal citizenship, rights and duties, and integrity, and this is consistent with the study comparing the general framework of curricula and UNESCO standards, which emphasized the inclusion of UNESCO standards in the general framework of curricula. The results of Salah's study (2023) showed a clear and intentional inclusion of Palestinian national constants in school books, and that these books focused on the national aspects of the Palestinian cause and the rights of the Palestinian citizen, and emphasized the inclusion in the books that Palestine is historically Arab, Jerusalem is its capital, the right to self-determination, the right of return for Palestinian refugees, the file of prisoners and the emptying of prisons, and this comes in line with the general framework of the developed curricula (2016), which confirmed that the priority of the Palestinian people is liberation and development. In affirming the independence of the national curriculum, as outlined in the "Incitement File" (2021) and approved by the Council of Ministers during session No. 97/18 on February 22, 2021, the Palestinian curricula are regarded as a sovereign matter of utmost national significance. This sovereignty is closely tied to the preservation



of Palestinian identity and the protection of the national narrative, with all its historical, cultural, and symbolic dimensions.

The curriculum's development relies on national principles and international conventions that assert the right to choose the type of education provided to our children. This is supported by the Palestinian Basic Law, particularly Article 24 of the 2003 amended law, as well as the 1988 Declaration of Independence. Furthermore, it adheres to international covenants, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, especially Article 26, and Article 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (1966). Additionally, Article 18/4 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights emphasizes the fundamental right of guardians, trustees, and parents to prioritize choosing the type of education for their children.

In safeguarding these rights, the curriculum maintains its independence as a reflection of both national pride and international principles, affirming the importance of a distinctly Palestinian education for future generations.

Secondly, the claim that Palestinian curricula ignore Israel's existence is refuted by the fact that «Israel» is explicitly mentioned as an occupying power that seizes Palestinian lands for the benefit of settler colonialism. The curriculum also references Israel as a party to peace agreements, yet to be fully realized, and calls for the implementation of United Nations resolutions, including Security Council Resolution No. 1515 (2003), which outlines the two-state solution. However, the curriculum does not delineate a clear relationship with Israel or define its political borders. This is because such boundaries have not been established within the framework of a just, comprehensive, and final settlement. With ongoing settler colonialism, as highlighted in the 2030 Sustainable Development Plan report (2018), and the denial of the Palestinian people's right to return and establish their independent state, it remains impossible to outline assumptions about this relationship.

Educators and teachers express concern when discussing values like peace and tolerance, as these discussions occur amid the continued killing and arrest of students and teachers on their way to school.

Thirdly, the accusation of inciting violence by portraying the occupation's

violations (such as massacres and arrests) needs clarification.

Article 51 of the United Nations Charter affirms the right of colonized peoples to resist, while Resolution 1514 (1960) calls for the decolonization of oppressed nations. Additionally, UN General Assembly Resolution 3314 (1974) recognizes the right of all peoples to struggle for freedom, independence, and self-determination. Consequently, Palestinian curricula present examples of youth resisting the recurrent incursions of the occupation army, often with primitive tools, reflecting the broader historical context of Palestinian resistance. This portrayal includes the massacres, forced displacement, and terrorization inflicted on civilians during the ongoing conflict.

Fourth, regarding the claim of incitement by honoring Palestinian leaders and martyrs: Every nation reveres its heroes, those who have sacrificed their lives and resources. The collective memory of a people is built on the legacy of such individuals, and their valor is celebrated universally. Every people on earth has the right to take pride in their heroes, honor their leaders, and memorialize their martyrs who have given their lives for freedom and dignity. Martyrs who defend their land and sanctities hold an elevated status that cannot be diminished. Nations honor their heroes, and this respect is a fundamental part of their cultural and historical identity.

Fifth – The Claim of Incitement by Referring to Israelis as Zionists

This claim is addressed by clarifying that the curricula discuss Zionism as a political movement, not as a religious or ethnic identity. The Zionist movement, which sought to establish a national homeland for Jews in Palestine, is referenced by its historical name in the context of the Balfour Declaration— a document that does not mention the word «Israel.» It is essential to distinguish between Zionism as a political ideology and Judaism as a religion. The curricula emphasize the role of the Zionist movement in the occupation of Palestinian land, not Judaism itself.

Sixth – The Claim of Incitement through Religious Texts

Religious education, both Islamic and Christian, is integral to the Palestinian

curriculum. Values such as sacrifice, jihad, and martyrdom are framed within their spiritual and ethical contexts, which cannot be reduced to instruments of incitement. These religious values are deeply tied to the pursuit of peace and humanity. Jihad, for instance, is understood in its broader religious context by believers, far beyond any abstract or literal interpretation. The curriculum draws on these religious teachings to promote broader universal values of peace, love, and justice.

The Palestinian curricula are built upon authentic, modern, and global values, promoting tolerance, democracy, and pluralism. They aim to foster individuals equipped with 21st-century skills—capable of communication, collaboration, and understanding across cultures.

Seventh – The Claim of Incitement by Emphasizing the Uniqueness of Jerusalem

The curricula highlight Jerusalem’s historical and religious significance for all followers of the three Abrahamic faiths. They draw attention to the systematic Israelization policies that threaten the city and the barriers that prevent Palestinians from accessing their holy sites. The curriculum underscores the violation of Palestinians’ right to freedom of worship, a right guaranteed by international conventions and United Nations resolutions.

The Georg Eckert Report

The European Union commissioned the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research to conduct an in-depth analysis of Palestinian curricula, specifically focusing on accusations of incitement to violence, anti-Semitism, and non-recognition of Israel. The study also examined how Palestinian textbooks discuss the occupation and the role of Palestinian fighters.

The final report made several key points:

- Palestinian textbooks incorporate principles of human rights, including individual and collective rights, women’s rights, and the rights of persons with disabilities, as well as civil, cultural, and social rights. These values are reflected across all grades and subjects.
- The textbooks uphold international human values, promoting tolerance,

justice, respect for others, positive dialogue, political and ethnic pluralism, and interfaith dialogue. They also emphasize citizenship, rights and duties, integrity, and global citizenship.

- Palestinian textbooks successfully address global issues that affect all humanity, such as environmental concerns, peaceful coexistence, and respect for diverse religious, social, and cultural groups.

- The report acknowledged that Palestinian social studies textbooks are free of incitement and maintain an objective tone.

- The ministry's commitment to reviewing and updating textbooks was praised, especially for aligning educational content with global standards.

Despite the observations noted above, the report raised several concerns in its analysis, which it considered problematic. Among them:

It highlighted the absence of references to the existence of Israel in school textbooks, particularly in discussions of coexistence and tolerance. The report claimed that the use of the term «Zionist occupation» in these textbooks was an attempt to undermine the legitimacy of the State of Israel. It further criticized the use of words like «jihad» and «martyrdom,» suggesting that these terms are politically charged, especially in the context of the ongoing conflict. The report also pointed out the omission of Israel from historical and geographical maps and noted a conflation between Israeli people and Jewish people, which it saw as problematic.

These objections, however, cast doubt on the integrity of the analysis and the biased, dangerous conclusions it reached. Consider the following points:

First – The report completely overlooked the official framework of the Palestinian curricula, which serves as the foundation for developing textbooks. It ignored the main guiding principles and philosophy of the curricula, disregarded Palestinian, Arab, and international studies on these textbooks, and focused solely on Israeli reports that incite against them. Additionally, it neglected the issue of how occupation authorities have distorted and forged Palestinian textbooks in Jerusalem schools, despite this being raised at both local and international levels. Second – The study failed to account for the objective realities imposed by the occupation, which profoundly affect Palestinian life, including repeated violations against schools, students, and teachers.

Third – The initial report presented to the Ministry recommended that there was no systematic incitement to violence, hatred, or anti-Semitism. However, it did contain implicit references to the political conflict, grounded in resolutions of international legitimacy issued by the United Nations Security Council and General Assembly. Strangely, the draft of the final report appeared to respond to the demands of the occupation authority. Notably, the Palestinian Ministry of Education has consistently called for a comparative study of Palestinian and Israeli curricula— a request the European Union has repeatedly rejected.

Fourth – There was a glaring disconnect between the text of the report and its conclusions. This is evident in its recommendations, many of which had no direct relation to the report’s content or objectives. The clearest examples of this inconsistency are the following two recommendations:

- Declaring Palestinian textbooks unsuitable for reducing the intensity of the conflict.
- Insisting that the reform of Palestinian textbooks should involve a joint Palestinian-Israeli team, or be overseen by international experts.

Fifth – The report failed to acknowledge the Palestinian Cabinet’s decision to establish a National Center for Curricula, a critical step in educational reform. These oversights and inconsistencies reflect the report’s failure to engage with the complexities of the Palestinian educational context, undermining its credibility.

The Third Axis:

Occupation Violations as an Embodied Curriculum

1. For decades, the violations committed by the occupation have, in themselves, formed a curriculum—one rooted in violence, oppression, and terror. This curriculum teaches theft, tyranny, subjugation, and discrimination, embodying the brutal culture of occupation. It is implemented by occupation forces and settlers through massacres of defenseless civilians, including in Gaza, the West Bank, and Jerusalem. Thousands of martyrs, many of them women and children, have fallen, while homes are demolished over their inhabitants. Schools, places of worship, hospitals, and ambulances are destroyed. Paramedics, journalists, and displaced persons are targeted, and civilians are deprived of

life's basic necessities—food, water, electricity, communication, and security. These violations, which reach the level of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide, have been meticulously documented in periodic reports issued by the Ministry of Education, chronicling the occupation's violations against Palestinian education.

2. The denial of the Palestinian Arab identity, in all its deep historical roots, plants seeds of violence and hatred within our students. It imprints in the minds of our children an image of the «other»—the Israeli—as a source of fear, anxiety, and deprivation. This extinguishes hope, leaving psychological and spiritual scars that our children must bear. It undermines the values of love, pluralism, and coexistence, values that should instead be nurtured in their souls. Any attempt to «humanize» these violations, which deny basic rights and the right to self-determination, is an impossible task (Ministry of Education, 2023).

3. In Jerusalem, the occupation's municipality systematically forges Palestinian textbooks. These books undergo radical changes, distorting the Palestinian narrative before being printed and distributed to Palestinian schools in the city. This explicit and public falsification of educational material amounts to a felony deserving of prosecution before international courts (Ministry of Education, 2020).

4. Israeli researcher Peled-Elhanan (2012, p. 61) observed that Israeli school textbooks portray Palestinian citizens as primitive, despised intruders, and outlaws—characterized by «illegal construction» on their own homes. Palestinians are painted as thieves and enemies from within, relying on assumptions presented in all Israeli textbooks: that of the historical Jewish right to the land of Palestine (referred to as Israel), the global threat of anti-Semitism, and the value of a Jewish state, Jewish majority, and Israeli control.

5. The Tanakh and Talmud serve as primary sources fostering education that promotes racism and bloodshed, emphasizing Zionist ideologies. Israeli textbooks repeatedly stress the colonial claim that «Palestine is a land without a people for a people without a land» (Peled-Elhanan, 2012, p. 35).

6. Arabs are not only absent from Israeli Jewish schools but are also erased from the curricula and textbooks themselves. This deepens the ethnocentric nature of education, while religiosity in these materials reinforces Israel's expansionist

policies. The past is exploited to justify the ongoing expansionist agenda, providing insight into the policies Israel intends to pursue in the future (Peled-Elhanan, 2012, p. 48).

7. Israeli textbooks also cultivate a culture of militarism. Hagit (2013), in her work «Militarization of Education in Israel,» points out that Israeli curricula across all educational levels focus on instilling the spirit of militarism. The educational system prepares children to become fighters, fostering a culture where military service is central to identity and future aspirations.

This analysis reflects the deeply entrenched cultural and educational framework promoted by the occupation, perpetuating conflict and oppression for generations to come.

Fourth Axis:

The Israelization of Education in Jerusalem

The occupying authority, Israel, has systematically worked to entrench settler colonialism in Jerusalem. This has been part of a broader effort to annex the city, including the Israelization of its civil sectors, notably education, in clear violation of international rulings that have recognized Jerusalem as occupied territory since June 1967. Qadah (2024) highlighted a five-year plan to Israelize the education system and curricula in Jerusalem. The aim is to replace the Palestinian high school system with the Israeli Bagrut system and substitute the Palestinian curriculum with the Israeli-approved version. Additionally, there have been efforts to falsify and distort the Palestinian curriculum. This process can be understood in more detail as follows:

1. Statistics of Schools in Jerusalem

According to the Ministry of Education's comprehensive annual survey for the academic years 2022/2023 and 2023/2024, these statistics provide insights into the state of education in Jerusalem. Excluding schools under the supervision of the Jerusalem Municipality and the Israeli Ministry of Education, the results compare the number of schools, students, and academic departments, as outlined in the following table:

A comparative table displaying the number of schools, students, and departments by supervising authority for the academic years 2022/2023 and 2023/2024.

Supervising authority	Number of schools		Number of students		Number of sections	
	23/2024	22/2023	23/2024	22/2023	23/2024	22/2023
The Directorate of Education, in collaboration with Islamic Endowments and the Palestinian Ministry of Education.	51	51	10375	10851	586	589
Private and national schools.	74	84	33537	33684	1280	1418
UNRWA schools	6	6	922	1053	52	63
Total	131	141	44834	45588	1918	2070

Note: Precise data on schools overseen by the Jerusalem Municipality and the Israeli Ministry of Education remains unavailable for the year 2023/2024 AD.

The comparative table of the comprehensive survey for the academic years 2022/2023 and 2023/2024 reveals that ten private schools closed in 2023/2024. Meanwhile, the number of government schools (endowments) and UNRWA schools remained unchanged. The total number of students in Jerusalem schools decreased across all supervisory authorities, with a decline of 754 students compared to the previous year. Additionally, there was a reduction of 152 academic departments overall, with private schools seeing the most significant drop—138 fewer departments. To assess how these changes impacted overcrowding, the average number of students per department was calculated, as shown in the following table.

A table displaying the number of students per department by supervisory authority for the years 2022/2023 AD and 2023/2024 AD.

Supervisory authority	Government (Directorate of Education)		Private		UNRWA	
	23/2024 _p	22/2023 _p	23/2024 _p	22/2023 _p	23/2024 _p	22/2023 _p
Student rate/section	17.70	18.42	26.2	23.75	17.73	16.71

The table above illustrates a slight increase in the average number of students per class in private schools, with a rise of 2.45 students compared to the previous year. UNRWA schools saw a smaller increase of 1.02 students per class, while government schools experienced a minor decrease of 0.72 students per class. These differences are minimal and have no significant impact, though it is important to note that classroom sizes in Jerusalem schools remain small. This is largely due to the fact that many of these schools operate out of rented buildings not originally designed for educational purposes, particularly those under government supervision.

Additionally, the occupation authorities' actions against schools not affiliated with them have led to a decrease in student enrollment in national schools, including the closure of some private institutions. In response, the occupation municipality opens schools that attract students by offering the Israeli curriculum, effectively replacing each closed national private school.

Forgery and Distortion of Palestinian Curricula in Jerusalem

The annexation policies pursued by the occupying authority (Israel) in Jerusalem seek to erase Palestinian national identity and distort the narrative taught to Palestinian children. This is done through the forced use of falsified and distorted textbooks in schools. A study examining forms of forgery in a sample of 78 schoolbooks, prescribed for the academic years 2020-2021 and

2021-2022, revealed the following findings, as detailed in the table (Ministry of Education, 2022).

A table displaying the frequency of forgery incidents in the studied sample of books.

Subject (1-10)	Number of study books	Number of times forgery	Average per book
Islamic Education	19	35	1.84
Mathematics	19	69	3.36
Arabic Language	20	337	16.85
Social Studies	6	281	46.83
Social Upbringing	2	52	26
National and Life Education	3	20	6.66
Science and Life	9	36	4
Total	78	830	Average: 10.64

The table above reveals that every book in the study was affected by forgery, with the highest number of alterations found in social studies subjects. On average, social studies books were altered 46.83 times per book, and social education 26 times per book. In contrast, Islamic education saw the fewest instances of forgery,

with an average of 1.84 changes per book. This indicates the occupation's focus on distorting the historical and national narrative more than the religious one, especially considering that subjects other than Islamic education often include national themes and heritage.

A table illustrating the frequency of forgery incidents categorized by type.

Distortion of the entire content	Substituting the content with alternative material	Obscuring a portion of the content	Modifying a section of the content	Total
165	351	235	79	830

The forgery process occurred 830 times across various investigations. This included complete distortions of content 165 times, substitutions of one piece of content for another 351 times, obliterations of part of the content 235 times, and modifications of specific sections 79 times. Such alterations manifested in the deletion of images and topics, the erasure of the Palestinian flag and state emblem from book covers and opening pages, and the removal of references to martyrs, prisoners, refugees, and the map of Palestine prior to 1948. It also encompassed the suppression of discussions about the right of return and the acknowledgment of occupied Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine.

Replacing the Palestinian National Education System with the Israeli Education System

The occupying authority employed various methods to pressure schools in the city to replace the Palestinian education system and curriculum with its own approved framework. They made promises of additional funding for schools that implemented the Bagrut system instead of the Palestinian general secondary school system. The occupation municipality and the Ministry of Education also

exerted pressure to revoke the licenses of private schools, as exemplified by the Ibrahim College in the Al-Suwana neighborhood, founded in 1931, and Al-Iman Schools, established in 1984. These closures were justified by claims that these schools used the Palestinian curriculum, with demands to substitute it with distorted textbooks. Moreover, inspections were imposed on schools under the pretext of security concerns, and the accusation of incitement in the curricula was frequently cited. Such actions violate international humanitarian law, particularly the Second Additional Protocol to the Fourth Geneva Convention, and strip the children of Jerusalem of their right to a normal education, including access to a national curriculum that reflects their culture (Qadah, 2024).

Closing the Education Directorate

In late 2019, the occupation authorities closed the Education Directorate in Jerusalem, a move repeated at the end of September 2021. This action served as part of a broader strategy to tighten control over the Palestinian education system and target Waqf schools under various pretexts, such as technical issues, Arnona taxes, and the adequacy of infrastructure, all while claiming that these schools operate under the auspices of the Jordanian Waqf (Ministry of Education, 2022).

Fifth: Violation of Students' Right to Access Quality Education Freely and Dignified

The right to education for students in Jerusalem is severely compromised in these occupied territories, as recognized by international law. Authorities deny licenses for new schools and hinder the rehabilitation of existing structures. They impose heavy taxes on rented buildings and create barriers for students and educational staff trying to reach their schools. Checkpoints and the annexation wall surrounding the city complicate access further. Moreover, the occupying authorities resort to arresting educational staff and students, often placing them under house arrest. Farwana (2022) reports that between January 2018 and March 2022, approximately 2,200 house arrest decisions were issued against minors, including 114 children under the age of 12. Alarmingly, 70% of these arrests led to house arrest before any adjudication of their cases. While the number of active house arrest orders has decreased, Israeli laws permitting the

arrest of minors under 14 have allowed for harsher penalties and the potential for extended detention of students.

Confronting the Israelization Plan for Education in Jerusalem

In response to the Israelization plan, the Ministry of Education (2022) formed a ministerial committee that included the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates, the Ministry of Justice, and the Ministry of Jerusalem. This committee undertook several significant measures:

- Elevating the issue within international and regional organizations advocating for the right to education.
- Implementing local and global awareness and mobilization campaigns.
- Engaging with the Jordanian Foreign Ministry and the Ministry of Endowments to urge a strong stance, given their unique position in Jerusalem.
- Presenting the matter to the Arab and World Economic and Social Council, UNESCO, and the Human Rights Council.
- Communicating with countries through their ambassadors and raising the issue within international and UN forums, particularly the European Union and the European Commission.
- Pursuing legal action against the occupying power (Israel) in international courts with jurisdiction.
- Establishing a legal clinic for Israelization staffed by four competent lawyers to monitor the legal status of education in Jerusalem.
- Ensuring timely payment of financial obligations owed to Jerusalem schools and their administration.
- Creating a special fund to protect education in Jerusalem through Arab and Islamic financing.
- Formulating a position paper on Israelization that details its contents, consequences, financial and legal processes, and recommended responses.
- Declaring 2023 AD as the «Year of Education Sovereignty in Jerusalem.»

As aggression against Palestine escalates, particularly in Jerusalem, it is crucial to confront the occupation's plans to Judaize education. This can be achieved through the following measures:

1. Activating the Legal Clinic: It is essential to promptly enhance the

effectiveness of the legal clinic. Unifying the efforts of legal and human rights organizations to defend the Palestinian education system in Jerusalem is imperative. Schools must not face hearing committees or courts without proper legal representation. Additionally, we must form advocacy and pressure groups composed of experienced Palestinians, Arabs, and international allies to influence the global community. This coalition should aim to unveil the harsh realities of the occupying authority's practices, garnering support for Palestine and our right to education in freedom and dignity, particularly in Jerusalem.

2. Engaging the Local Community: We must actively engage the local Jerusalemite community and parents' councils in a sustainable manner, providing them with financial support to confront Israeli policies. Working diligently and periodically with church and religious school representatives will help formulate unified response plans. Furthermore, we should enhance coordination with religious leaders, especially those from the Vatican, to align national positions at all levels.

3. Increasing Financial Allocations: It is vital to boost financial support at the official Palestinian level and seek funding sources that will free both private and public schools from Israeli control. We must cultivate national funding sources and mobilize support from individuals and institutions within the Arab and Islamic world, as well as other sources unencumbered by donor conditions.

4. Enhancing Education Quality: Improving the quality of education in Palestinian government schools and expanding enrollment rates is crucial. This effort will help preserve the essence of Palestinian national education in the city, serving as a vital shield alongside the East Jerusalem Hospital Network.

Fifth Axis:

Confronting Incitement Against Curricula

In its 2023 paper, "Confronting Incitement Against Palestinian Curricula", the Ministry of Education outlined its diplomatic and political efforts to counter the pervasive campaign of incitement and demonization directed at Palestinian educational materials by Israel, the occupying authority. This campaign extends across various levels and international forums in both America and Europe. Notable actions include:

1. High-Level Diplomatic Engagement: Numerous discussions and pleadings were conducted with senior European political and diplomatic officials.
2. Refuting Misinformation: The Ministry drafted position papers, studies, and artistic presentations that dismantle the falsehoods propagated by the IMPACT-se Foundation, which misrepresents Palestinian school books and teaching materials.
3. Addressing the George Eckert Report: The Ministry responded to the implications of the 2020 George Eckert report through written responses, dialogues at various levels, and presentations in both national and international forums. A comprehensive position paper was issued regarding the report's final findings.
4. Counter-Campaign: A media and diplomatic initiative was launched to raise global awareness about the racist content entrenched in Israeli school books, highlighting the accompanying demonization of the Palestinian people and the incitement to violence and hatred.
5. Comparative Analysis with UNESCO Standards: A comparative report was prepared, aligning UNESCO's curriculum standards with the reference framework for Palestinian curricula (2022). This analysis underscored that the principles of quality education, values promoting coexistence, and fostering global peace, as outlined by UNESCO, are integral to the Palestinian educational framework.
6. Non-Participation in Biased Studies: The Ministry decided against identifying with or participating in any external studies targeting Palestinian curricula on the grounds of incitement unless these studies are part of a simultaneous comparative analysis involving Israeli educational content.
7. Elevating Palestinian Curricula: The Ministry of Education (2023) affirmed its commitment to continuously update and enhance curricula and teaching methods to keep pace with rapid knowledge developments. This includes adopting new educational technologies, interactive platforms, and artificial intelligence tools.
 - On June 29, 2020, a significant structural transformation was achieved with Government Resolution No. (03/63/18/M.W/M.A), which established the National Curriculum Center as a legally recognized entity. This center operates under a high-level council, overseen by the Minister of Education, ensuring a

broad scope of independence and adherence to Decision-Law No. (27) of 2021, which amended earlier legislation on general education.

- National Education Financing Initiative: The Ministry also introduced the National Education Initiative for Education and the School Adoption Program (2023), emphasizing Palestinian self-reliance in securing sustainable funding. This approach aims to mitigate the impact of fluctuating external financial support and ensure that the education system fulfills its objectives with integrity and effectiveness.

The occupying authority, backed by the United States and certain European nations, seeks to alter Palestinian curricula under the guise of development and tolerance. This situation necessitates a strategic national plan to confront Israeli incitement against Palestinian education and to refute the deceptive narratives perpetuated by occupying institutions on the international stage. It is vital to emphasize the following:

- It is essential to integrate the roles of academic and educational institutions—such as universities, research centers, and civil society organizations—in confronting the systematic assault on Palestinian curricula. This incitement transcends educational boundaries, aiming to undermine Palestinian identity. By defending Palestinian curricula and showcasing their strengths locally, we can expose the occupation's policies and the biases embedded within Israeli curricula. We must also avoid distractions from issues that do not prioritize educational integrity.

- We must mobilize public opinion, both domestically and internationally, against the occupation's crimes committed against education in Palestine, particularly in Jerusalem. The occupation's incitement against curricula constitutes an attack on Palestinian identity and attempts to distort educational materials. This is compounded by arbitrary actions such as demolishing schools, arresting students, imposing house arrests, obstructing access for students and teachers, and the tragic martyrdom of many students, alongside acts that undermine education.

- Advocating for the sovereignty of curricula is crucial. We must view Palestinian education as an assertion of independence and seek to protect it from foreign interference and conditional funding. To achieve this, we need innovative

solutions, such as establishing a national fund dedicated to education and curricula, thus fostering self-reliance and investment in our educational system.

- It is vital to draft scientific documents that refute the occupation's claims in multiple languages. This will help mobilize global public opinion against the violations of educational rights and generate international support for the Palestinian cause.
- We must establish a permanent protection and advocacy group to confront the occupying authority's violations of education and curricula, which deprives students of their right to learn. This effort should be guided by a nationally agreed-upon plan, especially in Jerusalem, where the Israelization of education and the distortion of curricula persist amidst an ongoing struggle over identity and narrative. We should initiate campaigns for advocacy, monitoring, documentation, and legal assistance, particularly focusing on European nations and the European Union.

Conclusion

Palestinian curricula are a fundamental national issue. The occupation's accusations against these curricula are part of a broader campaign against education, aimed at promoting a religious and racist narrative within Israeli textbooks. As Peled-Elhanan (2012, pp. 35) articulated, the narrative in Israeli educational materials portrays a world where all civilizations are united in a singular goal: the extermination of Jews, depicting no distinction between Greeks, Romans, Persians, Nazis, and Arabs.

It is crucial to emphasize that the evolution of Palestinian curricula will always remain a sovereign national decision, informed by foundational documents and feedback from all Palestinians. Any amendments must align with the Palestinian narrative and values. Yielding to external pressures regarding the development or alteration of Palestinian curricula poses a perilous risk. It could embolden pressure groups to demand further changes, jeopardizing the integrity of our educational system and undermining public trust, which could threaten civil peace.

Thus, there is an urgent need for the ongoing development of our educational system, fostering a genuine educational renaissance that aligns with national interests and is competitive, particularly in Jerusalem. The establishment of the National Center for Curricula marks a significant milestone in this journey.

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