International groups condemn UN probe on Israel, Palestinian fighting, cite 'bias'

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A coalition of over 26 international pro-[Israel](https://www.foxnews.com/category/world/world-regions/israel) groups on Tuesday condemned a United Nations probe into the May 2021 [Israeli-Palestinian conflict](https://www.foxnews.com/world/un-tours-gaza-destruction-israel-and-palestinians-claim-victory-during-cease-fire) set to be released next month, alleging "bias" and a violation of its own guiding principles.

The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) established a Commission of Inquiry to investigate the deadly 2021 conflict between Israel and the Palestinian territories, which left more than [270 people dead](https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements/2022/03/occupied-palestinian-territory#:~:text=In%20May%202021%2C%20hostilities%20in,Over%202%2C200%20Palestinians%20were%20injured.).

The 11-day clash erupted after protests in East Jerusalem turned violent and led to the deadliest fighting between Israeli and Palestinian forces since 2014 – resulting in the death of 261 Palestinians and 10 Israelis.

The probe was directed to investigate "all alleged violations of international humanitarian law and all alleged violations and abuses of international human rights law" in Israel, East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza Strip that led to the deadly conflict.

A three-person commission was also tasked with investigating "all underlying root causes of recurrent tensions, instability and protraction of conflict, including systematic discrimination and repression based on national, ethnic, racial or religious identity."

But more than a dozen groups from around the globe, led by the International Legal Forum (ILF), have condemned the probe as biased following its appointment of three officials, including former United Nations human rights chief Navi Pillay, to lead the investigations.

The groups pointed to Pillay’s role as high commissioner from 2008-2014, when she assembled multiple fact-finding missions into Israeli military operations in areas like the Gaza Strip.

Tensions between Israel and the U.N. have been strained since 1967 and the international body has maintained that Israel has illegally occupied areas of Palestinian territory since.

But Pillay’s reference to Israel as an "apartheid regime" has further called into question her ability to conduct an impartial investigation.

"This Commission makes a complete mockery of international law and is tantamount to an all-out assault against the Jewish state," international human rights lawyer and leader of the ILF, Arsen Ostrovsky, said in a statement to Fox News Digital. "It only underscores the UNHRC’s persistent, systematic and relentless bias against the State of Israel, which is consistently denied equality before the U.N. body and pronounced guilty from the outset. When it comes to the UNHRC, Israel does not even stand a chance."

But it wasn’t just Pillay the groups have raised issue with.

Chris Sidoti, a former human rights commissioner appointed to the investigative body, has reportedly called for the criminal prosecution of Israeli leaders as well as international sanctions, the ILF report said.

Former United Nations special rapporteur on adequate housing with the Human Rights Council, Miloon Kothari, was named the third commissioner in the investigation but his reported claims that Israel was to blame for the May 2021 conflict has also left the international groups frustrated.

"This Commission of Inquiry, singularly unprecedented in scope and unabashed in its anti-Israel bias, betrays the UNHRC’s own guiding requirements of ‘independence and impartiality’," the report led by the ILF said. "Each three of the individuals tasked with investigating this matter have long-standing and undeniable histories of anti-Israel bias and whitewashing of Palestinian terror."

The report instead called on the U.N. to focus on other areas of alleged human rights abuses by foreign actors like China, Russia and Venezuela.

The UNHRC probe is expected to release its findings in June as part of its 50th session.