How Amnesty International Became a Joke

written by Arsen Ostrovsky | 05.12.2024

This week, Amnesty International released a 296-page report, accusing Israel of committing "genocide" in Gaza. This charge, no less than a modern-day blood libel, is just the latest attack in Amnesty's longstanding campaign of lawfare against and vilification of the State of Israel, having previously accused the Jewish state of the equally unfounded charge of apartheid.

To be sure, this report, written under the guise of international law and human rights, is utterly baseless, replete with malicious lies and gross distortions of fact, as well as wholesale fabrications of law. The crime of genocide, coined in 1944 by the Polish-Jewish jurist Raphael Lemkin to describe the systematic extermination of Jews by the Nazis, is one of the most serious accusations that can be leveled in international law. To accuse Israel of "genocide" in Gaza is a grotesque and egregious subversion and weaponization of the very term itself.

It is important to recognize that genocide is very clearly defined under Article II of the Genocide Convention of 1948, to mean "*acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group*." The commission of genocide has nothing to do with the number of civilian casualties that occur in a conflict; the key element here is the need to possess relevant "intent."

Whatever criticism one may have of Israeli policies or Israel Defense Forces (IDF) actions in Gaza, at no stage has Israel been seeking to destroy the people in Gaza, whether in whole, in part, or in any manner whatsoever.

Israeli leaders are directing military policy in accordance with the decisions of the War Cabinet, and Prime Minister Netanyahu, the Defense Minister, and the IDF Chief of Staff have been unequivocal: The intent of the operation in Gaza following October 7 is to eliminate Hamas by destroying its military and governing capabilities and to rescue the hostages. These are both entirely legitimate military objectives under the laws of armed conflict.

That there have been civilian casualties in Gaza is tragic, but it is also the

inevitable consequence of Hamas using its own people as human shields and embedding its military operations in schools, hospitals, kindergartens, and homes. Notwithstanding the complex challenge of operating in such difficult environment, the IDF has gone to extraordinary lengths, not seen in modern warfare, to abide by the principles of International humanitarian law and avoid harm to civilians in Gaza. This has included implementing historic measures to prevent civilian harm, such as advanced alerts to provide early warning and temporary evacuations, daily pauses of fighting, distributing maps to civilians, using precision weapons, as well are facilitating daily provision of aid.

In fact, to demonstrate just how utterly ludicrous Amnesty's accusation of genocide is, one only needs to see that, according to the CIA World Factbook, the population in Gaza has actually increased 2 percent in the last year. This is the very opposite of seeking to destroy, in whole or in part or in any way, a group of people.

Perhaps knowing it doesn't have a legal leg to stand on, Amnesty has resorted to manufacturing its own definition of genocide. Amnesty claims that the universally established and the sole accepted legal definition as outlined in the Genocide Convention of 1948 which requires the existence of intent is an "overly cramped interpretation of international jurisprudence and one that would effectively preclude a finding of genocide in the context of an armed conflict."

It's not just Israel that finds this redefinition ridiculous. In an absolutely scathing rebuke, even Amnesty's own Israel office has totally rejected Amnesty International's report, saying it was a "predetermined conclusion" based on "biased" and "artificial" analysis of the situation in Gaza and "motivated by a desire to support a popular narrative among Amnesty International's target audience."

If anyone is guilty of genocide here, it is Hamas. Not only does Hamas openly state that the destruction of Israel is its ultimate goal, as evidenced in their Charter, it acted out on those intentions on October 7, when Hamas massacred over 1,200 Israelis in a rampage that included raping, burning, mutilating, executing and abducting women and children. We've stood in the kibbutzim and communities in the south of Israel and saw first-hand the death and destruction. That is where the real attempted genocide occurred.

In an interview last year, shortly after the massacre, senior Hamas official Ghazi Hamad admitted that the terror group would repeat the October 7 massacre “again and again” until Israel was “annihilated,” openly admitting the group’s genocidal intentions. But Amnesty has completely disregarded this, instead absolving and whitewashing the heinous actions of Hamas.

The incoming Trump Administration should declare Amnesty a hate-group and adopt blistering sanctions against them, including withdrawing financial support and any cooperation with government agencies.

Regrettably, Amnesty International, once a storied human rights organization, has lost all credibility, becoming nothing more than a propaganda mouthpiece for the murderers and rapists of Hamas.

The article was written together with John Spencer is chair of urban warfare studies at the Modern War Institute (MWI) at West Point

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