

MEMMO

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Hamas Must Not Be Allowed to Fire Rockets, Rearm

Diplomatic efforts seeking to end hostilities in Gaza must provide for an immediate end to rocket attacks on Israel and a mechanism to ensure Hamas cannot rebuild its military arsenal via smuggled Iranian weapons shipments. U.N. Security Council Resolution 1860 is nonbinding and merely calls for such an outcome, but provides no mechanism to guarantee it. Hamas used the recent “period of calm” to build up its military capabilities and prepare for attacks on Israeli civilians. Israel remains committed to peace; its actions in Gaza are designed to help create the long-term conditions necessary for a peaceful solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

A durable and sustainable outcome to the hostilities is dependent on an end to Hamas rocket attacks and a mechanism to prevent Hamas from rearming.

- Hamas must stop all rocket attacks on Israel. As President Bush said in his Jan. 12 news conference, “There will not be a sustainable cease-fire if they continue firing rockets. ... The choice is Hamas’ to make.”
- Hamas also cannot be allowed to rearm. French President Nicolas Sarkozy, speaking on behalf of himself and German Chancellor Angela Merkel, said, “Israel should be guaranteed that no arms will be smuggled across the Egypt-Gaza border.”
- British Foreign Secretary David Miliband said an end to hostilities must include “above all a curb on the trafficking of illegal arms into Gaza.”
- International monitoring of the Gaza border is required to ensure an end to all Hamas smuggling activity. Bush said that “promises from Hamas will not suffice; there must be monitoring mechanisms in place to help ensure that smuggling of weapons to terrorist groups in Gaza comes to an end.”



Hamas continues to fire indiscriminate rockets into Israeli civilian population centers, hitting schools and homes such as the one above in southern Israel.

Security Council Resolution 1860 fails to meet the basic requirements to ensure a sustainable and durable end to the fighting.

- Security Council Resolution 1860 fails to differentiate between Israel’s legitimate acts of self-defense and the cruel acts of terrorism perpetrated by Hamas against a legitimate U.N. member state.

- The resolution fails to recognize the cause of the recent conflict was Hamas' refusal to extend the Egyptian-mediated calm last month and the renewal of intense Hamas rockets attacks into Israel.
- The resolution also does not recognize that Israel has been attacked by more than 6,800 rockets and mortars after fully withdrawing from Gaza in 2005.
- The resolution fails to condemn Hamas's weapons smuggling and fails to include an effective monitoring mechanism to ensure Hamas does not rearm. Rather, the resolution merely calls for states to "intensify efforts" to find arrangements to prevent illicit trafficking in arms and ammunition.
- The Security Council, in taking up the resolution, potentially undermined intense diplomatic efforts—led by Egypt and France—already underway in the region that are aimed at ending the hostilities and preventing a future outbreak.

Hamas has used the past six months to increase its military capabilities to carry out attacks against Israel.

- The Hamas leader in Damascus, Khaled Meshaal, said last year that a period of calm "is a tactic in conducting the struggle. ... It is normal for any resistance that operates in its people's interest ... to sometimes escalate, other times retreat a bit. ... The battle is to be run this way and Hamas is known for that."
- Hamas used the recent six-month "lull"—during which it fired more than 400 rockets and mortars—to double its stockpile of rockets and to acquire rockets with longer ranges, including Iranian-supplied Katyusha rockets.
- In addition to increasing its rocket capabilities, Hamas used the lull to smuggle massive quantities of arms into Gaza from Egypt, including shoulder-fired RPG anti-tank missiles, sniper rifles, high-quality explosives and anti-aircraft missiles, according to Israeli security officials.
- Hamas also used the past six months to increase its military infrastructure, modeled after Hizballah's in southern Lebanon. Israeli forces operating in Gaza have uncovered vast underground tunnel networks used to store weapons and filled with booby traps, which are designed to facilitate the kidnapping of Israeli soldiers.
- One tunnel loaded with large quantities of explosives lead to a Hamas command center beneath Gaza's Shifa hospital.
- Hamas also used the lull to send hundreds of terrorists to camps in Iran and Lebanon to receive training from Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. The training included rocket-making, sharpshooting, field combat instruction and advanced explosive techniques.

Israel's action in Gaza is designed to help create the long-term conditions necessary for peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

- Israel remains committed to peace and has held intensive negotiations with the Palestinian Authority (PA) during the past year amid continuing attacks by Hamas. Israel also has taken numerous steps to improve the lives of Palestinians in the West Bank.
- The best chance for a successful peace process is for Israel and others in the region to ensure that Hamas and its supporters in Tehran cannot disrupt Israeli-Palestinian negotiations by using Gaza as a launching pad for attacks on Israel.
- By weakening Hamas' stranglehold on Gaza, Israel is creating an environment in which the PA, headed by President Mahmoud Abbas and Prime Minister Salam Fayyad, can exercise its legitimate authority and conduct serious negotiations with Israel.