Being Right About Gaza War Report Isn't Enough

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<http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4672308,00.html>

Israel is rightfully slamming the [conclusions](http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4671512,00.html) of the United Nations commission of inquiry into Operation Protective Edge, but being right is not enough. We must also act more wisely.

Our resentment over the fact that the UN is treating us, a civilized country, with the same standards that it treats a terror organization like Hamas is understandable. But getting insulted in this case is the wrong approach. The right thing to do is to actually demand equal standards.

Gaza has been a de facto state for a long time now. It has all the characteristics of a state: A defined area, a central government, an independent foreign policy, and of course an army. The world understands that terror organizations like al-Qaeda, the Islamic States and others have poor norms. If they treat Hamas as a terror organization, they will not expect it to talk and will not put any pressure on it. It would be better if they treat Gaza as a state and demand the responsibility of a state from it.

The analogy between Israel and Hamas is a desirable thing which will actually emphasize our standards as a law-abiding state compared to the state of Gaza, where the government [executes](http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4661742,00.html) dozens of people on the streets without a trial.

The counter report prepared and published by the State of Israel does not contribute a thing and only creates damage. Naturally, it is filled with praise for ourselves, and is therefore not seen as credible by the world, even if the facts contained it in are true.

We should have (and we should still) wait for the official report expected to be published by senior generals from European countries, the United States and Australia, who visited Israel recently and investigated Protective Edge themselves. As opposed to the rumors, they have yet to publish anything official. It's always better to "let another person praise you, and not your own mouth."

Instead of reiterating that the UN report is political and biased and anti-Semitic, we should attack its fundamental weaknesses. It is a shallow and unprofessional report, and that is not hard to prove. It says, for example, that Israel used excessive force, or that many civilians were killed. The necessary question is: "Exaggerated" or "many" compared to what?

The report's authors, like the authors of the Goldstone Report before them, did not bother checking operations conducted by other countries in population-saturated areas. The average ratio between civilian casualties and fighters in the allies' operations in Iraq was about 1:5 (five times more civilians). In Protective Edge the ratio was about 1:1. Any professional and objective source should have praised Israel.

The report's authors settled for describing the results (casualties, building destruction, etc) and completely ignored a number of parameters which can explain the results). The first parameter is the circumstances and conditions (including the population size, density, etc).

The second is the enemy's power. Clearly, the stronger the enemy – more fighters, more anti-tank weapons and more rockets, alongside a network of offensive and terror tunnels – the stronger the force that has to be used in order to achieve the desirable result. In such a case, there will necessarily be more casualties and destruction. Any professional comparison aimed at examining whether excessive or proportional force was used must therefore consider the enemy's strength in order to receive normalized results (in other words, "comparing apples to apples"). That wasn't done.

The third parameter is the enemy's code of conduct. When the enemy intentionally operates out of schools and hospitals, when it uses its citizens as a human shield and prevents them from abandoning threatened places, the result is more dead civilians.

The report's authors ignored any professional military standard which allows a comparison between Operation Protective Edge to other events, and wrote conclusions which are based on nothing.

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We prefer to use explanations which mainly convince ourselves, that the UN Human Rights Council is an anti-Israel body. While that is true, it has to be the necessary conclusion following a professional refutation of the report's content, rather than the claim itself. This requires us to work vis-à-vis relatively objective elements, like the security establishment in Western countries or the American Congress. It's harder work, but it's necessary.