

EU to probe Palestinian textbooks for incitement to hatred, violence

Foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini confirms move following study that found new PA curriculum to be more radical than in the past, 'abusing' European taxpayer money

By Michael Bachner

The Times of Israel (15.05.2019) – <http://bit.ly/2JwtViB> – The European Union will conduct an examination of new Palestinian school textbooks following a study that found them to be more radical than in the past and containing incitement and rejection of peace with Israel.

The EU's foreign policy chief, Federica Mogherini, confirmed the planned investigation in a statement on the EU website, the Institute for Monitoring Peace and Cultural Tolerance in School Education, or IMPACT-se, said Wednesday.

The development comes after the European Parliament in April 2018 passed legislation geared to prevent hateful content in Palestinian textbooks. In October the parliament's budgetary committee recommended freezing more than \$17 million in aid to the Palestinian Authority over incitement against Israel in its textbooks.

“It can be confirmed that an academic study on Palestinian school textbooks is planned. Necessary funds have been reserved in the 2019 budget,” Mogherini said in response to a parliamentary question by Croatian MEP Marijana Petir.

She said the study would be carried out by an “independent and internationally recognized research institute” with the aim of “identifying possible incitement to hatred and violence and any possible lack of compliance with UNESCO standards of peace and tolerance in education.”

Work has already started on the study, for which terms of reference were being prepared, Mogherini added.

“Incitement to violence is fundamentally incompatible with advancing a peaceful two-state solution and is greatly exacerbating mistrust between the communities,” she said.

The NGO IMPACT-se last month published a 70-page document with what it said were select examples of incitement in new Palestinian textbooks.

The curriculum for 2018-2019 “deliberately omits any discussion of peace education or reference to any Jewish presence in Palestine before 1948,” the document says.

“Most troubling, there is a systematic insertion of violence, martyrdom and jihad across all grades and subjects in a more extensive and sophisticated manner, embracing a full spectrum

of extreme nationalist ideas and Islamist ideologies that extend even into the teaching of science and mathematics," it adds.

Among the examples is an image of a girl smiling at "heretics" being burned, a poem calling to "annihilate the remnants of the foreigners" after "eliminating the usurper," and the description of Jews as corrupt, liars, sexual harassers and "enemies of Islam" who killed Prophet Muhammad.

It calls for the end of the State of Israel and establishing a Palestinian state in all of what is today Israel, the West Bank and Gaza, and says the takeover will be violent. It denies any Jewish connection with the land or with holy sites in Jerusalem and elsewhere.

The EU hands the PA 360 million euros (\$404 million) per year, with most earmarked for its education ministry. In addition, the European body donates \$178 million to UNRWA, the UN agency for Palestinian refugees and their descendants, much of which goes to its schools that teach the PA curriculum.

IMPACT-se CEO Marcus Sheff said in a statement Wednesday that Palestinians have been for years "abusing" EU taxpayer money and goodwill.

"There is no excuse nor is there any justification. The PA takes hundreds of millions of euros and in return, teaches violence, hate and the sacrificing of young lives," he said. "We hope this study will help put an end to the abuse and

finally allow young Palestinians to receive meaningful peace education.”