



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on May 28, 2015

Report Says Hamas Tortured Israeli “Collaborators” and Fatah Members in Gaza

A report released on May 26 by Amnesty International said that Hamas — the more violent faction of the Palestinian National Authority that took control of Gaza from Fatah in 2007 — carried out a “brutal campaign of abductions, torture and unlawful killings against Palestinians accused of ‘collaborating’ with Israel and others.”

The report, which carried the lengthy title, “‘Strangling Necks’: Abduction, Torture and Summary Killings of Palestinians by Hamas Forces During the 2014 Gaza/Israel Conflict,” said that Hamas carried out its atrocities during last year’s conflict between Hamas and Israel. It said the abuses occurred “at the time of Israel’s 50-day military offensive against Gaza, codenamed Operation Protective Edge, which began on 8 July and ended on 26 August 2014.”

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Hamas has been designated as a terrorist organization by the European Union, Canada, Israel, Japan, and the United States.

Among the abuses cited in the report were the extrajudicial execution of at least 23 Palestinians and the arrest and torture of dozens of others, including members and supporters Fatah, the less violent branch of the old Palestinian Authority that abandoned Gaza to Hamas and now controls mainly the West Bank area.

However, the report was almost as critical of Israel as it was of Hamas, and accused Israeli military forces of committing “war crimes and other grave violations of international law during Operation Protective Edge,” including attacks that “killed more than 1,500 civilians, including more than 500 children, and caused massive destruction to civilian infrastructure.”

Without delving into the impossible challenge of determining the exact number of civilian casualties during an armed conflict, such casualties are always an unfortunate consequence of war, even wars waged for just reasons. Operation Protective Edge was launched as a retaliatory measure after armed groups in Gaza had launched 4,564 projectiles at Israel, according to a report in the *Jerusalem Post*. The *Post* did not dismiss Amnesty International’s charges against Israel in the report, however, and posted an article on May 27 that quoted the report’s charges against Hamas — even when they also pointed a finger at Israeli forces.





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“It is absolutely appalling that, while Israeli forces were inflicting massive death and destruction upon the people in Gaza, Hamas forces took the opportunity to ruthlessly settle scores, carrying out a series of unlawful killings and other grave abuses,” said Philip Luther, director of the Middle East and North Africa Program at Amnesty International.

“In the chaos of the conflict, the de facto Hamas administration granted its security forces free rein to carry out horrific abuses, including against people in custody. These spine-chilling actions, some of which amount to war crimes, were designed to extract revenge and spread fear across the Gaza Strip.”

Another quote from Luther published by the *Post* was a powerful indictment of Hamas:

The Hamas leadership repeatedly calls for rights and justice for Palestinians. But they do not always act in a manner that reflects respect for rights, justice, and the rule of law. By failing to halt such grave violations, the Hamas authorities are dragging the name of justice through the mud and condoning these appalling crimes.

The *Post* linked to a related article it published just after Operation Protective Edge ended that provided some detailed statistics, including:

- According to the Israeli army, 3,659 rocket and mortar impact sites were found — counting those fired on IDF soldiers in Gaza. Of salvos that struck Israel, 224 hit built-up areas.
- During the war, 70 people were killed on the Israeli side, including 64 soldiers. Gaza health officials said more than 2,100 people were killed in the Gaza Strip during the fighting, and many thousands more were wounded.
- There were 842 Israeli casualties during the fighting.
- Since the beginning of July 2014, 959 tons of medicine and medical supplies entered the Strip through the border crossings between Israel and Gaza.

[An article posted by *The New American*](#) last July noted while the conflict in Gaza was still ongoing that the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) made fruitless efforts to secure a cease-fire or at least minimize civilian casualties. At one point, after Egyptian authorities managed to secure a cease-fire, the peace was again broken after Hamas refused to stop launching rockets into southern Israeli territory.

The article quoted a statement posted by a spokesman for the IDF amid the cease-fire: “While we held our fire, Hamas terrorists fired three mortars that hit the Israeli community of Eshkol minutes ago.”

After Hamas and other jihadist groups fired over 1,000 of their crude rockets from Gaza into Israel, the IDF responded with a barrage of precision air strikes across Gaza. Though Israel tried to warn civilians in advance of the attacks, during one week of bombardments, more than 200 people were killed. Despite the fact that the attacks targeted senior Hamas leaders, some young children were killed.

“We consider every Palestinian civilian death a tragedy,” an IDF release said about news of civilian casualties. “Hamas considers every Israeli civilian death an accomplishment.”

The Israeli military had used phone calls, text messages, and leaflets, to warn residents in the Gaza strip to leave areas where Hamas militants were operating, “for their own safety.” The warnings said: “Whoever disregards these instructions and fails to evacuate immediately endangers their own lives, as well as those of their families.”

Hamas attacked the Israeli campaign to have civilians evacuate, calling them “psychological



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operations” by the “Zionist regime,” and told civilians to remain where they were. Israeli officials said the effort by Hamas to keep civilians in place following the warnings was aimed at making it more difficult for the IDF to strike terrorists and their weapons without hitting innocent victims. To top it off, Hamas tortured and executed civilians.

It is next-to-impossible to wage war without some civilian casualties, but the actions taken by Hamas were not accidental “collateral damage,” but murder.

Amnesty International summarized its report:

In every case Amnesty International has documented, it has uncovered evidence of Hamas forces using torture during interrogation with the apparent aim of extracting a “confession” from the detainee.

Photo of an Israeli shell hitting Gaza: [HRW](#)

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