
Chavez Says Israel Committed Genocide

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Congolese Court Sentences Two Norwegians to Death

(source: bet.com)

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez has accused Israel of genocide against the Palestinian people, telling a French newspaper that the bombing of Gaza late last year was an unprovoked attack. "The question is not whether the Israelis want to exterminate the Palestinians. They're doing it openly," Chavez said in an interview with Le Figaro published on Wednesday.

The Venezuelan president, who has just completed a tour of Middle Eastern and Arab countries, brushed aside Israeli assertions that its attack on Gaza was a response to rocket fire from Islamist group Hamas which rules the coastal enclave. "What was it if not genocide? ... The Israelis were looking for an excuse to exterminate the Palestinians," Chavez said, adding that sanctions should have been slapped on Israel. Israel launched an offensive against the Gaza Strip on December 27, 2008, with the declared aim of curbing rocket fire from the region into southern Israel.

The land, sea and air assault lasted 22 days, and left some 1,300 Palestinians dead, according to medical sources. Chavez said he recognized Israel's right to exist, as with all countries, but added that the Jewish state must respect the Palestinian people's right to self-determination. The Venezuelan president said he wanted more clarity from the United States on its foreign policy, adding that he was disappointed by recent U.S. dealings in South America, including the installation of military bases in Colombia. "Sadly, the arrival of Obama brought with it a lot of hope, but little change," he said.