

---

**Israel Committed War Crimes in Gaza, Says Amnesty International**

---

05/11/2014



The Gaza war left more than 2,100 Palestinians dead, including many civilians according to Palestinian and UN officials. Israel says the number of militants killed was much higher and accuses Hamas of using civilians as human shields. On the Israeli side, 66 soldiers and six civilians were killed.

Amnesty said in a report released on Wednesday that "Israeli forces killed scores of Palestinian civilians in attacks targeting houses full of families, which in some cases have amounted to war crimes."

Israel's foreign ministry rejected the report's findings, saying the London-based rights group "ignores documented war crimes perpetrated by Hamas."

**Related**

- [Israelis, Palestinians Clash at Jerusalem Holy Site](#)
- [Gaza Reconstruction Has Begun: UN](#)
- [Israel Passes Law to Block Palestinian Prisoner Releases](#)

"The report does not mention the word terror in relation to Hamas or other armed Palestinian groups, nor mentions tunnels built by Hamas to infiltrate Israel and perpetrate terror attacks," the ministry said.

Israel launched the Gaza operation in early July in response to stepped-up rocket attacks on Israeli cities by the coastal area's militant Palestinian Hamas rulers.

The operation followed a crackdown by Israeli forces in the West Bank, where troops arrested scores of Hamas members, in response to the kidnapping and killings of three teenage Israelis in June by Hamas operatives.

Several weeks later, Jewish extremists kidnapped and burned to death a Palestinian teenager in east Jerusalem in an apparent revenge attack.

But the summer war was the fiercest conflict between the two sides in years.

"Israeli forces have brazenly flouted the laws of war by carrying out a series of attacks on civilian homes, displaying callous indifference to the carnage caused," said Philip Luther, Director of Amnesty's Middle East and North Africa program.

During the 50 days of fighting, Hamas fired thousands of rockets and mortars at Israeli towns and cities, including Tel Aviv, and used a sophisticated tunnel network to carry out attacks on Israeli military encampments in southern Israel, close to the Gaza border. Some of the tunnels also had exits abutting Israeli civilian communities, giving Hamas the ability to attack them as well.

For its part, Israeli forces carried out sustained aerial, artillery and infantry attacks in Gaza, many of which the Amnesty report found to be indiscriminate.

Israel says the military was as careful as possible to avoid civilian casualties citing its system of providing warning to civilians that strikes on their buildings were coming when possible.

It argues that the heavy civilian death toll is Hamas' fault, accusing the Islamic militant group of launching rockets - and drawing retaliation - from school yards, residential areas and mosques.

"The report exposes a pattern of attacks on civilian homes by Israeli forces which have shown a shocking disregard for the lives of Palestinian civilians, who were given no warning and had no chance to flee," Mr Luther said.

---