



Opinion

Opinion • Why Aren't the World's Human Rights Groups Denouncing Hamas Atrocities Against Gazans?

In the face of testimonies showing political executions and the torture of civilians in Gaza by Hamas, the silence of major human rights groups like Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch is both puzzling and outrageous – and endangers Palestinian lives



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Following the cease-fire between Israel and Hamas, and the Israeli military's withdrawal from roughly half of the Gaza Strip, Hamas reasserted control over most of the territory.

Since then, numerous corroborated testimonies – some supported by filmed evidence – have emerged of executions of political opponents, particularly brutal

torture of civilians in the street in broad daylight and killings or beatings of civilians who merely expressed gratitude toward the U.S. or criticized Hamas. Needless to say, all of this took place without any due process.

Given these facts, I was astonished to look at the X accounts of two of the world's largest human rights organizations, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, and find that, at the time of writing, there has been not a single reference to these atrocities – not even an initial statement expressing concern and announcing an investigation of the material. I hope inquiries are underway and that responses follow soon.

Speed matters here: Every day more atrocities occur, and silence confers a degree of legitimacy upon them.

This silence is particularly outrageous for obvious reasons – how can one remain mute in the face of such horrors? Even if investigations take time, initial statements about atrocities have in the past been issued far more rapidly by human rights organizations, and expedited inquiries are not unprecedented. Yet roughly two weeks after the cease-fire there was still no comment, not even a demand that Hamas comply with international humanitarian law.

The silence is puzzling for strategic reasons as well: Human rights organizations have been subjected to a torrent of attacks – at times exaggerated or unjustified – accusing them of fixating on Israel, of unprofessional

bias against it, of downplaying Hamas' crimes, or even of providing reputational management for Hamas.

Beyond the moral and legal imperative to condemn Hamas' atrocities against Gazans, it is clear that this is also a strategic opportunity for these organizations to repair their own reputations by demonstrating that their work is universal, professional, and impartial.

Another reason why a prompt response to the atrocities against Gazans is necessary is because these actions threaten the cease-fire, and may lead to a renewal of the horrific war that claimed many Gazan lives and wounded many more. U.S. President Donald Trump has already warned in an official statement that "If Hamas continues to kill people in Gaza, which was not the Deal, we will have no choice but to go in and kill them."



Finally, it is important to speak out loudly and forcefully against Hamas atrocities in order to send a message to young movements across the West which,

in the name of social justice, conscience and human rights, have adopted a somewhat simplistic narrative.

They rightly condemn Israel vehemently for the atrocities it committed in Gaza, yet, at the same time, they downplay, excuse or even praise Hamas' horrors. That narrative paints one party in the conflict as the villain and the other as the saint or victim – without appreciating the complex internal dynamics of each society.

This is a moral distortion, and there is a real danger that a young generation of potential human rights supporters will be swept uncritically into a narrative that legitimizes atrocities by actors seen as supporting the weaker side (even though Hamas also slaughters Palestinians). This would erode the universality of human rights.

For Hamas there is a strategic advantage in reaching this younger audience, and so if its atrocities in Gaza cause reputational damage among the pro-Palestinian protest generation, it may reconsider and moderate its actions. In other words – this could save lives.







I can understand considerations about the need to maintain legitimacy with one's constituency, but human rights work is not a popularity contest and must never become one. As human rights activists, our message to young people, to Palestinians, to Hamas and to the world should be clear: We will not ignore any atrocity; we will not abandon Gazans now that Hamas

is attacking them; we will not hesitate in voicing strong condemnation.

I call on the human rights community to urgently denounce Hamas' atrocities against Gazans – loudly and unequivocally – so as to send a decisive message.

Dr. Yariv Mohar is Director of the [Pro-Human Campaign](#), an international coalition against dehumanization. He previously served as Deputy Director of Amnesty International's Israel Section. The opinions expressed here are his own

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