

MEMO

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In Context: The Recent Violence in Gaza

Coverage of the recent conflict on the Gaza border often lacks context. For the past seven weeks, Hamas has used “nonviolent protests” to attempt to overrun Israel’s border and kill its civilians, and it is Hamas that bears responsibility for the recent bloodshed. Tragically, innocent people were killed and injured in the violence. Unfortunately, the terrorist group prefers to sacrifice the people of Gaza over pursuing peaceful coexistence with Israel. Hamas’s ongoing terrorism—including the destruction of humanitarian infrastructure—makes clear the terror group does not seek a better life for the people of Gaza.

Hamas bears responsibility for the deaths in Gaza. The Palestinians killed during the riots would be alive today if not for Hamas. In a carefully orchestrated effort, the terrorist group has used the guise of “nonviolent protests” to attack Israeli territory. With Israeli towns only minutes from the fence, Israel must take preventive measures to thwart attacks on its civilian population. It cannot allow those bent on murder to infiltrate its communities. More than 80 percent of those killed have been acknowledged by Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad as members of the terrorist groups.

These are not peaceful protests. While some in Gaza seek to peacefully assemble, Hamas and other terrorists have instigated these demonstrations to violently attack Israel. On May 14, Israel discovered at least 10 improvised explosive devices (IEDs) at the Israel-Gaza fence. In one attack, eight armed terrorists hurled pipe bombs and grenades at soldiers stationed along the border. Gazans have launched dozens of incendiary devices into Israel to set ablaze its fields and communities. A Hamas guide posted online included maps to Israeli communities and the following instruction: “Bring a knife, a dagger or a gun. . . .keep it under your clothes. . . .kidnap Israeli civilians and transfer them immediately to Hamas.”

Hamas’s goal is Israel’s destruction. Hamas leaders have made clear that their goal is not peaceful change, but rather the destruction of the Jewish state. “Palestine and Jerusalem belong to us. . . . We will break the walls of the blockade, remove the occupation entity and return to all of Palestine,” said Ismail Haniyeh, Chairman of Hamas Political Bureau in an April 9 speech.

This is not about the location of the U.S. embassy. The events in Gaza have little to do with the opening of the U.S. embassy in Jerusalem. Demonstrations in Gaza began seven weeks ago under the banner of the “March of Return”—a euphemism for the destruction of Israel. The violence has only peaked on the anniversary of Israel’s Declaration of Independence, as those involved demonstrate their continued objection to Israel’s existence. In Jerusalem and the West Bank, there have been few protests, little violence, and no deaths. Even the Palestinian Authority acknowledges Hamas’s cynical goals. On April 6, a senior advisor to the Palestinian Authority president said, “Hamas is deliberately sending Gazan civilians to their deaths to grab good headlines.”



Rioters fire on Israeli forces, using Molotov cocktails and other incendiary devices.



Hamis social media encourages Gaza's citizens to violently attack Israel.

Hamis has destroyed Gazan humanitarian infrastructure. On several occasions, rioters have attacked the Kerem Shalom crossing with Israel—the sole transit point for humanitarian goods from Israel to Gaza. The damage to the crossing infrastructure has resulted in the reduced flow of aid to the people of Gaza. Rioters have also attacked other civilian infrastructure, including a gas pipeline.

Israel and America are continuing to work to improve Gaza's humanitarian situation. Despite ongoing violence and destruction of crossing-point infrastructure, Israel continues to transfer humanitarian aid and building materials to Gaza. In the last year, Israel has taken concrete steps to improve Palestinian lives in Gaza, including projects to improve water, sanitation, electricity, communications and more. The United States also continues to provide significant funding for humanitarian aid and projects in Gaza. Earlier this spring, the Trump administration hosted a conference to explore solutions to the humanitarian and economic conditions in the Gaza Strip—the event was attended by representatives from 20 countries, including Israel and multiple Arab nations.

The United States should continue to support Israel's right to defend itself. The United States should continue to support Israel's right to defend itself and protect its borders. As White House Spokesperson Raj Shah said on May 14: "The responsibility for these tragic deaths rests squarely with Hamis. Hamis is intentionally and cynically provoking this response. And as the Secretary of State said, Israel has the right to defend itself." Further, the United States should continue to increase sanctions on Hamis, and press the terrorist group to disarm, accept Israel's right to exist, and end the use of human shields.



Rioters set fire to the main crossing point into Gaza for humanitarian goods.



Terrorist attempt to place a bomb along the Gaza border fence.