

New JINSA Report by U.S. Generals, Admirals, and Military Law Experts on Gaza War Find Israel Following the Laws of Armed Conflict

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Washington, DC – A new, independent [analysis](#) by retired U.S. generals, admirals, and military law experts, evaluating the military conduct of both the Israel Defense Forces and Hamas in the war in Gaza, concludes that IDF operations to destroy Hamas are entirely justified, carried out in compliance with the Laws of Armed Conflict, and conducted with operational excellence despite the complex urban environment created by Hamas’s heavy fortification of the Gaza Strip.

Released today by the Jewish Institute for National Security of America’s Gaza Assessment Task Force, the report, [The October 7 War: Observations October 2023 – May 2024](#), provides operational, legal, strategic, informational, and contextual observations to assist American policymakers and military leaders seeking to understand this conflict and its implications.

“The barbaric October 7 attack was just one part of the multi-front threat that Israel faces from Iran and its proxies,” said task force member **Gen Charles Wald, USAF (ret.)**. “In defending itself against this threat, Israel is justified in seeking to eliminate Hamas’s ability to ever attack it again. And the IDF has pursued that mission effectively and legally against an adversary that is doing everything it possibly can—including cynically putting its own civilians in the line of fire—to discredit and delegitimize Israel.”

The war has been intensely scrutinized with questions about the IDF’s strategy, operations, legality of conduct, concern for mitigating harm to civilians, and provision of humanitarian assistance are being raised and actively debated from the public square to international organizations and governments.

“I’m proud to sign on to this report. It is based on in-depth interviews with a wide range of interlocutors, including members of Israel’s war cabinet, senior IDF leaders, IDF commanders and troops who had just been fighting in Gaza, IDF strategic communications officials, as well as international and non-governmental organizations,” said task force member **ADM Michael Rogers, USN (ret.)**. “Our group spent many hours discussing what we saw in Israel and refining our report to capture the observations that we think it is most vital for U.S. policymakers to understand about this conflict.”

The task force’s findings are based on primary source research, a fact-finding trip to Israel, and discussions with senior Israeli, international aid agency, and United Nations officials.

Among the reports highly detailed and thorough analysis are 10 key observations:

1. Hamas’s October 7 attack shook the foundations of Israeli security, well beyond the immediate vicinity bordering the Gaza Strip, with Iran and its proxies also attacking Israel since the war began.
2. Israel’s determination to dismantle Hamas as a conventional military force in the Gaza Strip is justified self-defense and represents a reasonable and legal objective.
3. The IDF’s performance on Gaza’s complicated battlefield to effectively combine air power, indirect fire, and ground forces in a significant above- and under-ground maneuver demonstrates operational and tactical excellence.

4. The IDF encountered a complex urban and subterranean battlefield in which Hamas transformed almost the entirety of Gaza, including civilian infrastructure, into fortified fighting positions to oppose Israeli advances and purposely create civilian casualties.
5. IDF operations in this complex environment were carried out in compliance with the Laws of Armed Conflict (LOAC), while Hamas has serially and intentionally violated LOAC by hiding among civilians.
6. Hamas is better understood as a “terror army” with the structure, training, infrastructure, and advanced weapons of a conventional force.
7. Israel’s early reticence to provide more than the legally required humanitarian assistance or to administer areas of Gaza that have generally been cleared of Hamas threaten to undermine the tactical victories it has won on the battlefield.
8. The United States would benefit from studying the IDF’s ground maneuver operations in Gaza’s dense complex urban terrain and particularly the tactics, techniques, and procedures it developed.
9. Although the IDF has made some improvements compared to past conflicts, it faced challenges communicating with international audiences, combatting Hamas disinformation, and conveying the gravity of the enemy threat.
10. The Israeli government’s lack of a clear strategy for a post-Hamas future for Gaza jeopardizes IDF battlefield successes.

In assembling the task force, JINSA made a concerted effort to ensure the members possessed significant combat experience, military command at the highest levels, including in Middle Eastern conflicts, and a long track record of navigating international and military law.

“Our observations reflect the critical yet often overlooked intersection between international law and the planning and execution of military operations,” said **LTC Geoff Corn, USA (ret.)**. “This should be recognized as a unique contribution to the discourse on this conflict, one in which operational challenges and legal considerations have been the dominant focus. What the members of this study group understand - and seek to convey - is that these are not isolated considerations. Instead, it is the context of military operations that informs a credible understanding of law and legitimacy in any military campaign.”

The Gaza Assessment Task Force Members are:

- **GEN David Rodriguez, USA (ret.)**, Former Commander, U.S. Africa Command
- **ADM Michael Rogers, USN (ret.)**, Former Commander, U.S. Cyber Command and Director, National Security Agency/Chief, Central Security Service
- **Gen Charles Wald, USAF (ret.)**, Distinguished Fellow, JINSA; Former Deputy Commander, U.S. European Command
- **LtGen David Beydler, USMC (ret.)**, Former Commander, U.S. Marine Forces Central Command
- **Lt Gen Tom Trask, USAF (ret.)**, Former Vice Commander, U.S. Special Operations Command
- **COL Mark Warren, USA (ret.)**, Distinguished Fellow, JINSA; Former Senior Legal Advisor, Joint Special Operations Command
- **LTC Geoff Corn, USA (ret.)**, Distinguished Fellow, JINSA; Former Special Assistant for Law of War Matters, U.S. Army; George R. Killam Jr. Chair of Criminal Law and Director of the Center for Military Law and Policy at Texas Tech University School of Law

[Read the Report](#)

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