



MEMO

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Israel Responds to Act of War, Launches Operation to Rescue Kidnapped Soldier

Israel's actions launched Wednesday in Gaza are aimed at rescuing the Israeli soldier kidnapped during this past weekend's attack by Hamas and other terrorist groups. The kidnapping and murder of Israeli soldiers represents an act of war and is the culmination of months of rocket attacks from Gaza and other terrorist attacks in Israel that have killed 19 people. Israel's operation was approved only after it exhausted all diplomatic means to secure the soldier's release. The failure of the Hamas-led Palestinian Authority (PA) and PA President Mahmoud Abbas to prevent terrorism has forced Israel to take measures to rescue the kidnapped soldier.

The kidnapping and murder of the soldiers represents an act of war and is the culmination of months of rocket attacks and other terrorism against Israelis.

- Sunday's kidnapping of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit, 19, and murder of two others during an attack on a military post inside Israel is an act of war.
- Israel's operation to rescue the Israeli soldier was launched after Israel endured six months during which nearly 1,000 Qassam rockets were launched from Gaza and more than 100 suicide bombings were attempted. "Successful" attacks during this time killed 19 soldiers and civilians, including a 16-year old American.
- The Qassam rocket attacks, which have numbered up to 100 per week, have terrorized the residents of the southern Israeli city of Sderot, forcing the mayor to consider evacuating area residents.
- Eight Israelis, including three children, have been killed in rocket attacks during the past two years. During one recent attack, a rocket crashed into a school classroom, narrowly missing a group of children who had just left the room for prayer.

Israel has been forced to defend itself against acts of war and to take action to secure the release of its wounded soldier.

- Like the United States and other sovereign nations, Israel has the right and duty to defend itself from attacks that represent a clear act of war.
- Israel only made the decision to take measured steps to secure the release of Shalit following 48 hours of intensive diplomatic efforts by Israel, the United States and the international community that were blocked by Hamas.
- Israel's military response has been carefully calibrated to effectively carry out the mission to rescue Shalit and ensure the safety of IDF troops while at the same time trying to limit civilian casualties in a hostile urban combat environment.

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The Hamas-led PA has advocated and participated in the continuing violence against Israelis.

- Ahmed Jaabari, a top Hamas terrorist leader on the ground in Gaza, planned the kidnapping operation with Jamal Abu Samhadana, a former official in the Palestinian Interior Ministry who was also a wanted terrorist.
- The Hamas-led PA, many of whose top leaders have consistently advocated the kidnapping of Israeli soldiers, has the responsibility to secure the release of Shalit to Israel. PA Foreign Minister Mahmoud al-Zahar said in March that Hamas would seek to kidnap Israeli soldiers and exchange them for Palestinian terrorists held in Israeli jails.
- The first step of the internationally backed Roadmap requires the PA to launch “sustained, targeted, and effective operations aimed at confronting all those engaged in terror” and to begin the “dismantlement of terrorist capabilities and infrastructure.”
- Not only has the Hamas-led PA failed to dismantle the terrorist infrastructure and to prevent attacks, it has actively encouraged and participated in the continuing terrorism against Israelis.

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