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### Douar Ouaraben: the Filistîn - Israîl war

A game inspired by the news of the Moroccan 2M TV channel

This game took place in December 2009 in the village Douar Ouaraben on the outskirts of the coastal town Tiznit in southwestern Morocco and was observed by Khalija Jariaa who also took the photos and videos (video 1: 1m 37s, video 2: 1m 3s). It shows the growing influence of television images and messages related to the realities of the adult world, on rural children's play and toy making activities. The videos were filmed with a digital photo camera. The language spoken by the players is Tachelhit, the local Amazigh language.

In the morning around eleven three boys play the Palestine-Israel war. Khalija is photographing and video filming the play without the boys noticing it. It is not known who started the play as Khalija only saw them when they were already playing. On the first photo, eleven year old Ahmed with a gun in his hand plays to be an Israeli soldier. The two other boys are Palestine fighters: Brahim, and Rashid, 8 year. Ahmed and Brahim are brothers. Ahmed seems to play the leading role especially when attacking the girls in their playhouses. Towards the bottom of the photo, the big stone represents the border between the Palestinian and Israeli territory. Left of the stone there is a piece of black plastic said to be a bomb.



The Palestine village is situated in the lower half of the next photograph. To its left, but outside the photo, there is a small well. To make the well the players look where the water, thrown away by Khalija who is washing clothes, flows and in the small water bedding they dig out the earth for about 40 cm. At the bottom of this photo there is another bomb, another piece of a plastic bag.



**Video 1** 1m 37s: Rashid, a Palestine fighter runs after the Israeli fighter Ahmed. Brahim, the second Palestine fighter is injured and fall dead but the Israeli soldier also fall death. Rashid, the unhurt Palestine fighter walks a bit around and towards the death Palestine fighter Brahim and tells him he is long enough death so he should stand up so they can again attack The Israeli fighter Ahmed. When Ahmed sees they attack him he stands up and runs away this way avoiding to be taken prisoner. Ahmed says to the two other boys “you must be tired because you cannot catch me”.

Then Ahmed, as Israeli soldier, marches towards the Palestinian village, the three small houses of the girls Saadiya, Habiba and Fatima playing household and have arranged the dinner table with clay utensils and other toy utensils. Ahmed disturbs the girl's small houses, and fires his gun at them saying you are from a Palestinian village. The girls act as if they are injured. The two Palestinian fighters come to protect the girls and hit Ahmed. The boys and girls join forces in taking Ahmed prisoner and bring him to the place where some sand remained used in house construction (at the middle right of the picture above). Ahmed defends himself but cannot escape. They put Ahmed on the sand and hit him. The girls hit him a bit angrily, shouting "why did you destroy our houses?" But Ahmed laughs saying "I am glad I have destroyed your houses". The mother of Saadiya calls her home for lunch and this brings the game to an end.

After eating they start playing again with a larger group of boys and this about 14.30h. Ahmed and Brahim have invited some other boys to play with them; they are with nine boys now. The Palestinians are represented by five boys: Hamid (9 years), Zakaria (8 years), Smail (7 years), Mohamed (6 years) and another boy. Four boys, Ahmed (11 years), Brahim (8 years), Rachid (8 years) and Hassan (7 years) represent the Israelis. Ahmed and Brahim also ask four girls, playing household in small houses delimited by stones, to join in the play and the girls accepted. The girls, all neighbors of the boys, are Saadiya (11 years), Fatima (11 years), Ijou (7 years) and Habiba (8 years). On the video the girls are mostly hidden by the smoke of the fire but at 54 seconds a girl dressed in white (Saadiya) appears to the right of the fire.

The play of the Palestine-Israel war starts again with the search for a lighter to light a fire. Ahmed asks another boy if he can get a lighter from his home but that boy says no as his mother doesn't want him to play outside at that time. Then Khalija gives them a lighter from her home. When they start playing again after this short interruption, Khalija makes another video from the flat roof of her house. The cries heard in the beginning of that video come from Khalija's small son.

**Video 2** (1:03 minute): A fire is made with wood from the wadi or dry riverbed coming from the mountains when there has been a heavy rain some months before. The boys say that the noise of the wind heard on the video is like the noise of a war. The girls shout at one or the other of the Palestinian fighters, so Saadiya is shouting at her brother Smail whose

name is heard on the video at 33 seconds. Smail and the other Palestinian fighters run from the right side of the fire towards the girls who are at the opposite side. Behind some bushes Saadiya and Ijou hide for the Israelis who are at about three meters from the fire. Saadiya throws a stone towards Rachid and shouts “you are death”. He falls dead and leaves the game but continues to watch the game. Fatima and Habiba sit in their small house. Ahmed, an Israeli fighter, comes to attack them and they run to the two other girls who hide behind the bushes. Ahmed shoots at Fatima and says “you are death”. Fatima doesn’t agree and says no it is Habiba. Habiba says “this is not right you are dead”. Ahmed confirms he was shooting Fatima and then Fatima agrees. She falls down and goes to the small houses.

During the game the Palestinian fighters throw stones at the Israeli who have guns. Ahmed made four guns. He uses the gun with a shoulder hold and gives the others guns to the three boys playing with him to be Israeli fighters. The Palestinian fighters don’t have arms because “they don’t have money to buy them” as the children say. However, to throw stones they use a sling made with the air tube of a bicycle, a stone thrower made with a forked branch and a piece of rubber, or they just throw stones by hand.



The game ends because the girls want to play in their small houses. Thereafter the boys go to play football.