UN commission accuses Israel of 'extermination' in controversial report

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By Rachel Wolf

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<https://www.foxnews.com/world/un-commission-accuses-israel-extermination-controversial-report>

Israel is accused of committing ‘the crime against humanity of extermination’ and impeding religious freedoms in a recent [United Nations](https://archive.vn/o/8lugt/https%3A/www.foxnews.com/category/world/united-nations) report.

The U.N. Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem and Israel (COI) issued a scathing 19-page report.

In a summary of the report, the COI said it ‘examines violations of international human rights law, international humanitarian law and possible international crimes relating to attacks against educational facilities and religious and cultural sites.’ However, the COI appears to be harsher on Israel than Palestinian authorities.

In its conclusion, the COI offers 13 recommendations for Israel, two for ‘the de facto authorities in Gaza,’ two for ‘the Government of the State of Palestine,’ and two for all U.N. member states.

The report is already sparking controversy, with the U.S. mission and legal experts expressing concerns over its content.

‘The latest report from this U.N.'s kangaroo court is a frightening indication of the antisemitism and incitement to violence spread by the United Nations on a global scale,’ Anne Bayefsky, Director of the Touro Institute on Human Rights and the Holocaust and President of Human Rights Voices told Fox News Digital.

Among its many accusations against Israel, some of the most egregious include claims that Israel is restricting religious freedoms, citing its control over holy sites in Jerusalem. The COI stated in its report that Palestinian worshipers were ‘subjected to increased security checks, checkpoints, harassment and assault, and criteria, linked to age, gender and place of residence, have been applied by Israeli authorities to restrict which Palestinians are allowed to enter’ the Temple Mount. The commission also claims that a ‘religious leader’ was arrested shortly after Oct. 7 over a sermon he gave at the mosque without explaining what was said.

Furthermore, the commission also complained that ‘extremist Jews and right-wing politicians’ were permitted ‘on multiple occasions to enter the site with a police escort, pray and cause provocation, despite a long-standing prohibition against Jewish prayer.’ The COI appeared to take greater issue with Jews praying than with the ban on their ability to do so, despite claiming to admonish restrictions on religious freedoms.

‘They claim Jews exclude non-Jews from religious sites when the exact opposite is true. Only Israel protects freedom of religion for Christians, Muslims and Jews, while Jews have been banned and Jewish religious sites have been systematically trashed by Palestinian Arabs for a century,’ Bayefsky told Fox News Digital.

In response to a Fox News Digital request for comment, a State Department spokesperson said that the U.S. ‘firmly’ opposes ‘this COI’s open-ended and vaguely defined mandate’ and that it does not ‘support its involvement in investigating the current conflict given our reservations about its structure and approach.’

‘To be clear, Palestinians are going through sheer hell in this conflict and a lot of that is because Hamas has put them in an impossible situation. We’ve been clear that Israel has a right to take action against Hamas, but we’ve also been just as clear that Israel must take every precaution possible to protect civilians,’ the spokesperson added.

In another part of the report, the COI notes that the U.N. Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) documented 42 instances from Oct. 7, 2023, to March 15, 2024, in which ‘parties to the conflict’ interfered with its schools.

In response to a Fox News Digital request for comment and clarification on whether Hamas used its schools, UNRWA reiterated its condemnations of ‘any party to the conflict’ using its facilities for ‘military or fighting purposes.’

‘Since the start of the war, [UNRWA has repeatedly](https://archive.vn/o/8lugt/https%3A/www.foxnews.com/world/israel-orders-unrwa-cease-operations-country-over-terror-ties-miserably-failed-its-mandate) condemned the use of UN facilities by any party to the conflict for military or fighting purposes. We have repeatedly called for independent investigation and accountability for the blatant disregard of UN staff lives, premises and operations,’ a spokesperson for UNRWA told Fox News Digital. ‘We reiterate our call on all parties to the conflict to respect the sanctity and neutrality of UN installations.’

While UNRWA did not directly address whether Hamas used its facilities, the commission said that Israeli forces caused ‘the majority of harm to educational facilities.’ While the commission mentions Israel’s claim that Hamas has operated out of these schools, it also says that the terror organization ‘contested’ the allegation.

In its recommendations for Israel, the commission calls on Jerusalem to ‘cease the use of educational facilities and cultural sites for military purposes.’ It also recommended that ‘de facto authorities in Gaza’ — Hamas — ‘cease using civilian objects for military purposes.’

The commission also [calls on Israel](https://archive.vn/o/8lugt/https%3A/www.foxnews.com/category/world/world-regions/israel) to ‘provide effective, adequate and prompt remedy for victims of human rights violations, including surviving family members,’ but makes no such demands of those responsible for atrocities committed on Oct. 7.