Ted Cruz: 'Useful idiots' at United Nations help Hamas

March 18, 2019

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The Washington Examiner

<https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/policy/defense-national-security/ted-cruz-useful-idiots-at-united-nations-help-hamas>

A group of “useful idiots” at the United Nations accused Israel of committing war crimes rather than hold terrorist groups responsible for using human shields in recent protests, a prominent Republican senator argued Monday.

Texas Sen. Ted Cruz delivered that rebuke hours after a commission appointed by the United Nations Human Rights Council reported that Israeli forces “killed and gravely injured” dozens of civilians over a nine-month period last year. The clashes arose form protests against the relocation of the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem, as President Trump’s decision inspired a “Great March of Return” by thousands of Palestinians who sought to breach a border fence between Israel and Gaza. The most intense confrontations [took place on the day of the Jerusalem embassy opening](https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/policy/defense-national-security/nikki-haley-blocks-un-statement-on-gaza-violence-walks-out-on-palestinian-envoy), which resulted in a U.N. rebuke.

“The Commission found reasonable grounds to believe that during these weekly demonstrations, the Israeli Security Forces (ISF) killed and gravely injured civilians who were neither participating directly in hostilities nor posing an imminent threat to life,” the U.N. investigators said. “[T]he use of lethal force in response was rarely necessary or proportionate.”

The report said 29 of the dead “were members of organized armed groups, with another 18 of undetermined status.” That’s a fraction of the 183 people killed and the 6100 wounded between March 30 and Dec. 31. "Unless undertaken lawfully in self-defense, intentionally killing a civilian not directly participating in hostilities is a war crime. Serious human rights violations were committed which may amount to crimes against humanity," the report said. Hamas, a designated terrorist group, [announced](https://www.apnews.com/3e5b1dbebb2a4ed09cb958c5f11ca9b6) about 50 of the individuals killed [when the U.S. Embassy opened on May 14](https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/policy/foreign/16-palestinians-killed-in-violent-protests-against-new-us-embassy-in-jerusalem) were militants.

“This U.N. report is on its face absurd and dishonest and we know because they have been doing it for a long time,” Cruz said Monday on a call hosted by the Jewish Institute for National Security of America. “Hamas and Hezbollah use human shields as a deliberate tactic. They use innocent Palestinian civilians, to put them in harm’s way, because they intend to exploit those human shields for when they are injured or killed when Israel defends itself.”

U.S. officials defended Israeli tactics at the time by noting that Hamas was urging protesters [“to burst through the fence”](https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/policy/defense-national-security/nikki-haley-blocks-un-statement-on-gaza-violence-walks-out-on-palestinian-envoy) and race into Israeli communities. The protest is “the latest form of the broader phenomenon of hybrid warfare,” JINSA argued Monday in a rebuttal of the U.N. finding.

“Hamas and other armed groups in Gaza intermixed their own belligerent operatives in these crowds and exploited them as passive shields and a tactical cover for their operatives to approach and attempt to breach the border fence,” the JINSA report said. "Any breach would enable attacks on Israeli security personnel and Israeli civilian communities near the border.”

The U.N. finding maintained that international law barred most uses of lethal force at the border fence. “For lethal force to be permissible, the victim must pose an imminent threat to life or limb,” the investigators wrote. “Imminent means impending or ‘immediately antecedent, presently exercised or ongoing’ not speculative. For a threat to be imminent the attacker should have no remaining preparatory steps and should be in sufficient geographic proximity for the attack to succeed.”

Trump’s administration withdrew the United States from the U.N. Human Rights Council last June, [citing anti-Israel bias](https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/policy/defense-national-security/pompeo-haley-announce-us-withdrawal-from-un-human-rights-council) at the organization.

“The United Nations long has been a reservoir of deep anti-Israel animus and this report today is yet another example of that,” Cruz said.