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The Fight Inside Amnesty International over Its Hamas Report



"A FACTION WITHIN AMNESTY HAS WAGED A LAST-DITCH EFFORT TO PERSUADE THE GROUP'S SENIOR LEADERS NOT TO PUBLISH THEIR REPORT," WRITES CHARLES LANE. (AHMAD GHARABLI/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES)

Amnesty International claims to be an impartial human rights monitor. Internal emails about the timing of a long-delayed Hamas report suggest otherwise.

By Charles Lane

09.21.25 — Israel

Charles Lane is a nonresident senior... ▼

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As the second anniversary of the October 7, 2023, Hamas massacre approaches, Amnesty International, the Nobel Prize-winning human rights monitor, has still not published a long-delayed report on the atrocity—and faces internal resistance to doing so, according to internal Amnesty emails and other documents obtained by *The Free Press*.

In the works for well over a year, but long since superseded by media reports and other NGO publications, Amnesty's report is now set for release “in the coming weeks,” an Amnesty spokesperson says.

Yet a faction within Amnesty has waged a last-ditch effort to persuade the group's senior leaders not to publish the report, arguing that even a belated acknowledgment of Hamas's crimes might help Israel in the court of public opinion.

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“Our concern is about timing and impact,” Usman Hamid, the section director for Amnesty in Indonesia, emailed the organization's top officials on August 8. “The situation in Gaza is at a peak of humanitarian crisis, famine is unfolding, and the Israeli security cabinet has just approved plans for full occupation. In this climate, there is a real risk the report could be used to divert attention from the current crisis or justify ongoing genocide.”

Seydi Gassama, section director for Senegal, echoed that view the same day. “The situation in Gaza is getting worse,” he wrote in an email. “This decision will worsen the humanitarian crisis and loss of lives. We urge the [international secretariat] to reconsider the timing of the

publication of the report as it may be used by Israel to justify its actions.”

Such blatant politicization of what is supposedly an impartial human rights reporting process stunned even critics who have long seen anti-Israel bias in Amnesty’s coverage of the Middle East. The group has [produced a 2022 report](#) finding Israel guilty of apartheid and another in 2024 [accusing it of genocide](#) in Gaza.

Invective about alleged Israeli atrocities dominates the X feed of Amnesty’s secretary general, [Agnes Callamard](#), and of [other Amnesty officials and staff](#). Earlier this year, the organization [suspended its Israeli chapter](#) after some members publicly dissented from the genocide accusation.

“You can see the bias when the organization only holds space for the suffering of one group of people in a conflict,” says a former Amnesty employee who requested anonymity because of the topic’s sensitivity.

“This is what happens when you make human rights work more of a work about narrative,” says Yariv Mohar, former co-director of Amnesty’s now-defunct Israel section.

Indeed, the directors from Indonesia and Senegal were far from alone. At about the same time they sent their emails, Amnesty staffers were circulating a 1,900-word letter, also addressed to Amnesty’s senior leadership, protesting that Israel would benefit if the group called out Hamas.

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“The violations perpetrated on the 7 October 2023 [sic] have been used by the Israeli government, its allies, and large parts of the Western media to manufacture consent for the Israeli genocide that followed immediately after this attack,” the letter says. “Publishing this report at this time would significantly contribute to entrenching this position at a time when the world public opinion is overwhelmingly against genocide and other states’ complicity in it.”

The staff letter, which quickly accumulated two dozen signatures, acknowledged that the report’s long delay had created “considerable pressure on Amnesty International by some of its sections and members to publish a condemnation for the violations of 7 October 2023.”

But the letter added: “[W]e believe the current scheduled timing for this report launch, set for early September, is possibly the worst,” in part because it would be “two weeks before the start of the 80th session of the UN General Assembly when a vote for Palestinian statehood is on the agenda.”

Amnesty’s spokesperson said the organization’s leaders never received the staff letter.

Secretary General Callamard did, however, respond to the emails from the Senegal and Indonesia directors. Rather than rebuking them for inappropriately politicizing the issue, she expressed understanding.

“We have met and will continue to meet very often to review all the risks and look for mitigation and appropriate responses,” she wrote. “We have some ideas on how to move forward but need to do further risk analysis.”

“We will be in touch with you with further details sooner rather than later, and early enough for sections to get prepared,” Callamard added.

The emails from Indonesia and Senegal went to every Amnesty section director in the world as well as three officials of Amnesty International USA. Yet only one person on the chain, Sacha Deshmukh, Amnesty's director for the UK, spoke in defense of what should be the organization's overriding principle: "Amnesty should never suppress or delay the publication of evidence of violations of the human rights of any people, anywhere," he wrote.

Amnesty's spokesperson characterized the internal dispute as nothing unusual for high-profile subject matter, and insisted that any notion the report's release has been intentionally slow-walked is "unfounded." Responding to a request for comment, he wrote in an email, "The production timeline for the report into Hamas violations is typical of an Amnesty report focusing on a multitude of crimes under international law in challenging environments."

Yet Amnesty has shown it can get a report out in a timely fashion when the subject is Israel's alleged wrongdoing. In late August, it issued a report calling out Israel for deliberately destroying civilian property in Lebanon since November 2024—more than a year after Hamas's crimes.

Amnesty's performance on the October 7 massacre also contrasts with the approach of Human Rights Watch, the other big-name NGO in the field, which produced a comprehensive report more than a year ago.

Amnesty commissioned its investigation into the Hamas attack in early to mid-2024, hiring two outside consultants to conduct it. The consultants submitted the bulk of their findings in August 2024 and have been working on details and adjustments since, according to sources familiar with the process and internal Amnesty communications.

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Philip Luther, Amnesty's research and advocacy director, emailed a staff member at the organization's Israel chapter in late July 2024, assuring him that reviews of the consultants' work would be finished by September 8, 2024.

On September 5 of that year, Budour Hassan, an Amnesty researcher, told staff in a conference call that "the hope is for us to issue [the October 7 report] back-to-back" with the report accusing Israel of genocide in Gaza.

When the genocide report came out December 5, 2024, an accompanying press release included this pledge: "The crimes perpetrated by Hamas and other armed groups during this attack will be the focus of a forthcoming Amnesty International report."

The early August 2025 staff protest letter's reference to a release "set for early September" suggests that, by now, Amnesty has let yet another publication date slip.

This is significant, since the organization has consistently considered the timing and content of the Hamas report in terms of legitimizing its condemnation of *Israel*. According to an internal document circulated on March 4, 2025, the Hamas report would be "timed to follow Amnesty's conclusion that Israel's actions in the wake of the attacks constitute genocide. It will strengthen the perception of Amnesty International's documentation of crimes committed by Israel in the Gaza Strip, including genocide, as an impartial conclusion and lend it greater weight."

That Amnesty would fine-tune the planned report's political impact for such a purpose speaks volumes about the organization's priorities.

“They’re very much trying to please the young, ultraradical, woke culture in the West,” said Yariv Mohar, the former co-director of Amnesty’s Israel section. “When you take that to an extreme, it goes against the principle of universality”—that is, the idea that all individuals have the same human rights, regardless of identity or standing in any power structure.

To be sure, there are potential good-faith reasons for the lengthy postponement, such as resource limitations and the small size of the team devoted to researching a complex event. An editor assigned to review the document apparently had to take an extended sick leave, according to a source familiar with the process.

With the report so late, it is unlikely to have much impact—though inside Amnesty, the rank and file could well react against a strong condemnation of Hamas that coincides with a new Israeli offensive in Gaza City.

“My feeling is it hardly matters anymore in the public debate,” one person familiar with the process inside Amnesty told me. “It’s kind of water under the bridge.”



The new target publication date for Amnesty’s report is September 29, according to a source familiar with the deliberations. It will be interesting indeed to see how Callamard and other top Amnesty officials “mitigate” the “risks” she mentioned in her email.

Amnesty’s spokesperson declined to confirm a release date but denied they would “mitigate” any “risks” by softening any of the report’s condemnation of Hamas. “Under absolutely no circumstances would the organization ever alter its research findings because of the external political context, or in response to pressure.”

An undeniable casualty of Amnesty's recent record on Israel, though, is a valuable alliance with progressive-minded Israelis who had staffed an Amnesty chapter in that country until its suspension in January 2025.

These Jewish human rights activists worked with Palestinians to condemn the country's misconduct, and even argued that the Israel Defense Forces committed "crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing," as the section said in its response to Amnesty's genocide report.

Their objection to Amnesty's report was that the NGO had not proven that Israel had specifically intended to destroy Palestinians—which is the definition of genocide under international law.

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In response, Amnesty's leadership suspended the section for two years, saying it was guilty of "anti-Palestinian racism," and that "the actions of AI Israel against Amnesty research and positions are prejudicial to Amnesty's values and to our human rights work overall," according to a January 6, 2025, internal email.

The chapter subsequently fell apart amid bitter factional disputes, after which Yariv Mohar helped to found a new NGO, the [Pro-Human Campaign](#). According to its website, the group "aims to counter two disturbing trends: the dehumanization of Israelis and Jews, and the dehumanization of Gazans, Palestinians, and Muslims around the world."

It's an admirable agenda, but apparently not one that Mohar and others felt they could pursue any longer within Amnesty International.



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Charles Lane

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Coline Bied-Charreton Coline Bied-Charreton Sep 24

...

There are little if no other press outlet which make these facts known. I suggest that you also make a summary of the Besa report (especially the part dedicated to the alleged famine), as visibly no one is aware of the measure mistakes made by the UN.

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