

Israeli Gaza War Crimes Investigation

By [Stephen Lendman](#)

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Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

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Last August, Human Rights Council (HRC) President Baudelaire Ndong Ella announced the formation of an “independent, international commission of inquiry” into war crimes committed during Israel’s Operation Protective Edge (OPE).

International human rights law expert Professor William Schabas was appointed to chair a three-person panel. His special focus is genocide.

On January 30, Israel’s Geneva-based UN envoy, Eviator Manor, outrageously accused him of a “blatant conflict of interest.”

A typical Israeli stunt. Demanded his immediate dismissal. Months earlier, Israel refused to cooperate with HRC’s investigation. Outrageously called it a “kangaroo court” proceeding.

On February 2, Schabas announced his resignation. Citing unfounded Israeli allegations of bias for PLO consulting work he performed.

Explained he was paid \$1,300 for an October 2012 legal opinion. Called it no different from similar services he provided other organizations.

Said he acted with full “independence and impartiality” as HRC chairman. Called himself victimized by “malicious attacks.” Didn’t want accusations casting a cloud over his work.

“My views on Israel and Palestine as well as on many other issues were well known and very public,” he said.

“This work in defence of human rights appears to have made me a huge target for malicious attacks.”

“I believe that it is difficult for the work to continue while a procedure is underway to consider whether the chair of the commission should be removed.”

Netanyahu responded as expected. Said HRC “is the same body that only in 2014 passed more resolutions against Israel than against Iran, Syria and North Korea combined.”

He failed to explain Israel deserves much more condemnation and full accountability for its high crimes against peace.

Its appalling human rights records is exceeded only by America’s. It’s yet to answer for its crimes.

Netanyahu consistently blames victims. Irresponsibly calls Hamas a “terrorist organization.”

Horrific Israeli state terror goes unmentioned. Its apartheid exceeds South Africa's horrors.

Netanyahu said Hamas should "be investigated and not Israel." Outrageously called the IDF's genocidal OPE crimes self-defense.

"Israel will continue to defend itself against terror directed against it on all fronts," Netanyahu hyperventilated.

Ultrationalist defrocked/reinstated Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman absurdly said "appointing Schabas to investigate Israel was like appointing Cain to investigate Abel."

In mid-January, Israel launched a smear campaign to discredit him. In 2012, he called Netanyahu his "favorite person" to bring to the International Criminal Court.

After his appointment, Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesman Emmanuel Nahshon called HRC's commission "born in sin."

"Its mandate...highly distorted, and its head (indicted) Israel even before (beginning his) work."

"This is a sham, a mockery of justice and reminiscent of the Inquisition trials," he claimed.

Hard-right Economy Minister Naftali Bennett said HRC "only investigates Israel...(T)his is a bad committee that has no legitimacy."

Other Israeli extremists voiced similar criticisms. Some demand HRC's process abandoned altogether.

Investigators are near completing their work. Gathering evidence from surviving victims and witnesses.

It remains to be seen what type report it issues. Due on March 23. Expect much less than what's warranted.

Following Israel's 2008-09 Operation Cast Lead, Justice Richard Goldstone issued a scathing report.

Citing clear evidence of "serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law were committed by Israel during the Gaza conflict, and that Israel committed actions amounting to war crimes, and possibly crimes against humanity."

Later falling from grace. Softening his initial condemnation. Overlooking inconvenient facts. Including his own findings.

Capitulating to powerful interests he initially condemned. At the expense of his honor, character, dignity and high-mindedness.

Abandoned in a single [op-ed public statement](#). Too late to retract after publishing.

Ignored how Israeli internal investigations consistently whitewash its crimes of war and against humanity.

Following Cast Lead, the Palestinian Center for Human Rights said:

“Rather than uphold the rule of law, the Israeli investigative and judicial system artfully manipulated (its findings) to provide an illusion of investigative and judicial rigour, while systematically perpetuating pervasive impunity” for crimes too grave to ignore.

New York Judge Mary MxGowan Davis replace Schabas as HRC chairperson.

From 1986 - 1998, she was Acting Justice of the New York State Supreme Court. In 2004 and 2005, she worked in Afghanistan mentoring Afghan lawyers.

She was involved with establishing Sierra Leone and Cambodia special courts for war criminals.

Worked as a consultant for the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda.

Served on the boards of the International Association of Women Judges Board of Managerial Trustees, the International Judicial Academy, and American Association of the International Commission of Jurists.

It remains to be seen if she'll hold Israel's Israel's feet to the fire as warranted. Or whether she'll fall from grace like Goldstone.

Clear evidence shows Israel committed genocidal high crimes against peace. Near daily atrocities demanding accountability.

Political expediency usually matters more than facts. Given Davis' background, expect far less criticism than Israel deserves. Israeli media responded favorably to her appointment.

Said she'll be much more sympathetic to Israel's position. She was involved in implementing the Goldstone committee's findings.

Israel cooperated with her at the time for good reason. She was soft on its high crimes.

Said its officials “devoted substantial resources to investigating more than 400 complaints of improper behavior in Gaza.”

Ignored Israel's whitewash. Called its investigation appropriately conducted. Goldstone's fall from grace followed.

Absurdly claiming if information Davis presented was available to him at the time, his account would have been entirely different.

In other words, clear irrefutable evidence doesn't matter. Israeli produced whitewash overrides it. Odds favor something similar this time.

Especially with Davis in charge. Expect Israel criticized too little to matter. Expect Hamas unjustifiably bashed for its justifiable self-defense.

Expect no Israeli accountability like after Cast Lead or Pillar of Cloud. Expect more lawless aggression on Gaza ahead at Israel's discretion.

Perhaps greater mass murder and destruction than before. Expect Hamas blamed for

Israel's crimes like always. Expect justice consistently denied.

Stephen Lendman lives in Chicago. He can be reached at lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net. His new book as editor and contributor is titled "Flashpoint in Ukraine: US Drive for Hegemony Risks WW III." <http://www.claritypress.com/LendmanIII.html> Visit his blog site at sjlendman.blogspot.com. Listen to cutting-edge discussions with distinguished guests on the Progressive Radio News Hour on the Progressive Radio Network. It airs three times weekly: live on Sundays at 1PM Central time plus two prerecorded archived programs.

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About the author:

Stephen Lendman lives in Chicago. He can be reached at lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net. His new book as editor and contributor is titled "Flashpoint in Ukraine: US Drive for Hegemony Risks WW III." <http://www.claritypress.com/LendmanIII.html> Visit his blog site at sjlendman.blogspot.com. Listen to cutting-edge discussions with distinguished guests on the Progressive Radio News Hour on the Progressive Radio Network. It airs three times weekly: live on Sundays at 1PM Central time plus two prerecorded archived programs.

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