[IDF Commander: Hamas Transformed the Gazan Civilian Sector Into War Zone](http://www.algemeiner.com/2015/05/10/idf-commander-hamas-transformed-the-gazan-civilian-sector-into-war-zone/%22%20%5Co%20%22Permanent%20Link%20to%20IDF%20Commander%3A%20Hamas%20Transformed%20the%20Gazan%20Civilian%20Sector%20Into%20War%20Zone)

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By David Daoud

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http://www.algemeiner.com/2015/05/10/idf-commander-hamas-transformed-the-gazan-civilian-sector-into-war-zone/

Speaking last week at the International Ground Forces Ceremony in Latrun, IDF Col. Uri Gordin — who commanded the Nahal Brigade during Operation Protective Edge last summer — discussed the differences between how Israel and Hamas treat their civilians.

He said Israel “aims to protect its civilian population. The Israeli fighter endangers himself to protect civilians.” By contrast, Hamas “was not trying to stop us, but wanted us to harm civilians… This way, it can negatively impact Israel’s legitimacy to act against it.”

Another of Hamas’ goals was to “obtain victory photos. One particular way was to kidnap soldiers. In such a situation, the fear of having a soldier kidnapped made us act differently.”

The asymmetry between Hamas and Israel was not only tactical, he said, but also moral.

Gordin said, “there is also a difference in values between us and Hamas. The commitment of the commanders is one aspect of it.” He said Hamas commanders would flee after the IDF inflicted casualties on their fighters.

In contrast to Israel, “their commitment to their fighters does not exist, whereas in the IDF, this is a supreme value.”

This moral asymmetry was most pronounced when it came to civilian lives, said Gordin.

“In the course of our operations, we found a Palestinian family inside a house. The unit carried out a non-violent entry despite the risk of being ambushed… This is just one example of the IDF’s concern for Palestinian civilians,” he said.

“Hamas constantly tried to drag us into urban areas,” said Gordin, which “forced us to use civilian buildings.”

“In one operation, they shot at us from inside a school,” recalled Gordin. “In a quarter of the buildings we entered, we found explosive devices.”

He said, “you cannot fight without entering into these buildings, and in every fourth house, we found a bomb. This is an operational challenge. The entire civilian space was organized as a war zone.”