# **NGO Monitor: Amnesty Plays Hamas Apologist in Gaza Report**

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NGO Monitor

http://www.ngo-monitor.org/press-releases/ngo\_monitor\_amnesty\_plays\_hamas\_apologist\_in\_gaza\_report\_/

Amnesty’s latest report on the recent Gaza conflict denies that Hamas used human shields, excuses their violations and supports a strategy for Israel’s isolation, according to NGO Monitor’s analysis.

The Amnesty report, titled ‘Operation Cast Lead: 22 Days of Death and Destruction’ again blames Israel almost exclusively for the conflict. Similarly, Amnesty’s 2009 Annual Report placed [sole responsibility](http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1243346492782&pagename=JPost%2FJPArticle%2FShowFull) on Israel for the breakdown of the ceasefire that led to Operation Cast Lead. In 117 pages of the latest report, a mere 8 are devoted to the ‘conduct of Palestinian armed groups’.  Although this brief reference condemns Hamas rocket fire on Israeli civilians as a war crime, Amnesty makes the tendentious claim that it “did not find evidence that Hamas or other Palestinian groups violated the laws of war to the extent repeatedly alleged by Israel.”

Ignoring well-documented evidence of Hamas’ extensive use of human shields (including [this video clip](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J08GqXMr3YE) of a gunmen grabbing a child as cover and [this detailed](http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/pdf/hamas_e068.pdf) independent report) Amnesty found “no evidence that Hamas or other fighters directed the movement of civilians to shield military objectives from attacks.”

‘Evidence’ in the report is based largely on ‘eyewitness’ testimony.  For example, “Atta Rmeilat, told Amnesty International that he was not aware of rockets being launched from near the house at any time in the past” – one of many claims that cannot be verified.

In a section on international humanitarian law, an area in which they lack professional expertise, Amnesty makes inaccurate and biased legal claims, including the absurd contention that ‘Israel is the occupying power in the Gaza Strip.’  This specious assertion wholly disregards Israel’s complete military and civilian evacuation of the area in 2005 and contravenes [international law](http://www.jcpa.org/text/puzzle1.pdf).

Amnesty’s report includes ‘aggressive’ quotes from IDF personnel intended to portray a disregard for Palestinian life.  Statements such as ‘let the mistakes be over their lives not ours’, ignores the very real threats faced by the IDF in Gaza, as shown by the fate of kidnapped soldier Gilad Shalit.  Indeed, Amnesty [continually fails](http://www.ngo-monitor.org/article/betrayed_by_silence_ngos_ignore_gilad_shalit_s_rights) to condemn the wholesale violation of Shalit’s basic human rights, an abuse also omitted from this report.

The recommendations are consistent with the ‘Durban strategy’ that seeks to isolate Israel as a pariah state.  Amnesty advocates an international arms embargo, which would deny Israel’s basic right to self-defense in the face of daily security threats.  The authors repeat calls on the international community to ‘exercise universal jurisdiction’ in national courts against ‘alleged perpetrators’ of war crimes, reflecting the ongoing ‘[lawfare](http://www.ngo-monitor.org/data/images/File/lawfare-monograph.pdf)’ campaign to delegitimize Israel.

NGO Monitor’s Executive Director, Prof Gerald Steinberg said, “Amnesty’s latest publication is further evidence of their obsessive attempts to condemn and isolate Israel. The lack of expertise and the façade of research are reflected by the effort to erase evidence of the massive use of human shields by Hamas and its aggression.

Amnesty’s call to isolate Israel through boycotts and manipulative legal processes constitutes a pernicious and immoral campaign. It is entirely inconsistent with the legitimate and impartial pursuit of universal human rights.”