

## Human rights hypocrisy in Gaza

Gerald M. Steinberg, Special to National Post | Nov 20, 2012 2:56 PM ET

Human rights and international law, or at least the accompanying rhetoric, are an integral part of 21st-century warfare. In Iraq, Afghanistan and whenever Israel acts to defend its citizens, a cacophony of United Nations ideologues and their allies in groups such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch automatically condemn the use of force as a “war crime.” In contrast, their silence is deafening in the face of mass attacks conducted by terrorists from “the Global South,” and in which the victims are from democracies.

This moral hypocrisy is on display in the “human rights discourse” during the latest round of warfare between Israel and the Hamas terror group that controls Gaza (a member in good standing of the Global South). In the first hours following the long-delayed Israeli response to rocket attacks that terrorized millions of civilians, the flood of righteous condemnations began. Without any evidence, Israel was immediately accused of “war crimes” and “human rights violations,” and these claims are often copied in the media without thought or verification, fueling the campaigns that demonize Israel.

Amnesty International — which has a history of intense anti-Israeli ideological bias hidden behind a thin façade of human rights — immediately asserted that “Israel’s assassination of Ahmad al-Jabari, the head of Hamas’ military wing has placed civilians in Gaza and southern Israel at grave risk.” The thousands of rocket attacks targeting Israeli civilians, for which Jabari was responsible, including dozens in recent days, were ignored because they did not fit the anti-Israel straightjacket worn by many Amnesty officials. Krystian Benedict, Amnesty U.K.’s “campaigns manager,” has flooded his Twitter account with snide attacks on Israel.

Amnesty’s statement on the Jabari killing also repeated the bogus legal claims used in the previous political wars against Israel, including Lebanon (2006) and Gaza (December 2008/January 2009) and then reiterated in the discredited Goldstone report and other UN frameworks. In the latest version, they claimed to have “gathered evidence” of “indiscriminate attacks ... in densely-populated residential areas that will inevitably harm civilians.”

In reality, Amnesty has no ability to “gather evidence” in a war zone — instead, they simply repeat the “eyewitness testimony” from the spokespeople of the given terror groups — whether Taliban in Afghanistan, al-Qaeda in Iraq, Hezbollah in Lebanon or Hamas in Gaza.

And in their warped logic, it is not Hamas — which places and launches deadly rockets from homes and schools — that is guilty of war crimes, but rather the Israeli forces defending their citizens.

Similarly, an Oxfam International statement implied that Israel was not abiding by “obligations under international law.” Oxfam, which ostensibly is a humanitarian aid organization, has no credentials to make legal judgments. To make matters worse, they repeat the immoral equivalence between deliberate Palestinian terrorist attacks launched from civilian areas and directly targeting civilians with necessary Israeli self-defence. Oxfam called on Israel to halt military operations in Gaza, while offering no alternatives to protect Israel’s population.

Indeed, Amnesty, Oxfam and other NGOs have no independent means of analyzing any military activity and determining the facts or legality. In April 2002, it was an Amnesty “expert” — Derek Pounder — who appeared on the BBC and “confirmed” the “Jenin massacre” lie. This NGO human

rights expert, like many others, including Goldstone, simply repeated Palestinian claims — that is the entirety of their methodology.

The strategy of using human rights claims to attack Israel was adopted in September 2001, during the infamous NGO Forum of the UN Durban conference, in which 1,500 delegations and 5,000 officials, including officials from Amnesty and Human Rights Watch, participated. (Canadian officials under the Liberal government played a central role in promoting and funding this travesty, in which “anti-racism” was used as a grounds for racist attacks.) This forum adopted a final declaration, written during a preparatory conference held in Teheran, which used the rhetoric of “apartheid,” “genocide” and “war crimes” to promote the “complete isolation” of Israel. The Durban strategy was implemented in Jenin, Lebanon (in 2006) and Gaza on many occasions, and again in the current round.

As these and other examples demonstrate, the human rights network, including once honourable groups such as Amnesty International, Oxfam and Human Rights Watch, has lost its moral compass. These organizations, in close co-operation with the thoroughly corrupted United Nations Human Rights Council, have exploited universal ethical principles and the real suffering of black South Africans under apartheid to wage political war against Israeli democracy. By abusing allegations of “war crimes” in these ideological campaigns, they are undermining the legal structures established to bring genocidal dictators to justice.

The moral foundations of universal human rights are incompatible with these anti-democratic double standards and hypocrisy.

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