

# Israel Bombing Elementary Schools Not Considered War Crimes, “Collateral Damage” according to UN Commissioned Task Force

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Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)  
Theme: [Militarization and WMD](#), [United Nations](#)

In-depth Report: [PALESTINE](#)

*The High Level International Military Group—a UN-commissioned group made up of 11 former chiefs of staff, generals, senior officers, and political leaders from the U.S., Germany, Spain, Holland, the U.K., Italy, Australia, and Colombia—[dismissed all charges and allegations](#) of Israel’s war crimes after investigating last summer’s attack on Gaza.*

The [report](#) was issued on Saturday following the group’s five-day trip to the region in March. It ultimately claims that Israel acted responsibly and with much restraint when the IDF bombarded Gaza last summer during what is known as “Operation Protective Edge.” The report even refers to the attack as “legitimate.”

An excerpt from the report states the following:

“We were well aware of the allegations made by some governments, the United Nations, human rights groups and the media, that Israel acted outside the laws of armed conflict in Gaza. Some have suggested that the IDF lacked restraint or even deliberately targeted innocent civilians.”

Nevertheless, the investigators drew the following conclusion:

We examined the circumstances that led to the tragic conflict last summer and are in no doubt that this was not a war that Israel wanted. In reality Israel sought to avoid the conflict and exercised great restraint over a period of months before the war when its citizens were targeted by sporadic rocket attacks from Gaza. Once the war had begun, Israel made repeated efforts to terminate the fighting. The war that Israel was eventually compelled to fight against Hamas and other Gaza extremists was a legitimate war, necessary to defend its citizens and its territory against sustained attack from beyond its borders.

The report appears to be nothing close to the results of a “fact-finding mission,” as was claimed, but rather a written defense of the Israeli government.

It also claims:

“But none of us is aware of any army that takes such extensive measures as

did the IDF last summer to protect the lives of the civilian population in such circumstances.”

Those extensive measures [included](#) killing 2,191 Palestinians, 519 of whom were children, injuring 11,231 Palestinians, damaging 61,800 Palestinian homes, displacing 108,000 Palestinians, damaging 220 Palestinian schools, 278 worship centers, and 62 hospitals, and overall costing a total of \$7.8 million in damages.

The report gets worse:

“The measures taken were often far in excess of the requirements of the Geneva Conventions.”

If that is the case, then maybe we should revise the Geneva Conventions! But wait, they’re not finished yet:

*“We understand that over 2,000 people died in Gaza during the conflict. In a population of approximately 1.8 million, over a 50-day period many would have died of causes unrelated to the fighting.”*

This is tantamount to saying, “Eh, well, they would’ve died anyway. So who cares?”

Furthermore, the report went on to say that that the members of the group are in agreement “*on the record,*” with U.S. Army General Martin Dempsey, who said last November that “*Israel went to extraordinary lengths to limit collateral damage and civilian casualties.*”

By far, one of the most blatant statements that points out the biased nature of the report is the closing statement. It reads:

“The project was sponsored by the Friends of Israel Initiative.”

Overall, it is hard to find this report entirely “factual,” as it has been called by its commissioners. How can an investigation of a war that lasted 50 days be carried properly in a matter of only five days? Furthermore, how can they reduce the value of over 2,000 lives and treat those lives as if they were merely collateral damage, and that such a loss was to be expected anyhow? To say the least, this letter should be considered nothing more than a distastefully written doctrine of Israeli superiority and righteousness, bigotry toward Palestinians, and a testimony of utter disregard for human life. It is nothing short of appalling that it is being passed off as a formal, investigative report.

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