

Embassy of Israel  
2 Palace Green,  
London W8 4QB



שגרירות ישראל  
לונדון

Ms. Céline Grey  
Project Coordinator  
Bar Human Rights Committee of England and Wales  
Doughty Street Chambers  
53-54 Doughty Street, London  
WC1N 2LS

July 31<sup>st</sup> 2014

Dear Ms. Grey,

Thank you for your message to the Ambassador of July 22<sup>nd</sup> attaching the BHRC's statement on Gaza.

Like yourselves, Israel believes that military conflict must be conducted in accordance with international human rights law and makes strenuous efforts to see that these principles are respected even in the most complex of circumstances.

At the same time, we cannot help but be disappointed to see the selective presentation of the principles of international law in your statement, most specifically the omission of the obligation (Article 28, Geneva Convention [IV]; Article 51, Additional Protocol I) not to use protected persons to render military operations immune to, or to shield them from, attack. It is the shocking violation of this principle by Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and other terrorist groups that has turned a densely populated area into a tragic zone of conflict.

We further question the portrayal of the various methods by which the IDF upholds the principle of distinction. The measures taken by Israel to minimize civilian casualties, including radio broadcasts, leaflets detailing specific evacuation routes, personalised telephone calls and text messages to the families of combatants, in addition to non-lethal warning shots are almost unprecedented in the history of warfare.

We were also troubled by the heading of the statement, which refers to "Israel's military assault on the Gaza Strip" but makes no reference to the thousands of missiles fired by Hamas at Israel's towns and cities (over 2,670 since July 8<sup>th</sup>) and the dozens of tunnels from Gaza into Israel constructed by Hamas with the express purpose of massacring civilians in border communities.

Finally, as regards, BHRC's call for a ceasefire, it might have been apposite to mention that 6 ceasefire proposals including 5 humanitarian ceasefires were not only accepted but implemented by Israel, but none were respected by Hamas and the other terrorist groups, which continued to bombard Israel's cities with missiles.

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We continue to believe that law and legal rights play a vital role in protecting lives and reducing the impact of conflict, but only if they are applied equally and judiciously to all parties.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Rony Yedidia-Clein'.

Rony Yedidia-Clein  
Minister-Counsellor for Public Diplomacy  
Embassy of Israel