US Jewish Organizations Deride UN Report on Gaza War

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<http://www.timesofisrael.com/us-jewish-organizations-deride-un-report-on-gaza-war/>

US Jewish organizations on Monday responded with sharp criticism to a United Nations Human Rights Council report that found Israel may have committed war crimes in the Gaza Strip during fighting last year against Hamas and scorned the document for viewing the IDF and the Palestinian terror group in the same light.

The American Israel Public Affairs Committee attacked the notion that Israel and Hamas had an equal moral standing.

“Hamas indiscriminately waged a war of aggression against Israeli civilians while inhumanely exploiting Gaza residents as human shields,” AIPAC said in a statement. “Any suggestion of moral symmetry between the actions of Israel and those of the terrorist organization Hamas is a malicious affront to the truth.”

AIPAC cautioned that further reports like the one on the Gaza conflict could be “eroding the credibility” of the UNHCR.

The UN Human Rights Council report placed blame on both parties but focused more on Israel’s role. It also accepted the Palestinian death count, by which 1,462 out of a total of 2,251 Palestinians killed were civilians — a 65 percent ratio.

[Israel’s internal report](http://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-shifts-to-offense-ahead-of-un-report-on-gaza-war/) found that 56% of the dead were civilians, a figure that supports Israel’s stated emphasis on proportionality and discernment during war. The fighting raged for 50 days in July and August last year and was dubbed Operation Protective Edge by the IDF.

“The UN Human Rights Council continues to bring shame on itself,” the Anti-Defamation League’s Abraham H. Foxman wrote in a critique of the report, which he described as “illegitimate in its conception, inadequate in its execution and immoral in its conclusions.”

The report, he said,”is the latest example in a long string of calumnies against Israel by the Council, reinforcing the inherent bias against Israel and further eroding the credibility of the international response to grave violations of human rights around the world.”

World Jewish Congress CEO Robert Singer said that while Hamas provoked the war, it hardly gets a mention in the report.

“It is most unfortunate that here is yet another UN Human Rights Council report that puts the democratic State of Israel and the terror group Hamas on the same level, that unfairly accuses Israel of deliberately killing civilians in Gaza and that fails to address Israel’s right under international law to defend its very existence against the threats coming from Gaza,” he said.

“The cause of the Gaza conflict last year was the behavior of Hamas and other armed groups in Gaza. Hamas was the aggressor, not Israel,” Singer noted. “But strangely, Hamas is barely mentioned in this report.”

Singer announced that the WJC together with dozens of other NGOs planned to hold a pro-Israel rally in Geneva on June 20 to coincide with a scheduled UNHRC debate on the report.

Democratic Representative Ted Deutch, a Jewish Florida senator, posted a tweet calling the report biased and lamenting its consideration of the IDF and Hamas as moral equivalents.

“This biased UN report tries to equate Israel’s efforts to minimize casualties & defend its people w/ terrorists’ goal of mass casualties,” he wrote.

The B’nai B’rith organization dismissed the integrity of the report and declared it should not be taken seriously.

“The report inherently lacks credibility and should not be taken as a serious evaluation of the necessary counterterrorism actions of the Israel Defense Forces,” B’nai B’rith said in a statement.

“Because of the council’s singular and obsessive focus on Israel, anything produced by it on related matters must be viewed with a high level of skepticism.”

Israeli [officials lambasted the UNHRC review](http://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-slams-politically-motivated-and-morally-flawed-un-gaza-report/), led by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu who called the report “biased.”

Israel says that up to half of the Palestinians killed were fighters and blames Hamas for all civilian deaths in Gaza, since Hamas and other terror groups placed military infrastructure in residential areas of the crowded enclave.

During the fighting Hamas-led Palestinian terror groups fired over 4,500 rockets and mortar bombs indiscriminately at Israeli towns and cities, with some of the projectiles reaching as far as Tel Aviv in the center and Haifa in the north of the country.