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War Crime?

Report: Bombing of Gaza power plant war crime

Human rights group B'Tselem determines bombing of power plant in Gaza constitutes war crime and was carried out as 'vengeance'

Ynet reporters

The B'Tselem human rights group published Wednesday a report on the implications of the bombing of the [power plant](#) in Gaza on June 28th, 2006. Findings show that the majority of residents in the Gaza Strip are only intermittently connected to the power supply and that the power cut has adversely affected medical services throughout hospitals and clinics in the Strip.

The report also found that the majority of the urban population is connected to the water supply for only two to three hours a day and that the sewer system in the Strip has virtually collapsed. In addition, the mobility of many of the residents has been hindered following disruption to the elevator service and the inability to refrigerate food supplies, thus exposing many to risk of food poisoning.

According to B'Tselem, the power cut has caused severe damage to small businesses dependent on the electrical supply, and the report foresees an increasingly grave situation in the wake of the severe economic crises prevalent in the Gaza Strip.

The B'Tselem organization has determined that the IDF operation was illegal and that according to international humanitarian law it is deemed a war crime as it constitutes an attack on a clear civilian target, as well as being "a banned collective punishment."

'Israel should finance plant's rebuilding'

With regards to the operation's objectives, contends the report, it came in the wake of the abduction of IDF soldier Gilad Shalit and in response to the firing of Qassam rockets, and that it did not serve any military objective except for "vengeance."

According to the organization, even if the "dubious assumption that the power cut provided a clear military advantage for Israel," it was a disproportionate reaction and Israel should have opted for a less detrimental alternative towards Gaza residents, namely disconnecting the power supplied by Israel. According to B'Tselem, this alternative was not selected so as not to harm the Israel Electric Company's interests.

The report concluded that the Israeli government should launch a criminal investigation into the bombing of the power plant and bring all those responsible to justice.

In addition, the report surmises that Israel should finance the rebuilding of the power plant and until such a time it should increase the flow of electricity supplied from Israel to the Gaza Strip. A further measure called for in the report is to allow residents and institutions from the Gaza Strip to claim damages from the State of Israel.



IDF attack in Gaza
(Archive photo)
Photo: Reuters

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