



## Security Council

Distr.: General  
13 August 2024

Original: English

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### **Identical letters dated 12 August 2024 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council**

On Saturday, 10 August, the Israel Defense Forces struck terrorists operating in a Hamas command and control centre, which was embedded inside a mosque in the Taba'een school compound in the Daraj Tuffah neighbourhood in the city of Gaza.

According to intelligence assessments, at least 19 Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad terrorists were eliminated. These terrorists operated in order to advance and carry out attacks against Israel Defense Forces soldiers and Israel from inside the compound. These terrorists included Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad platoon commanders, operatives, cell commanders and military intelligence operatives. Contrary to Palestinian allegations, the Israeli strike was not against a school but rather against Hamas headquarters.

The strike was carried out using three small and precise munitions, which, according to professional analysis, were not expected to cause the amount of damage that is being reported by the Hamas-run government office in Gaza.

Prior to the strike, and in accordance with international humanitarian law, numerous steps were taken to mitigate the risk of harming civilians.

We must recall that Hamas systematically violates international law and operates within civilian infrastructure and shelters, brutally exploiting the civilian population as human shields for their terror activities.

Prohibited uses of civilian infrastructure, including United Nations facilities and compounds, by Hamas terrorists are numerous and widespread, as schools, hospitals and mosques have had rockets launched from them, tunnels dug beneath them; their normal use has been “hijacked” by Hamas.

The Security Council has been unable to condemn Hamas since the 7 October attacks, despite repeated calls to do so. These acts must cease immediately. The international community must condemn Hamas for putting its own civilians at risk.

Recently, we have witnessed an uptick in cases of Hamas and Islamic Jihad deliberately entering both schools that are used for civilians and abandoned school buildings and operating from them, including United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) schools. We recall that UNRWA has a responsibility to warn both Israel and the United Nations about the use or misuse of its compounds and infrastructure by Hamas. To date, we have not been alerted of such misuse of infrastructure by UNRWA authorities.



We further warn that it would be prudent not to adopt any “data” provided by the Hamas authorities in Gaza regarding the number of civilians hurt or killed in this incident, as in other cases. Initial claims of over 100 casualties were published by Hamas in the hours immediately following the strike; however, by Saturday evening, Hamas had adjusted the figures downwards to less than half as many. This was only after many Western media outlets had blindly parroted the Hamas numbers. In another example, the United Nations itself halved the number of Palestinian women and children casualties overnight, in May, and the spokesman indicated that “the fog of war” was responsible for the adjustment. These figures are intended to serve Hamas’s propaganda, and we call on all responsible actors to be cautious in adopting or repeating figures that have not been confirmed.

Israel has both the right and the duty to protect its civilians and will continue to do so, even as Hamas attacks Israeli civilians and cynically hides among Palestinian civilians.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter distributed as a document of the Security Council.

*(Signed)* Gilad **Erdan**  
Ambassador of Israel to the United Nations

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