Israel Fires Back at UN Report Accusing It and Hamas of Violating World Law in Gaza War

June 22, 2015

Fox News

<http://www.foxnews.com/world/2015/06/22/israel-fires-back-at-un-report-accusing-it-and-hamas-violating-world-law-in/>

A UN report released Monday found both Israel and Palestinians committed “serious violations” of international law and possible war crimes in last summer’s seven-week battle in Gaza, a finding Israel swiftly denounced.

The [report from the Geneva-based UN Human Rights Council](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/CoIGazaConflict/Pages/ReportCoIGaza.aspx) was expected to come down on Israel, which publicized a preemptive report last week from military and political leaders around the world that determined Israel went to lengths above and beyond international requirements to minimize civilian casualties.

The report called for Israel to “break with its recent lamentable track record in holding wrongdoers accountable,” but also cited Palestinian militants for the “inherently indiscriminate nature” of rocket and mortar attacks on Israel and condemned Hamas’ summary executions of suspected collaborators.

Israel launched "Operation Protective Edge" on July 8, 2014 -- which lasted for seven weeks and left more than 2,000 dead -- after enduring daily rocket and tunnel attacks mounted from Gaza, as well as the kidnapping and murder of three Israeli teens by Hamas operatives.

The report also cited Israel’s restrictions on Gaza residents’ travel and trade as a contributing factor to the summer war, saying, “the blockade and the military operation have led to a protection crisis and chronic, widespread and systematic violations of human rights.”

Israel swiftly moved to dispute the report’s findings.

“The Palestinians have moved the battlefield to the United Nations," said Israel's ambassador to the UN, Ron Prosor. "The UN is the true frontlines, the Human Rights Council serves as the soldiers of the Palestinians and Hamas, and this biased report is their weapon. The UN has been taken hostage by terrorist organizations, and in this battle the international community will lose. If we continue to give legitimacy to this attack, we will all pay the price.

"Any comparison between IDF soldiers who seek to defend innocent civilians, and the terrorists who indiscriminately target Israelis while deliberately endangering Palestinians is completely unacceptable,” he said.

There was no immediate comment from Hamas, which the report said also may have committed war crimes in firing rockets at Israeli civilian population centers.

Monday’s report said the devastation in Gaza was “unprecedented,” and determined that 2,251 Palestinians were killed and 18,000 homes destroyed in the densely populated Palestinian enclave ruled by internationally recognized terrorist group Hamas.

“Palestinian and Israeli children were savagely affected by the events,” the report stated. “Children on both sides suffered from bed-wetting, shaking at night, clinging to parents, nightmares and increased levels of aggressiveness.”

The Israeli government refused to cooperate with the Human Rights Council investigation, citing past reports it believes were biased against the Jewish State, and a former panel chairman who led inquiries even as he did legal work for the Palestine Liberation Organization.

The report could be used in an ongoing war crimes inquiry by the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court.

Last week’s report, by the High Level International Military Group, a consortium of some of the world’s leading military experts, laid much of the blame on the Palestinian side.

“Israel not only met a reasonable international standard of observance of the laws of armed conflict, but in many cases significantly exceeded that standard,” stated the report, sponsored by the Friends of Israel Initiative.

The High Level Military Group's report was conducted by 11 high-ranking former military commanders and senior international politicians from around the world. The panel includes the former chiefs of staff of the German, Italian and Spanish armed forces, a former commander of the Australian Defense College and the former Commander of British Forces in Afghanistan. It also includes several U.S. diplomatic and military leaders, including a former ambassador at large for war crimes issues and a  former senior United States Air Force officer in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Gen. Klaus Naumann, former chief of staff of the German armed forces and chairman of the NATO Military Committee, who led the fact-finding mission on which the HLIMG report is based, said Israel paid a price for following the law.

“A measure of the seriousness with which Israel took its moral duties and its responsibilities under the laws of armed conflict is that in some cases Israel’s scrupulous adherence to the laws of war cost Israeli soldiers’ and civilians’ lives,” Naumann said.