

President Carter: Israel - Not Hamas - Is to Blame for War

By [Washington's Blog](#)

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Says Failure to Recognize Hamas Is the Core Problem

Jimmy Carter spent a lot of effort [brokering peace](#) in the Middle East. Some of his efforts [succeeded](#). Since retiring from the White House, he has worked to try to broker peace. So he knows something about the Israeli-Palestinian situation.

President Carter [wrote](#) yesterday:

This tragedy results from the deliberate obstruction of a promising move toward peace in the region, when a reconciliation agreement among the Palestinian factions was announced in April. This was a major concession by Hamas, in opening Gaza to joint control under a technocratic government that did not include any Hamas members. The new government also pledged to adopt the three basic principles demanded by the Middle East Quartet comprised of the United Nations, the United States, the European Union, and Russia: nonviolence, recognition of Israel, and adherence to past agreements. Tragically, Israel rejected this opportunity for peace and has succeeded in preventing the new government's deployment in Gaza.

Carter says that Israel has committed war crimes:

There is no humane or legal justification for the way the Israeli Defense Forces are conducting this war. Israeli bombs, missiles, and artillery have pulverized large parts of Gaza, including thousands of homes, schools, and hospitals. More than 250,000 people have been displaced from their homes in Gaza. Hundreds of Palestinian noncombatants have been killed. Much of Gaza has lost access to water and electricity completely. This is a humanitarian catastrophe.

There is never an excuse for deliberate attacks on civilians in conflict. These are war crimes. This is true for both sides. Hamas's indiscriminate targeting of Israeli civilians is equally unacceptable. However, three Israeli civilians have been killed by Palestinian rockets, while an overwhelming majority of the 1,600 Palestinians killed have been civilians, including more than 330 children. The need for international judicial proceedings to investigate and end these violations of international law should be taken very seriously.

Carter also argues that failure to recognize Hamas is the core problem:

First, there must be at least a partial lifting of the 7-year-old sanctions and blockade that isolate the 1.8 million people in Gaza. There must also be an opportunity for the teachers, police, and welfare and health workers on the

Hamas payroll to be paid. These necessary requirements for a human standard of living continue to be denied. Instead, Israel blocked Qatar's offer to provide funds to pay civil servants' salaries, and access to and from Gaza has been further tightened by Egypt and Israel.

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