

*Israel won't criminally charge
five officers for 2021 Gaza attack*

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Tel Aviv, July 10 (RHC)-- Israel's army says it has "disciplined" five officers but would not file criminal charges for their actions during the deadly 2021 assault on the besieged Gaza Strip. The soldiers, who received army reprimands for their actions, did not obey standard procedures when striking Gaza but none crossed the "criminal threshold," the army said in a statement claimed.

The Israeli army did not say when the incidents took place, what occurred or whether they involved civilian deaths. It only said two officers struck a target at an unauthorised range, one received a warning

for “negligence for incriminating a target in violation of the mandatory procedure,” another was reprimanded for “lack of sufficient control in the striking unit cell”, and a last officer erred in “targeting procedure”.

Israel is accused of committing war crimes during a devastating 11-day offensive, which killed at least 261 people, including 67 children, and wounded more than 2,200 in Gaza, according to the United Nations. Thirteen people were killed in Israel during the assault in May 2021.

Rights group Human Rights Watch (HRW) had then said that Israeli army committed war crimes, given that attacks had “no evident military targets” and resulted in the deaths of dozens of civilians. HRW said the Israeli army’s actions against its officers did not go far enough and did not amount to a real form of accountability for Israel’s destruction of Gaza.

“Entire families were wiped out and high-rise buildings with scores of homes and businesses were reduced to rubble,” Omar Shakir, Israel and Palestine Director at HRW said. “That requires a much more serious investigation and real consequences imposed, not only on those who carried out the attacks but on those who authorised them. What took place does not appear to be that.”

The army’s announcement came on the heels of its recent raid on the Jenin refugee camp, which has also been condemned for possible rights violations. The raid killed 12 Palestinians and wounded more than 100 others, 30 of them seriously, Israel’s largest attack in the occupied West Bank in more than 20 years.

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