UN human rights official says Israel ‘can’t claim’ self-defense after deadly terror

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<https://www.timesofisrael.com/un-human-rights-official-says-israel-cant-claim-self-defense-after-deadly-terror/>

A lawyer heading the UN Human Rights Council’s open-ended investigation into Israel’s treatment of Palestinians said Saturday that Israel does not have the right to self-defense against Palestinians, after two deadly terror attacks and volleys of rocket fire against Israel.

Other UN human rights bodies have also been mum about terrorism and rockets — also fired from Lebanon and Syria — over the past week, while criticizing Israel.

Francesca Albanese, the UN special rapporteur for the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, said ‘the loss of life in the [occupied Palestinian territories and] Israel is devastating, especially at a time that should be of peace for all, Christians, Jews, Muslims.’

‘Israel has a right to defend itself, but can’t claim it when it comes to the people it oppresses/whose lands it colonizes,’ Albanese said on Twitter. Albanese regularly refers to Israel as a colonial enterprise that subjugates Palestinians, and rejects the conflict paradigm, assigning Israel sole responsibility for all disputes.

She said she was ‘saddened’ by the death of a tourist in a suspected terror attack in Tel Aviv on Friday, without assigning any responsibility. The tourist, Alessandro Parini, and Albanese are both Italian. All three fatalities in the recent attacks were civilians.

Albanese has not mentioned the recent rocket barrages or a terror attack that killed two sisters in the West Bank on Friday, but has repeatedly [lashed Israel](https://twitter.com/FranceskAlbs/status/1644006310831087617) over the past week, including by [calling for](https://twitter.com/FranceskAlbs/status/1644011742723186696) an International Criminal Court investigation into Israel.

Albanese has a [history of antisemitism](https://www.timesofisrael.com/un-palestinian-rights-officials-social-media-history-reveals-antisemitic-comments/), which she has not explicitly apologized for, denouncing criticism of her rhetoric as a smear campaign.

The UN Human Rights Council, based in Geneva, has [repeatedly](https://twitter.com/UN_SPExperts/status/1643982052356919296) criticized Israel [over the past week](https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/04/israel-un-expert-condemns-brutal-attacks-palestinians-al-aqsa-mosque), mostly for Israeli police forcefully removing Palestinian rioters from the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem’s flashpoint Temple Mount, but does not appear to have made any mention of Palestinian terror or rockets.

The Twitter accounts for the UN Human Rights Council, UN Special Procedures, UN Human Rights MENA, and UN Geneva have all shared anti-Israel content in the past week, but none has mentioned violence against Israel.

The UN Human Rights Council and Albanese’s office did not respond to requests for comment from The Times of Israel.

The office of UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and the UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Tor Wennesland [expressed concern](https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/04/1135457) about both Israeli activities at Al-Aqsa and rocket attacks in recent statements. Guterres heads the New York-based UN General Assembly, the parent organization of the UN Human Rights Council.

Both the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council have been heavily criticized by Israel and the US for a lopsided focus on the Jewish state. Israel has accused the Palestinians, who have nonmember observer state status at the UN, of trying to use the world body to circumvent peace negotiations.

Israel’s envoy to the Human Rights Council said last week that the body had passed its 100th resolution condemning Israel, representing around one-third of all condemnatory resolutions since its creation in 2006.

‘100 times, no matter the reality, no matter the situation, this Council has ignored the victims of Palestinian terrorism, Hamas and the [Palestinian Authority],’ Meirav Eilon Shahar [said](https://twitter.com/MeiravEShahar/status/1642901113224437762) in a statement.

The General Assembly [passed](https://www.timesofisrael.com/un-condemned-israel-more-than-all-other-countries-combined-in-2022-monitor/) more resolutions critical of Israel than against all other nations combined in 2022.

In addition to resolutions, there are two open-ended UN investigations into Israel, the only country under such scrutiny. Albanese heads one of the investigations, and a member of the other probe has [also made antisemitic comments](https://www.timesofisrael.com/member-of-un-gaza-probe-apologizes-for-jewish-lobby-remark-slammed-as-antisemitic/).

[US Congress members](https://www.timesofisrael.com/us-congress-members-call-on-un-leadership-to-remove-antisemitic-official/) in multiple letters and a proposed bill have called for an end to the investigations, saying the two cases illustrate the UN’s systemic, disproportionate focus on Israel. The commission is harshly critical of Israel, while almost entirely ignoring Palestinian terror.

Albanese said in 2014 that the ‘Jewish lobby’ controls the US, in comments first exposed by The Times of Israel. She has also sympathized with terror organizations, dismissed Israeli security concerns, compared Israelis to Nazis, accused the Jewish state of potential war crimes, said Israel controlled the BBC, and claimed that the Jewish state started wars out of greed. UN special rapporteurs are supposed to be unbiased.