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Calling a spade a spade

## Assad wants Israel branded 'a terrorist state'

### Syrian President says Arabs should declare unequivocal support for Palestinian resistance.

KUWAIT CITY - Israel should be branded a terrorist state for its 22-day assault on the Gaza Strip, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad told an Arab summit in Kuwait on Monday.

"Arabs should declare an unequivocal support for the Palestinian resistance ... I call on the Arab summit to officially declare Israel as a terrorist state for the crime it did in Gaza," Assad said.

"Ceasefire does not mean the end of aggression as the invading forces are still in Gaza," the Syrian leader said, urging "Arab solidarity... for our causes."

Kuwait's Emir Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah opened the summit with a call for collective Arab measures setting out "practical steps to stabilise the ceasefire" in the Gaza Strip.

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Statistics released by the Palestinian bureau of statistics showed some 4,100 homes in Gaza were totally destroyed and 17,000 others damaged in the three-week war.

Israel's military offensive began on December 27 and resulted in the deaths of at least 1,300 Palestinians, most of them civilians and a third of them children.

Amnesty International said it was "undeniable" that Israel had used white phosphorus in crowded civilian areas, contrary to international law.

"We saw streets and alleyways littered with evidence of the use of white phosphorus, including still burning wedges," said Christopher Cobb-Smith, a weapons expert touring Gaza as part of a four-person fact-finding team.

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