Former UK Cmdr.: UN, Foreign Governments “Deliberately” Twisting Laws of Armed Conflict on Israel

May 6, 2015

By Zach Pyzer/Tazpit News Agency

Jewish Press

<http://www.jewishpress.com/news/breaking-news/former-uk-cmdr-un-foreign-governments-deliberately-twisting-laws-of-armed-conflict-on-israel/2015/05/06/>

Shurat HaDin – Israel Law Center, an Israeli NGO specializing in International Law, opened a two-day conference in Jerusalem on Monday entitled *“*Towards a New Law of War*,”*which dealt with the rules of armed conflict, their interpretation and application.

Col. (ret.) Richard Kemp, former commander of the UK’s forces in Afghanistan, was one of the prominent participants at the conference.

Other international contributors included former IDF Chief of Staff Lt.-Gen. (ret.) Benny Gantz and former Deputy Chief of US Special Operations Command, Lt.-Gen. (ret.) David Fridovich, among other legal, military and counter-terrorism experts.

Kemp told *Tazpit News Agency* that the United Nations, foreign governments and human rights organizations were “deliberately misunderstanding, and misrepresenting, international laws of armed conflict,” specifically referring to the law of proportionality.

“These organizations and governments are portraying Israel as breaking the laws of armed conflict, which according to my knowledge, they’re not,” Kemp contended.

Meanwhile, he continued, those very same bodies were not adequately holding [Hamas responsible](http://www.breakingisraelnews.com/38718/idf-commander-calls-for-preemptive-strike-on-hamas-terror-tunnels-before-its-too-late/) for their own clear violations, particularly regarding “human shields.”

Gantz, in his [address on Monday](http://www.breakingisraelnews.com/38762/former-idf-chief-warns-entire-villages-in-lebanon-used-as-missile-launching-areas/), also touched upon this theme, claiming that “Both in Gaza and in Lebanon, the enemy [operates from within civilian populations](http://www.breakingisraelnews.com/18074/hamas-human-shield-policy-effect/).

“Don’t tell me it’s a kindergarten when I know it’s a rocket warehouse. Don’t tell me it’s a mosque when I know it’s a rocket warehouse,” the former Chief of Staff argued.

Gantz also called for revisions to the laws which govern armed conflict, insisting the “bad guys” no longer cared about breaking the rules.

Kemp, taking a different tack, told *Tazpit* that he didn’t see a need, or possibility, for changes to the laws themselves. Rather, he contended, there needed to be a reexamination of conventional interpretations to suit the realities of 21st Century conflict.

Panels on the conference’s second day discussed targeted killings, and the International Criminal Court (ICC) at The Hague.

On the subject of the ICC, Kemp maintained that Israel should not have to face the court, and not only because he sees the IDF as having acted in accordance with the law. “The ICC is set up for specific circumstances, and has jurisdiction where there is no legal system, or internal will to examine previous conduct,” he explained.

Kemp, who also led a joint UK-US counter-terrorism force in Afghanistan, added “Israel has a proven and respected legal process, which stands up to international standards.”