

MEMMO

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Israel Defending Its Citizens Amid Constant Terror

Faced with unremitting rocket attacks from Gaza, the government of Israel has taken forceful action to defend its citizens, the prime obligation of any nation. Israel remains committed to talks with the Palestinian Authority (PA), despite Hamas' deliberate targeting of Israeli civilians on a daily basis. To improve the prospects for successful Israeli-Palestinian talks, the Arab states must increase essential political and financial support to the PA and begin to normalize relations with Israel.

Israel has been forced to defend its citizens from daily rocket attacks from Gaza.

- Israel has shown tremendous restraint in the face of more than 4,000 rocket and mortar attacks on its civilians since the Jewish state dismantled every settlement and removed every settler from Gaza in 2005.
- Israel's military response in Gaza has been carefully calibrated to reduce rocket fire while at the same time making every effort to limit Palestinian civilian casualties.
- Israel's actions have targeted Hamas operation centers, Palestinian rocket-launching devices and vehicles carrying Qassam rockets and armed terrorists. By contrast, Hamas terrorists have deliberately launched rockets from densely populated areas in order to complicate Israel's efforts to respond.
- Like every other sovereign nation, Israel has the right and duty to defend its citizens. At some point, Israel may have to take broader military action in Gaza to quell the daily rocket attacks on homes, schools and malls that are killing, maiming and terrorizing innocent civilians.
- Both Congress and the administration have repeatedly supported Israel's right to defend itself against terrorism, noting in numerous resolutions and statements the threat posed by Hamas and other terrorist groups in Gaza.



Hamas has built a 20,000-man military force equipped with sophisticated weaponry provided by Iran.

Hamas has increased its military capabilities, boosting its arms smuggling efforts and firing longer-range rockets into Israel.

- In addition to home-made Qassam rockets, Palestinian terrorists are now attacking Israel with longer-range, Iranian-supplied rockets that put more than 250,000 Israelis living in southern cities, such as Ashkelon, within striking range.
- Hamas is smuggling into Gaza increasingly sophisticated weaponry, including advanced propellants, shoulder-fired RPGs, anti-tank missiles and anti-aircraft missiles.
- A recent report by the Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center (ITTC) in Israel says Hamas has more than 20,000 armed fighters organized in semi-military formations under improved command and control. Many of these fighters are being sent for training in Iran and Syria.
- The report also says that Hamas is preparing for a large-scale battle with Israel, building underground bunkers similar to those used by Hizballah during the 2006 war in Lebanon, and planting improvised explosive devices on roads the IDF might use during an operation in Gaza.

Despite the violence, Israel is facilitating humanitarian assistance to Gaza and is committed to talks with the PA.

- Israel is committed to negotiations with the PA and has taken steps to help Palestinians in the West Bank, including removing several dozen roadblocks and checkpoints, allowing PA security forces to operate in key cities and seeking ways to boost economic activity.
- Israel continues to allow the delivery of food, medicines and energy supplies to Gaza despite repeated attacks on those helping to facilitate such humanitarian efforts. Since Hamas took over Gaza in June 2007, Israel has transferred more than 530,000 tons of humanitarian supplies to Gaza.
- Palestinian terrorists have repeatedly attacked the very border crossings and facilities intended to help the Palestinians, including the Kerem Shalom crossing, where hundreds of trucks with food and medicine enter Gaza on a monthly basis.
- Israel continues to allow patients to leave Gaza for medical treatment in the Jewish state, with more than 14,000 people having entered Israel since 2006. Would-be suicide bombers have used fake medical information in attempts to enter Israel and carry out attacks.

If Israeli-Palestinian negotiations are to succeed, Arab states must actively support Abbas and move toward normalizing relations with Israel.

- Arab states need to take concrete steps to support the talks by providing Abbas the political support he will need to fight terrorism, isolate Hamas and make the tough compromises necessary to reach an agreement with Israel.
- Arab governments must fulfill their pledges to provide financial assistance to the Palestinians. Despite record oil profits, members of the Arab League have provided the PA with only 30 percent (\$215 million out of \$717.1 million) of pledged budget support.
- Arab states can further show their commitment to ending the conflict—and demonstrate to the Israeli public their sincerity—by taking steps to normalize relations with Israel, ending incitement in their media and preparing their own people for peace with the Jewish state.