

Can the United Nations Ever Be ‘Scrupulously Objective’ With Israel?

Last summer, the United Nations’ Human Rights Council’s Commission of Inquiry released its 183-page investigative report into the 2014 Gaza War, blaming both Israel and Hamas for possible violations of international law, yet concluding, “The onus remains on Israel.”

The U.N. report differs sharply from another report that not only absolves Israel of wrongdoing but praises the Jewish state for its high standards.

Mary McGowan Davis, the former New York Supreme Court justice who led the U.N. Human Rights Council (UNHRC) commission, called the U.N. investigation “scrupulously objective.”

Seventy-three Israelis died in the war, along with more than 2,200 Arabs. The UNHRC report calls on Israel to “break with its recent lamentable track record” and hold wrongdoers accountable and to provide details on its military decisions to determine their legality—even though doing so would pose a security risk.

It also concludes Israel “may not have done everything feasible to avoid or limit civilian casualties.”

The UNHRC report radically contradicts another report from the High Level International Military Group established by U.N. Watch, a nongovernmental organization based in Geneva that investigated the same war and found Israel blameless.

Israel called the UNHRC committee a “kangaroo court” that failed to recognize the “profound difference” between “Israel’s moral behavior” and that of terrorist organizations

like Hamas.

The UNHRC has been controversial ever since it was established in 2006. The George W. Bush administration refused to participate in it, saying it was loaded with repressive member-states that were irredeemably tipped toward serving the interests of human rights violators. The Obama administration reversed the policy.

In a 2009 *Forbes* magazine piece, Claudia Rosett cited UNHRC's deplorable history of continually condemning Israel, while failing to investigate some of the world's worst violators:

"Excusing, glossing over or simply ignoring the violations of some of the worst abusers," she wrote, "the Council, as noted by a Geneva-based non-governmental organization, U.N. Watch, has devoted more than 80 percent of its country resolutions to condemning Israel, while 'eroding free speech protections in the name of Islamic sensitivities and steadily eliminating country investigations in places like Belarus, Congo, Cuba, Liberia and Sudan.'"

In 2013, *BBC News* reported that five countries on the UNHRC (China, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Vietnam and Algeria) actually "denied access to U.N. human rights monitors keen to investigate alleged abuses." Member-states that control the UNHRC repress their populations and provide little if any rights to their citizens; yet they judge other nations whose track records are far better than their own.

The UNHRC passes more resolutions against Israel than all other countries in the world combined.

By contrast, the High Level International Military Group's members consisted of former chiefs of staff, generals, senior officers, political leaders and officials from the United States, Germany, the United Kingdom, Holland, Spain, Italy, Australia and Colombia—countries whose citizens enjoy human rights.

Gen. Klaus Naumann, former chief of staff of the German Armed Forces and chairman of the NATO Military Committee, declared, "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."

They noted Israel sought to avoid war and took unprecedented measures to warn and protect Gaza's civilians.

The report declared, "Israel not only met a reasonable international standard of observance of the laws of armed conflict, but in many cases significantly exceeded that standard."

That group's findings inevitably lead to the question of whether any U.N. body can ever be "scrupulously objective" when it comes to Israel.

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