Counterpoint: United Nations Continues Biased Treatment of Israel

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The United Nations Human Rights Council is unfortunately dominated by countries in which human rights are often abused. These same countries systematically single out and condemn Israel. The UNHRC set up the Schabas/Davis Commission on the 2014 Gaza conflict.

The Government of Israel did not cooperate with the Commission, due to its biased mandate.

The International Association of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists, a UN accredited non-governmental organization, cooperated with the Schabas/Davis Commission despite the bias. We sought to give the Commission an understanding of the suffering of Israel’s citizens, as it was Hamas’ barrage of rockets on Israel’s cities that started the conflict.

During its conflict with Hamas, Israel was forced — again — to engage an enemy who fought, literally, underground, within populated civilian areas. As demonstrated by the evidence in the recent Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs report: “Hamas training and doctrinal materials… attest to Hamas’s intentional efforts to draw the IDF into combat in densely populated areas and to actively use the civilian population in order to obstruct the IDF’s military operations.” The report further showed that “Hamas also actively encouraged, and even coerced, civilians, to remain in areas of hostilities in order to impede IDF attack and shield military activities.”

These ‘human shield’ practices by Hamas constitute war crimes, as do the 4,000 rockets launched by Hamas towards Israel’s civilians. Hamas also dug attack tunnels into Israel, seeking to infiltrate Israeli villages and kill their inhabitants in their homes.

Israel, faced with such criminal tactics, continued to abide strictly by the laws of armed conflict. In fact, the IDF’s efforts to mitigate civilian casualties went beyond the legal requirements, as attested to by two separate reports of high-ranking military experts from democratic countries around the globe. Israel surpassed the practices of militaries of democratic states, in warning Gaza citizens in the vicinity of military targets, and encouraging them to vacate the area prior to its attack.

It is important to illuminate the disparity between the reality and what is often reported. The constant, biased treatment of Israel at the UN does not contribute toward a peaceful settlement of the conflict. It serves only to embolden Hamas and other terrorist groups to intensify their unlawful methods.