

Israeli Defense Minister Promises to Kill More Palestinian Civilians and Threatens to Nuke Iran

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Image: Moshe Yaalon speaking at the 2015 Shurat HaDin conference.

Israeli defense minister [Moshe Yaalon](#) on Tuesday said Israel would attack entire civilian neighborhoods during any future assault on [Gaza](#) or [Lebanon](#).

Speaking at a conference in Jerusalem, Yaalon threatened that

“we are going to hurt Lebanese civilians to include kids of the family. We went through a very long deep discussion ... we did it then, we did it in [the] Gaza Strip, we are going to do it in any round of hostilities in the future.”

The Israeli official also appeared to threaten to drop a nuclear bomb on [Iran](#), although he said “we are not there yet.”

In response to a question about Iran, Yaalon said that “in certain cases” when “we feel like we don’t have the answer by surgical operations” Israel might take “certain steps” such as the Americans did in “Nagasaki and Hiroshima, causing at the end the fatalities of 200,000.”

Relating a July 2013 meeting with UN secretary-general [Ban Ki-moon](#), Yaalon recalled promising Israel would bomb the entire Gaza City neighborhood of [Shujaiya](#).

He showed Ban photos of villages in Lebanon and of “certain neighborhoods in Gaza, to include well-known Shujaiya, with many red spots” which he claimed were “terror assets in the densely populated urban area. And I said – July 2013 – we are going to hit it.”

Yaalon was true to his word. The [Shujaiya massacre](#) was among the most brutal examples of Israeli war crimes during last summer’s attack on the Gaza Strip.

Israel [killed 2,257 Palestinians](#) during the 51-day assault, according to the United Nations monitoring group [OCHA](#). Of that number, OCHA [says 70 percent were civilians](#), including 563 children (Defence for Children International-Palestine has documented [547 child deaths](#)).

The 20 July 2014 attack on Shujaiya was the most bloody day of the war, when Israel bombed the entire neighborhood indiscriminately. Initial [reports on the day said 60 bodies](#) had been brought out of the rubble. Later reports suggested death tolls of [90](#) or [120](#).

Threat of BDS

The conference was titled "[Towards a new law of war](#)" and was intended to help Israel use "[lawfare](#)" to defend its crimes in courts around the world.

The other main theme of Yaalon's speech, which closed the conference, was the "challenge" of BDS, [boycott, divestment and sanctions](#). The Palestinian-led global movement aims to hold Israel accountable for its crimes.

Yaalon sought to cast the grassroots activist movement as a kind of military front. He said that "delegitimization, BDS and lawfare" were just "another tool" in the war of Israel's enemies.

He complained that he had been unable to visit European countries because of the possibility he could have been arrested for suspected war crimes under universal jurisdiction law: "I prefer not to go to [the] UK, to [London](#) for about 10 years, or to [Spain](#) for a while."

"Collateral damage"

In 2011, under Israeli pressure, the [UK government changed its laws to make it easier](#) for Israeli war crimes suspects to visit the country. Although the changes have meant that several high-level Israeli politicians and military officers have been able to visit since, in 2013 retired [Major-General Doron Almog canceled a visit to London](#) because of an outstanding warrant for his arrest related to war crimes committed in the Gaza Strip.

Yaalon lamented that Israeli soldiers now have to be taught that "we should be ready to give up a visit to London ... but it's not fair, it is not just."

But, apparently referring to the law changes, he said they "found the common language to discuss these issues with our friends, with our allies."

He also described criticism of Israel in international bodies such as the [UN Human Rights Council](#) as a "war after the war" and advocated that "we should fight them back."

He said there should be no investigations of Israeli soldiers just because of "collateral damage" - a euphemism for the killing of civilians.

"Lawfare" conference

The conference was organized by [Shurat HaDin](#), a group of Israeli lawyers which is at the forefront of using courts around the world to defend Israeli war crimes, and attack Palestine solidarity groups.

In 2013, as I reported for The Electronic Intifada at the time, it was revealed that the group has extremely close ties to the Israeli security establishment, to the extent of [acting as a proxy group for the Mossad](#), Israel's deadly overseas spy agency.



Shurat HaDin's leader Nitsana Darshan-Leitner introduced Yaalon to the conference.

During his speech Yaalon heaped effusive praise on Shurat HaDin and its leader Nitsana Darshan-Leitner. He thanked the group

“for the activities of Shurat HaDin fighting one of Israel’s challenges of today, the lawfare, BDS, delegitimization of the state of Israel ... Nitsana thank you very much for what you are doing for the state of Israel.”

He said Israel and its supporters should use courts around the world “to fight them back,” meaning critics of Israel, and that this is exactly what Shurat HaDin does.

“*Hasbara* is not the right term,” he continued in the question and answer session, “it’s a war ... Each of us can become to be a warrior in this war. By talkbacking, by blogging, by disseminating articles, by raising our case.”

[*Hasbara*](#) (literally “explanation” in Hebrew) is the Israeli term for propaganda.

Justifying Israeli attacks on civilians was the main theme of the conference. Speaker after speaker lined up to reinterpret international law so that it would, supposedly, allow the killing of Palestinian and other Arab civilians.

This was justified with [familiar canards](#) about the supposed use by Palestinian resistance factions of “human shields,” which then inevitably results in Palestinian civilian dead. In other words, Israel was being forced to kill civilians.

Yaalon did similar by saying that the civilian neighborhoods Israel had bombed had contained “rocket rooms.”

[The New York Times reported Wednesday](#) that Yaalon is likely to continue as defense minister in the newly-agreed government headed by his Likud party leader Benjamin Netanyahu, in coalition with the Jewish Home and other ultra-right-wing parties.

The Electronic Intifada watched the entire conference by livestream and will be reporting more detail soon.

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