

[IDF Spokesperson emblem]

Israel Defense Forces
IDF Spokesperson Division
Freedom of Information Unit
Tel: [REDACTED]
4 Cheshvan 5781
13 July 2021

To

Eric Goldstein

Human Rights Watch

Dear Sir,

Re: **Your request for information regarding Operation Guardian of the Walls**

Yours: Freedom of Information Application dated June 22, 2021

1. Your application with regards to the matter in reference has been received by the IDF and forwarded to the professional officials for a response. Below is the response of the IDF to your application:
2. **Paragraphs 1-12:** The paragraphs included in your application are not phrased as an application for information as defined in Section 2 of the Freedom of Information Act - 1998 (hereinafter: the Act), but rather as a request for general information by way of responding to a questionnaire. There is no obligation to answer questionnaires when responding to a Freedom of Information Application (see AAA 6930/12 **Zvi Tiram v. Ministry of Defense** and AP 1084/07 **Kordova v. City of Jerusalem**). The information below is provided as an exception. At any rate, the information requested in these paragraphs constitutes information about IDF operations and operational plans disclosure of which is prohibited under Section 2(3) of the Freedom of Information Order (Topics regarding which a Public Authority will not Provide Information) - 1999.
3. Note that the IDF launched Operation Guardian of the Walls following rocket fire aimed at Jerusalem by the Hamas terrorist organization. The IDF strikes military targets exclusively, following an assessment that the potential collateral damage resulting from the attack is not excessive in relation to the expected military advantage. While terrorist organizations in Gaza fired thousands of rockets at population centers in order to deliberately harm civilians, the IDF makes concerted efforts to reduce harm to uninvolved individuals.
4. In many of the IDF strikes during Operation Guardian of the Walls, when possible, the IDF provided civilians located within military targets with prior warning so they may evacuate and has employed various measures to ensure civilians had, in fact, evacuated - all with the object of avoiding harm to uninvolved individuals.
5. The Hamas terrorist organization deliberately incorporates its military assets into civilian structures in the heart of densely populated areas in a manner that puts Gaza civilians at risk.
6. Nevertheless, we note that the IDF is making inquiries and investigations into various incidents that took place during Operation Guardian of the Walls to assess whether the obligatory rules had been breached and to draw conclusions. Cases of Palestinian fatalities and other sensitive cases

known from various sources (the media, complaints and reports by international organizations, social media and more) have been forwarded to General Staff Mechanism for Fact-Finding Assessments, which operates independently and professionally to best assess the facts. Inasmuch as breaches of the obligatory rules are uncovered, appropriate steps will be taken according to the relevant considerations and the circumstances of the matter.

7. This decision may be appealed by petitioning the Court for Administrative Affairs in Tel Aviv.
 8. Sincerely,

Lieutenant Colonel Mika Lifschitz
Head of Strategy and Operations Branch
per/ IDF Spokesperson