**UN call to blacklist the IDF – a disgrace to human rights organizations**

*Human rights organizations called for the United Nation’s Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, to add the IDF to the blacklist of states and armed organizations responsible for serial injury to children during armed conflict, alongside brutal terrorist and guerilla organizations such as ISIS and Al Qaeda. This attests to the international community’s deep misunderstanding of the difficulty sovereign states face in fighting terrorist / guerilla organizations while minimizing the collateral damage caused during fighting.*

For years the state of Israel has endured a deep lack of understanding regarding its war against terrorist organizations. A prominent case in point is the Goldstone Report that was published after Operation Cast Lead. This report served as a ‘moral earthquake’ as far as Israel was concerned, because it stated that Israel had a policy of deliberately harming civilian non-combatants. In an op-ed published two years later in *The Washington Post*, Goldstone himself retracted this statement and admitted that “If I had known then what I know now, the Goldstone Report would have been a different document”. He claimed that the international laws of war should be implemented by non-state organizations, such as Hamas, to the same extent in which they should be implemented by the armies of sovereign states. According to Goldstone, lack of implementation of the international laws of war during warfare should lead to investigation of the violating party. This claim is compelling testimony to the lack of understanding that the terrorist organizations, such as Hamas which the IDF is fighting, have an entirely different value system from that which is acceptable to Israel as a democratic country. These organizations tend not to take human life into consideration – not the lives of their own activists, or the lives of the population in whose name they are fighting, nor the lives of the enemy. Thus, although they semi-military and similar to a regular state army – possessing large quantities of ammunition, an organized military force and sophisticated military tactics and strategy – not only do they not fight according to the principles of international laws of war, they deliberately violate them. One of their main strategies is to act against Israeli civilian populations and IDF soldiers from within their own civilian populations in order to deliberately distort the distinction between the civilians and themselves—for instance, launching rockets or mortar shells from civilian facilities such as schools, mosques, churches and hospitals. In this way they hope to force the IDF to target those facilities and thus cause the IDF to lose its legitimacy to act, bringing about the condemnation of the IDF and of Israel by the international community.

Such acts by these organizations from within civilian populations lay the responsibility for endangering civilian security on them and not on the IDF. Nevertheless, during battle, the IDF – as a moral army – is undoubtedly responsible for maintaining not only the human dignity of Israel’s civilians and soldiers, but also the human dignity of the opposing side’s civilians and soldiers. Meaning, the IDF must strive to minimize the damage caused to the civilian population of the other side as much as possible. However, it must be understood that so long as the UN and human rights organizations are unable to comprehend how different war between a sovereign state and a terrorist organization is from wars between sovereign states; and until the rules of war and moral justifications for the various actions taken during combat are adjusted accordingly; we will continue to see international condemnation of Israeli and IDF actions.

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