

Palestinian Rights Investigator Says He Will Not Resign, Despite Criticism

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The United Nations human rights investigator for the Palestinian territories said Tuesday that he would not resign, and he accused critics who have called him anti-Semitic of trying to divert attention from his scrutiny of Israeli policies. The investigator, Richard Falk, left, accused Israel on Monday of imposing collective punishment on 1.75 million Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and said that the enclave's viability was at stake. UN Watch and the United States have called for him to quit. The American ambassador to the United Nations Human Rights Council, Eileen Chamberlain Donahoe, described him as "unfit to serve in his role as a U.N. special rapporteur." Mr. Falk said Secretary General Ban Ki-moon had "joined in the attacks."

"I don't intend to resign, and there doesn't seem to be any formal initiative that is seeking my dismissal," Mr. Falk said at a briefing. "My role of trying to speak honestly about the situation that Palestinians are facing under this condition of prolonged occupation generates this sort of reaction that tries to paint anti-Israeli criticism as a form of anti-Semitism." Israel and the United States have boycotted the debate at the Human Rights Council, where Mr. Falk, an American law professor who is Jewish, called for an inquiry into allegations of torture of Palestinians in Israeli custody.