

LEGAL OPINION

By Giovanni Di Stefano

Introduction

This opinion addresses the legality under international law of Israel's bombardment of the sovereign territory of Qatar, allegedly in pursuit of Hamas operatives. The purpose of this legal opinion is not to engage in political debate, nor to assess the morality of either party's objectives, but to examine the matter purely through the lens of international law.

International law is clear: sovereignty is inviolable, and armed action against another sovereign state is strictly regulated. Even when states allege security imperatives, their conduct must conform to the United Nations Charter, the Geneva Conventions, and the established jurisprudence of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the International Criminal Court (ICC).

Seven Violations of International Law

Violation of the Prohibition on the Use of Force (Article 2(4) UN Charter)

By launching aerial bombardments on Qatar, a sovereign state not at war with Israel, Israel has engaged in a prima facie breach of Article 2(4). The ICJ has consistently reaffirmed the prohibition on unilateral armed force, save in circumstances of self-defense under Article 51. No evidence suggests Qatar launched an armed attack sufficient to trigger Article 51. Accordingly, the bombardment constitutes an unlawful act of aggression.

Breach of Qatari Sovereignty and Territorial Integrity

A military attack on the soil of Qatar constitutes a violation of its territorial integrity under Article 2(1) of the UN Charter and customary law. The ICJ in *Nicaragua v. United States* (1986) confirmed that such use of force violates sovereignty regardless of motive.

Unlawful Extrajudicial Killings (Right to Life under ICCPR, Article 6)

Targeting individuals alleged to be Hamas operatives on Qatari soil without judicial process amounts to unlawful extrajudicial killings. Article 6 of the ICCPR prohibits arbitrary deprivation of life, which applies extraterritorially.

Violation of the Principle of Non-Intervention

The bombardment interferes with Qatar's sovereign right to determine its own security and policy towards non-state actors. The UN General Assembly's 1970 Declaration on Friendly Relations expressly outlaws such conduct.

War Crimes under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (Article 8)

If civilian casualties or damage to civilian infrastructure occurred, these acts fall within the definition of war crimes. Deliberately directing attacks against civilians or disproportionate collateral damage is a grave breach of international humanitarian law.

Crime of Aggression (Article 8 bis, Rome Statute)

The bombardment may also qualify as a crime of aggression, defined as the use of armed force against the sovereignty, territorial integrity, or political independence of another State absent Security Council authorization or lawful self-defense.

Violation of Qatar's Right to Security and Peaceful Development

By subjecting Qatar to armed bombardment, Israel disrupts peace and security, violating UN General Assembly Resolution 2625 (XXV) and impeding Qatar's right to peaceful development.

Consequences and Remedies

1. International Criminal Court Warrants – The ICC Prosecutor may open an investigation into war crimes and aggression, issuing arrest warrants against Israeli leaders responsible.
2. International Court of Justice Proceedings – Qatar may bring proceedings before the ICJ for violations of sovereignty, the UN Charter, and human rights treaties.
3. UN Security Council and General Assembly Action – The Security Council may impose sanctions; failing that, the General Assembly may recommend collective measures under the Uniting for Peace resolution.
4. Freezing of Assets and Targeted Sanctions – The EU, US, and others may freeze assets of implicated officials and impose financial sanctions.
5. Reparations to Qatar – Israel is liable under international law for reparations to Qatar for damage caused, consistent with the principle of restitutio in integrum.

Why Consequences Cannot Be Ignored

Failure to hold Israel accountable would erode the integrity of international law. Selective enforcement undermines the universality of the UN Charter. If aggression against sovereign states is tolerated, the prohibition on the use of force loses all authority. Law must be applied uniformly, irrespective of the perpetrator. To ignore this violation is to sanction impunity.

Conclusion

Israel's bombardment of Qatari territory in pursuit of Hamas operatives constitutes at least seven violations of international law:

1. Breach of Article 2(4) UN Charter.
2. Violation of sovereignty and territorial integrity.
3. Extrajudicial killings under ICCPR Article 6.
4. Violation of the principle of non-intervention.
5. War crimes under the Rome Statute.
6. Crime of aggression under Article 8 bis of the Rome Statute.
7. Violation of the right to security and peaceful development.

Accordingly, accountability must be pursued through ICC prosecution, ICJ proceedings, sanctions, and reparations. The law must be enforced without exception. If international law is to retain credibility, breaches must carry consequences.

Signed,
Giovanni Di Stefano

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Table of Authorities

International Treaties and Conventions

- Charter of the United Nations, 26 June 1945, 1 UNTS XVI.
 - Article 2(1): Sovereignty and territorial integrity.
 - Article 2(4): Prohibition on the use of force.
 - Article 51: Right of self-defence.
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 16 December 1966, 999 UNTS 171.
 - Article 6: Right to life and prohibition of arbitrary deprivation of life.
- Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, 17 July 1998, 2187 UNTS 3.
 - Article 8: War crimes.
 - Article 8 bis: Crime of aggression.

International Case Law

- *Military and Paramilitary Activities in and against Nicaragua (Nicaragua v. United States of America)*, Merits, Judgment, I.C.J. Reports 1986, p. 14.

United Nations Resolutions and Declarations

- UN General Assembly Resolution 2625 (XXV), "Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations," 24 October 1970.
- UN General Assembly, Declaration on Friendly Relations, 1970.

Other Authorities

- Jurisprudence of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and International Criminal Court (ICC) (referenced generally).