Lapid slams ‘antisemitic’ UN report accusing Israel of violating international law

October 21, 2022

The Times of Israel

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/lapid-slams-antisemitic-un-report-accusing-israel-of-violating-international-law/>

Prime Minister Yair Lapid on Friday morning slammed a United Nations report accusing Israel of violating international law, as part of an ongoing inquiry into alleged rights abuses in Israel, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip following last year’s 11-day fight between Israel and the Hamas terror group.

“Precisely because I was not prime minister at the time of Operation ‘Guardian of the Walls,’ I feel obliged to emphasize: The UN report on the operation is biased, false, inciting and blatantly unbalanced,” Lapid said on Twitter, referencing the 2021 conflict.

“Not all criticism of Israel is antisemitism, but this report was written by antisemites (as Israel has already revealed) and is a distinctly antisemitic report,” he added.

The United Nations’ ongoing Commission of Inquiry released its second [report](https://www.timesofisrael.com/un-report-slams-israels-unlawful-occupation-demands-prosecution-of-officials/) on Thursday, calling on the Security Council to end Israel’s “permanent occupation,” and on individual UN member states to prosecute Israeli officials.

The 28-page document, which will be presented to the General Assembly on October 27, accuses Israel of violating international law by making its control over the West Bank permanent, and by annexing land claimed by the Palestinians in Jerusalem and the West Bank, and Syrian land in the Golan Heights.

“Actions by Israel constituting de facto annexation include expropriating land and natural resources, establishing settlements and outposts, maintaining a restrictive and discriminatory planning and building regime for Palestinians and extending Israeli law extraterritorially to Israeli settlers in the West Bank,” reads the report.

It also accused Israel of discriminatory policies against Arab citizens, of stealing natural resources and of gender-based violence against Palestinian women.

The commission cited “reasonable grounds” to conclude that Israel’s presence in the West Bank “is now unlawful under international law due to its permanence” as well as the Israeli government’s “de facto annexation policies.”

“By ignoring international law in establishing or facilitating the establishment of settlements, and directly or indirectly transferring Israeli civilians into these settlements, successive Israeli governments have set facts on the ground to ensure permanent Israeli control in the West Bank,” said Navi Pillay, a former UN human rights chief who chairs the commission.

The report does not mention the words “Hamas,” “rockets,” or “terrorism.”

Israel has refused to cooperate with the commission and has not granted it entry into Israel or access to Palestinian-controlled areas in the West Bank and Gaza.

Israel’s mission to Geneva rejected the report, saying: “Commissioners who made antisemitic comments and who proactively engaged in anti-Israel activism, both before and after their appointment, have no legitimacy nor credibility in addressing the issue at hand.”

The embassy added that the report damages the UN’s credibility and its human rights mechanisms.

Pillay heads the open-ended inquiry and is joined by Miloon Kothari of India, the first UN special rapporteur on adequate housing, and Australian international human rights law expert Chris Sidoti.

Kothari caused an uproar after he was quoted on a podcast this summer speaking out against the “Jewish lobby” and questioning Israel’s inclusion in the UN, sparking Israeli accusations of antisemitism and calls for his resignation. Pillay [defended](https://www.timesofisrael.com/head-of-un-panel-probing-israel-says-comments-on-jewish-lobby-taken-out-of-context/) Kothari and said his comments had been deliberately contextualized. Kothari has since [apologized](https://www.timesofisrael.com/member-of-un-gaza-probe-apologizes-for-jewish-lobby-remark-slammed-as-antisemitic/).

Sidoti had previously dismissed accusations of antisemitism against the commission and said these were being “thrown around like rice at a wedding.”

The commission was established last year during a special session of the council in May 2021 — following fighting between Israel and Palestinian terrorists in the Gaza Strip — when the UN Human Rights Council tasked the body with an investigation into “all alleged violations of international humanitarian law and all alleged violations and abuses of international human rights law” in Israel, East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza.

The commission was the first to have an open-ended mandate from the UN rights body — rather than be tasked with investigating a specific crime — and critics say such permanent scrutiny shows anti-Israel bias in the 47-member-state council. Proponents support the commission as a way to keep tabs on injustices faced by Palestinians under decades of Israeli rule.

Its first report, an 18-page document [released in June](https://www.timesofisrael.com/un-probe-blames-israel-for-perpetuating-conflict-with-palestinians/), blamed Israel’s “persistent discrimination against Palestinians” for violence between the two sides.

Following Kothari’s comments this summer, Israel [called to immediately disband](https://www.timesofisrael.com/lapid-urges-un-chief-to-disband-tainted-gaza-probe-over-remarks-deemed-antisemitic/) the commission. Lapid said in late July that the commission was “fundamentally tainted by the publicly expressed prejudices of its leadership, who do not meet the basic standards of neutrality, independence, and impartiality required by the United Nations,” he said.

Israel justifies its policies as security measures needed to stop terrorism.