

The United Nations (UN) is generating pressure on Israel to stop defending itself against the terrorist organization Hamas following the worst slaughter of Jews since the Holocaust on October 7, 2023. UN staff and bodies excuse Hamas's actions, draw false moral equivalences between Hamas and Israel, and criticize Israel even when it makes clear and deliberate efforts to avoid civilian casualties.

1. Top UN officials make excuses for Hamas

“Today’s violence must be put in context,” specifically the “aggression” Israel perpetrated in the form of “almost six decades of hostile military rule over an entire civilian population,” [wrote](#)

UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) special rapporteur on Palestine Francesca Albanese on October 7. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres [said](#) on October 24 that “Nothing can justify” Hamas butchering civilians, but he then presented a long and one-sided account of Palestinian grievances, saying the Hamas attacks “did not happen in a vacuum.”

2. The UN General Assembly refuses to condemn Hamas

On October 27, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) [failed to pass](#) a resolution that would have unequivocally rejected and condemned the terrorist attacks by Hamas. Instead, the assembly approved a resolution expressing concern over all violence since October 7 — without mentioning Hamas or explaining that Hamas had initiated the violence. The UNGA-approved resolution calls for establishing a mechanism to protect the Palestinian civilian population without asking the same for Israelis. It also calls for an immediate ceasefire, which would enable Hamas to survive, rearm, and carry out future attacks on Israel, something its leaders have [pledged](#) to do.

3. The UN equates Hamas’s slaughter with Israeli attempts at self-defense

While condemning violence in principle, many UN [statements](#) focus [exclusively](#) on Palestinian suffering. Others equate Hamas’s deliberate slaughter of Israeli civilians with the collateral loss of Palestinian lives caused by Israel firing on Hamas militants embedded in dense urban terrain. For example, a spokesperson for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights [expressed](#) “concerns that the principles of distinction and proportionality are not being respected by both sides.” UN Women [condemned](#) both sides’ “attacks on civilians.” Meanwhile, the World Health Organization (WHO) [criticized](#) the harm being inflicted on both sides. In all these cases, the UN erased the distinction between Hamas’s deliberate, criminal targeting of civilians and the tragic cost of Israel defending itself from an enemy that uses civilians as human shields.

4. The UN nurtures Palestinian grievances rather than resolving conflict

The UN maintains numerous bodies that prolong and exacerbate tensions rather than resolve the long-running conflict. Whereas all other refugees in the world fall under the jurisdiction of the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the UN has a Palestinian-specific refugee agency, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). By conferring refugee status on descendants of actual refugees, something not done for any other population, UNRWA has increased the population under its care from 700,000 in 1948 to 5.9 million today. This figure includes more than 2.3 million Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, counted as refugees despite living in lands Palestinians claim for a future state. By [promoting](#) a fictitious Palestinian right to claim land in Israel and not offering resettlement as an option, UNRWA helps make the “refugee” issue intractable.

5. The UN does not consider Hamas to be a terrorist organization

The UN [does not recognize](#) Hamas as a terrorist group despite decades of suicide bombings, thousands of rockets launched indiscriminately at Israeli cities, and the barbaric actions of October 7. In addition, the UN body formerly known as the 1267 Committee, now known as the ISIL (Dae’sh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee, does not view Hamas (or any other Iranian proxy) as a terrorist group. In line with this view, no UN condemnation of Hamas’s brutal attack labeled the group as a terrorist organization. Moreover, UNRWA [employs](#) members of Hamas, supports Hamas’s public relations efforts, such as [erasing](#) social media posts insulting to Hamas, and teaches Palestinians to [hate](#) Israelis. Relatedly, several UNRWA staffers [praised](#) Hamas for the October 7 massacres.

6. The UN spreads false information

UN bodies and officials quickly spread Hamas's false narrative blaming Israel for the October 17 blast at Gaza's al-Ahli Hospital, which instead was hit by an [errant](#) Palestinian Islamic Jihad rocket. Nine of the UN's special rapporteurs for human rights [falsely claimed](#) that Israel had said "an attack on the hospital was imminent if people inside were not evacuated." In fact, Israel had issued a [broad call](#) to evacuate northern Gaza, including hospitals for the safety of the patients. Going further, the nine UN rapporteurs said there is "a risk of genocide against the Palestinian people."

7. The WHO ignores Hamas's use of human shields

The World Health Organization [criticizes](#) Israel for attacking Palestinian ambulances but makes no mention of Hamas [reportedly](#) using those vehicles to ferry terrorists. The WHO is also silent regarding Hamas [deliberately](#) disabling Israeli [ambulances](#) on October 7 and murdering medical [first responders](#) to prevent Israelis from receiving life-saving care. The WHO has also not addressed Hamas's use of [Shifa Hospital](#) and other healthcare facilities as command centers. Relatedly, the WHO holds Israel to an antisemitic double standard by maintaining an [agenda item](#) at its annual gatherings dedicated to scrutinizing Israel, something no other country faces. During the coronavirus pandemic, the WHO [dedicated](#) an entire day of an eight-day conference to examining Israel's alleged violations of Palestinian health rights.

8. UN calls for a ceasefire play into Hamas's hands

Hamas has a two-fold strategy: [kill as many Israelis as possible](#) and [ensure Palestinian casualties](#) to win international support. To do so, Hamas places its terrorists and weapons within population centers, using civilians as human shields. Rather than criticize Hamas for using human shields or supporting Israel's right to defend itself against an enemy using human shields, the UN has pushed for a ceasefire, pointing to the high Palestinian death toll without linking it to Hamas's human shields strategy. A ceasefire would grant Hamas impunity for the crimes of October 7 and preserve its ability to carry out future massacres. By pressuring Israel to halt its maneuvers against Hamas, the UN demonstrates the effectiveness of Hamas's human shields strategy.

9. The UN criticizes Israeli efforts to minimize civilian casualties

Israel [warned](#) Palestinians for weeks to evacuate the warzone in northern Gaza in order to protect them from military action to remove Hamas. Instead of encouraging this effort to minimize civilian casualties, the commissioner-general of UNRWA [described](#) Israel's efforts to relocate the Gaza population as "horrendous." The October 27 UNGA resolution framed it as the "forced transfer of the Palestinian civilian population." Secretary-General Guterres' spokesperson [called](#) for the order to be "rescinded." In fact, Israeli warnings are [consistent](#) with international law.

10. The U.S. must demand much-needed UN reforms

The UN's Orwellian focus on Israel has undermined the basic functions of the multilateral body and reforms are desperately needed. Some [recommendations](#) for the United States include:

- » Requiring the overhaul of UNRWA to ensure an accountable and transparent organization. Any further U.S. funding should include specific contingencies.
- » Demanding the UN Security Council add Hamas and other Palestinian terrorist organizations to its list of sanctioned entities and individuals.
- » Dismantling bodies that serve as Palestinian propaganda vehicles. Any agency dealing with the Palestinian cause should prioritize counter-radicalization and co-existence.
- » Encouraging the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism as the standard for all UN bodies.
- » Reforming the selection process at the Human Rights Council to block the worst violators of human rights.