**Israel To Cooperate With Probe Investigating Attacks On UN Facilities In Gaza**

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In a signal that it is not opposed to cooperating with international investigative bodies it believes are professional and impartial, Jerusalem agreed on Thursday to cooperate with a UN probe investigating attacks on UNRWA facilities during this summer’s military operation in Gaza and Hamas’s use of those facilities to store weapons.

The decision to cooperate with the “board of inquiry” established by UN Secretary- General Ban Ki-moon stands in stark contrast to Jerusalem’s decision not to cooperate with a UN Human Rights Council committee set up to investigate what the Palestinians allege were Israeli war crimes during Operation Protective Edge.

Israel will boycott that commission because it believes the mandate given to it is way too narrow, looking only at events after July 17 and not at the rocket fire that led to the Israeli incursion, and because that committee is being led by jurist William Schabas, who Israel feels is badly biased against it.

By contrast, Jerusalem believes the Ban-established committee is professional and will look at the context that led to the fighting in Gaza, as well as what happened at the UN facilities.

Israel intends to provide the board of inquiry with intelligence material regarding Hamas’s activities in the UNRWA facilities both before and during Operation Protective Edge.

During the operation at least six UN-run facilities were hit by fire, with Jerusalem maintaining that in some cases the facilities were hit by mistake or by errant Hamas projectiles. On a couple of occasions, Hamas weapons were found inside UNRWA facilities.

Hamas spokesman Fawzi Barhoum said the group welcomed the dispatch of any UN committee to Gaza.  But he did not say whether Hamas would cooperate with an investigation into the storage of weapons at UN sites.  “No contact had been made with us regarding such a request. We will look into a request when it is made,” he said.

Ban this month named Patrick Cammaert, a retired Dutch general and former force commander of the UN peacekeeping mission in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, to head the investigation.