# Ehud Olmert brands Israeli Gaza offensive war crimes amid growing international censure



Former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert has publicly condemned the military actions currently being undertaken by Israel in Gaza, declaring that the nation is “committing war crimes.” In an opinion piece for Haaretz, he criticized the government's approach as aimless and lacking clear objectives, characterizing the conflict as increasingly brutal and devoid of any legitimate purpose. His concern for the rising toll on innocent Palestinian lives and Israeli soldiers alike points directly to the failures of leadership under Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Olmert's statements serve as a stark indictment of Israel's military strategy, which many view as having triggered a humanitarian disaster in Gaza. He described the current administration as a “criminal gang,” asserting that their actions have reached unprecedented levels of violence in Israel's history. This marks a significant shift from his previous defense of military actions; he now argues that operations can no longer be framed as justifiable. He attributed the devastation to government policy, labeling it as “indiscriminate, limitless, cruel and criminal killing of civilians,” a complete reversal from his earlier justifications that military engagement did not amount to a war on civilians.

The response to Olmert's comments has been swift, particularly from far-right factions within the government. Gideon Sa’ar, the Israeli foreign minister, has accused Olmert of being part of a coordinated effort to undermine Israel’s reputation on the global stage. Raising tensions further, Yair Golan, a former deputy chief of staff of the Israeli army, echoed some of Olmert's critiques concerning the treatment of civilians, arguing that no rational state should deliberately target innocents. However, these views have been met with sharp backlash from other officials, who claim that such statements are reckless and detrimental to the morale of Israeli forces.

The backdrop of Olmert's remarks coincides with a growing discourse that scrutinizes Israel’s military actions. Various human rights organizations, including Amnesty International, have leveled accusations against Israel, suggesting that actions taken could qualify as genocide against the Palestinian population. This intensifying scrutiny from the international community highlights pervasive concerns regarding excessive civilian casualties, with estimates indicating over 40,000 Palestinians have lost their lives.

Additionally, traditional allies of Israel appear to be shifting their views. Recently, Germany’s leadership has begun raising alarms about the humanitarian consequences of Israeli operations, with discussions revolving around the future of military aid. Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul emphasized that historical support for Israel should not come at the expense of humanitarian conduct. As public sentiment in Germany and other Western nations grows ever more critical of Israel’s operations, domestic pressures for reevaluation of military assistance are mounting.

This escalating criticism extends globally, as American officials have privately voiced apprehensions that Israel's military operations may amount to war crimes. Internal discussions within the Biden administration reveal unease over the spiral of violence and the treatment of civilians, underlining the delicate balance between diplomatic support for Israel and rising humanitarian concerns in Gaza.

In this complex landscape, Olmert’s comments illuminate the internal divisions within Israel, underscoring a clash of historical narratives, political alliances, and an urgent demand for accountability. As both domestic and international perspectives continue to evolve, the repercussions of this tumultuous era in Israeli history remain yet to be fully articulated, revealing a critical point of reflection for any political entity focused on the future trajectory of Israel's governance and humanitarian responsibilities.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/may/27/former-israeli-pm-ehud-olmert-says-his-country-is-committing-war-crimes> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/may/27/former-israeli-pm-ehud-olmert-says-his-country-is-committing-war-crimes> - Former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert has stated that Israel is committing war crimes in Gaza, with thousands of innocent Palestinians and many Israeli soldiers being killed. In an opinion piece for Haaretz, Olmert criticised the Israeli government's current military actions as aimless and without clear objectives, leading to a humanitarian disaster in Gaza. He also condemned Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's leadership, describing it as a 'criminal gang' setting unprecedented precedents in Israel's history. Olmert's remarks have sparked controversy, with Israeli far-right parties accusing him of defaming the country internationally.
3. <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/amnesty-report-says-israel-has-committed-genocide-against-palestinians-gaza-2024-12-05/> - Amnesty International has accused Israel of committing genocide against Palestinians in Gaza, an allegation Israel strongly denies. This conclusion was reached after months of analysing incidents and statements by Israeli officials, with Amnesty asserting that Israel has met the legal criteria for genocide as defined by the 1948 Genocide Convention. Israel, however, maintains that it respects international law and has the right to defend itself after attacks by Hamas. Amnesty's report highlighted acts of killing, serious harm, and life conditions aimed at destroying the group, all with the intent required by the convention. This claim follows the International Criminal Court issuing arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his former defence chief for alleged war crimes. Amnesty called for the ICC to investigate these allegations further.
4. <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/emails-show-early-us-concerns-over-gaza-offensive-risk-israeli-war-crimes-2024-10-04/> - In October 2023, as Israel launched heavy air strikes on northern Gaza and mandated the evacuation of over a million Palestinians, U.S. officials expressed deep concerns about potential humanitarian disasters and violations of international law. Dana Stroul, a senior Pentagon official, relayed warnings from the International Committee of the Red Cross about possible Israeli war crimes to the White House. Internal Biden administration emails reviewed by Reuters show that senior U.S. officials struggled with balancing support for Israel after the Hamas attack, which killed 1,200 people, against rising concerns over the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. Despite public support for Israel, U.S. officials privately urged Israel to delay ground offensives and allow for more humanitarian aid. The conflict resulted in over 40,000 deaths in Gaza and jeopardised U.S. relations with Arab allies. While the Biden administration pressured Israel to mitigate civilian harm and extend evacuation deadlines, the public stance remained largely unchanged initially. The war further strained domestic U.S. politics, with significant divisions between pro-Israel Democrats and pro-Palestinian progressives.
5. <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/germany-shifts-tone-israel-over-incomprehensible-gaza-carnage-2025-05-27/> - Germany has issued its strongest criticism yet of Israel's military actions in Gaza, with Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul and Chancellor Friedrich Merz warning of potential consequences, including halting arms exports. The German leadership, traditionally a strong supporter of Israel due to historical responsibilities stemming from the Holocaust, is shifting its stance amid growing international and domestic disapproval. Wadephul emphasised that Germany’s fight against anti-Semitism and support for Israel should not justify actions causing humanitarian harm. Merz criticised ongoing Israeli airstrikes in Gaza as disconnected from the objective of combating Hamas terrorism. Germany's change reflects broader trends in public opinion, as recent surveys show declining support for Israel and increased opposition to arms shipments. The reversal also aligns with similar reconsiderations in other Western countries and ongoing EU policy reviews. Amid worsening hunger in Gaza and stalled ceasefire negotiations, Berlin is under increasing pressure from coalition partners and the public to reevaluate its military support for Israel. Chancellor Merz is expected to discuss these concerns with Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu soon, though no definitive measures have been announced.
6. <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/un-torture-expert-visits-israeli-scenes-of-oct-7-hamas-attack-2024-12-18/> - The United Nations' expert on torture, Alice Jill Edwards, visited Israeli kibbutz communities attacked by Hamas fighters on October 7, 2023. This visit aimed to support families of abducted Israelis. Edwards expressed hope for a ceasefire deal and hostage release, describing the abductions and killings as unlawful atrocities and war crimes. The attack by Hamas resulted in the death of 1,200 people and the capture of over 250 hostages, with 100 still held captive. In response, Israeli forces killed around 45,000 Palestinians in Gaza. Edwards emphasised the need to recognise the suffering of both communities and called for impartial investigations into all crimes committed. The visit also highlighted the desire of affected families, like Yuval Haran's, for peace and the safe return of captives rather than revenge. Israel has criticised the UN's response to the attacks, pushing for thorough investigations into sexual violence on October 7.
7. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Winograd_Commission> - The Winograd Commission was established in Israel to investigate the conduct of the 2006 Lebanon War. The commission's preliminary report, released in April 2007, criticised Prime Minister Ehud Olmert for lacking an organised plan in launching the war and for making misguided and rash judgments. It also accused Olmert of not consulting military leadership adequately and authorising operations without sufficient input from other sources. The report stated that Olmert had failed in his duty during the war, though it did not call for his dismissal. The commission's findings were significant in assessing the Israeli government's preparedness and decision-making processes during the conflict.