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**To:** Israeli and American Leaders

**From:** The Israel Project

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## **RE: LANGUAGE GUIDE ON GAZA: ISRAEL'S ACTIONS TO DEFEND ITS CITIZENS AGAINST THE IRAN-BACKED WAR AGAINST ISRAEL**

Over 6,300 rockets and mortars were fired from Gaza towards Israel since Israel withdrew from all of Gaza in 2005, more than 3000 were fired in 2008 alone. They have increased not only in number but also in range thanks to support from Iran, the world's largest state sponsor of terrorism. Thirteen innocent people have been killed in Israel, more than 780 have been wounded and thousands have been traumatized. The toll which this has taken on Israelis living in the south is literally unimaginable to most Americans and Europeans with whom you are trying to communicate. Not only is it hard to imagine, but due to a severe lack of media coverage it is also largely unknown.

Despite the more than 6,300 rockets shot by Iran-backed terrorists groups towards Israel since Israel gave up all of Gaza in hopes of peace, **fully 60 percent of Americans have heard "little or nothing at all" about the rockets being fired from Gaza into Israel.** Thus, in all your communications you must remember that the majority of your audience does not know about the intentional targeting of Israeli civilians. They don't know that for more than three years families in southern Israel have spent nights in bomb shelters rather than bedrooms and that during the day school children, adults and the elderly are all forced to run for bomb shelters on a regular basis. They do not know that over **90 percent of Sderot residents experienced a rocket exploding on their own street or an adjacent one.**

It is vital that we educate the public in a human and personal way about the state of siege that Sderot residents face daily as we communicate about Israel's actions and the responsibility that Iran bears in this conflict. **We have seen the damage and destruction that Iran-backed terrorists can do with rockets and missiles. Imagine what can happen when Iran decides to share its nuclear material as well.** As Israel exercises its right to self defense, we should be aware that we are faced with very powerful and destructive images in the media as innocent Palestinians are also hurt and killed in these defensive actions. We therefore need to include and emphasize empathy and Israel's desire for peace as critical components to our communications strategy. We need to point out clearly that Iran-backed terrorists are using Palestinians as human shields – which is a war crime.

Several core messages are essential to a winning communications strategy about IDF defensive actions in Gaza:

- **Israel's obligation to defend its citizens;**
  - Israel withdrew from all of Gaza more than three years ago in hopes of peace, there is NO occupation of Gaza, Israel wants a two-state solution

- The dire situation in Sderot where neighborhoods of innocent Israelis are being deliberately attacked with rockets as often as dozens of times a day
  - The expansion of the threat to Ashdod and Ashkelon – a city with 120,000 people that is now also under attack by Iran-backed terrorists who are shooting rockets from inside human shields
  - Israel has an obligation to defend its citizens from the threat of Iran-backed terrorists now – just as it did when Iran-backed Hezbollah attacked Israel not long ago
  - Iran's President has said he wants to "wipe Israel off the map." They are developing nuclear materials in defiance of the world while supporting, training and arming Hamas, Islamic Jihad, Hezbollah and others.
  - Israel is no different from any other sovereign nation that must protect their citizens from those who would kill them.
- **Empathy for the average Palestinian;**
  - **Israel's desire and actions for a two state solution and a secure peace** – the fact that there is an active peace process underway and that Israel, like when it gave up the Sinai for peace with Egypt, Israel is ready to make painful sacrifices for a better future for both sides.
  - **Hamas and other Palestinian terrorist groups are funded and armed by Iran.** We must refer to them as Iran-backed terrorists in order to keep the critical issue of Iran's nuclear development in the headlines as well. Using words like, *"We have seen the damage and destruction that Iran-backed terrorists can do with rockets and missiles. Imagine what can happen when Iran decides to share its nuclear material as well."*

**President-Elect Obama** is widely respected around the world, especially by our European allies. His words and views carry great weight with people whose hearts and minds we still need to win. Use his own quotes to emphasize the importance of this issue. During his presidential campaign, he visited Sderot and at a press conference in the local police station, Obama said of the Qassam rocket fire, *"If somebody was sending rockets into my house where my two daughters sleep at night, I would do everything to stop that, and would expect Israel to do the same thing."*

Obama also addressed the Iranian nuclear threat, saying, *"A nuclear Iran would pose a grave threat and the world must prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon."*

## **RIGHT TO SELF DEFENSE**

Israel has shown incredible restraint in its response thus far to the rocket attacks from Gaza, but the world does not know that there has been restraint because, as research shows, they know surprisingly little about the attacks themselves. Thus, you must set the stage for Israel's right to self defense by describing what Israel is defending itself from. Bring it to a human level, this year over 3,000 rockets have been fired from Gaza into Israeli **neighborhoods** hitting, living rooms, kindergartens and playgrounds -- **women and children** driving to school and the supermarket. These rockets come five, ten, over 50 a day, hundreds of rockets in less than one week. For three years families have slept together in bomb shelters rather than bedrooms.

Because so little is known of this threat it is critical that include the following components in your argument to provide the full context to this message.

- Israel withdrew from Gaza over 3 years ago, with no intention of returning. Every man, woman, child, soldier left Gaza in the hands of the Palestinians in hopes of peace.

- Q: And what did they get in return?
- A: Terrorism (see [www.theisraelproject.org](http://www.theisraelproject.org) for more statistics and examples)
  - 335 rockets were fired from Gaza into neighborhoods in one week. As many as 150 rockets have been fired at Israel in one DAY.
  - No responsible Member State would sit back in silence and do nothing as its citizens and territory are under constant attack. They would not be idle as the alarms in Sderot - and now Ashkelon - blare "Colour Red, Colour Red", giving Israeli civilians less than 15 seconds - 15 seconds of terror - that's all it takes, before the rocket slams into their lives, their homes, hospitals, kindergartens, schools, and playgrounds
  - Thirteen Israelis, including innocent toddlers have been killed by rockets from Gaza. Nearly one thousand have been injured. Residents of Sderot have been dealing with this for eight years! An entire town is terrorized and traumatized by the daily onslaught and randomness of rockets targeting their homes, schools, and businesses.
  - Children can't sleep, can't go to school, and can't live normally. And why? What have these people done? What did the Israeli father of four who was brutally killed while seeking a diploma at Sapir college do to be killed?
  - There should be no doubt in our minds that Hamas' true vision is the extermination of the State of Israel, and not to live peacefully side by side with us. It does not even seek to restore normalcy for the sake of the people of Gaza.
  - Hamas, an internationally recognized terrorist organization is in charge in Gaza. It permits, encourages, funds and conducts terror attacks from Gaza into Israel. They have declared war on innocent Israelis and their proclaimed goal is not resistance to occupation of Gaza and the West Bank, their goal is the destruction of all of Israel.
  - With funds and arms coming from Iran into the Gaza strip, the reach of their rockets, the damage they inflict and the danger to the southern part of Israel are growing every day.
  - One must wonder about the timing of Hamas' escalation of violence, and whether its purpose is to distract the international community's attention today and this week from the real threat to the world – a nuclear Iran.

Americans understand that Israel, just like any other sovereign country, has not just a right but an obligation to defend its citizens. Use rhetorical questions to gain permission from the audience for Israel's actions. When presented with the facts and questions, Americans will come to the right conclusions.

#### Words That DO Work

*"What should Israel do? **Imagine**, if thousands of rockets were fired from Canada into homes in Rochester every day and every night? What would America do? What would you want them to do if you lived in Rochester? Don't we have a duty to protect our citizens?"*

*“How can you call it a “cycle of violence” when in reality, if Israel stopped fighting terror, the violence would not end? Israel left all of Gaza and were rewarded with rockets. If the Palestinians stopped terror, Israel would have no reason for curfews, fences, checkpoints, and other defensive measures.”*

*“Israel tries everything they can to avoid civilians in their actions in Gaza, but unfortunately, Hamas and other terrorists place guns, rocket launchers and weapons smuggling tunnels in the heart of their civilian population. Israel must defend its citizens, why does Hamas intentionally place Palestinians in the line of fire to create more ‘martyrs’ for their cause?”*

Don't pretend that Israel is without mistakes or fault. **It's not true and no one believes it.** Pretending Israel is free from errors does not pass the smell test. It will only make your listeners questioning the veracity of everything else you say. Americans do not expect Israel to be 100 percent successful in all their efforts to stop terrorism. **Admitting that Israel has and continues to make mistakes does not undermine the overall justice of Israel's goals: peace and security and a better quality of life for BOTH sides.** Use humility.

### **Words That DO Work**

*“Is Israel perfect? No. Does Israel make mistakes? Yes. But we want a better future, and are working towards it. But the Palestinians must have a better future as well. They need to have a place where they can have hope and a place of their own. They deserve a government that will eliminate the terror not only because it will make my children safer—but because it will mean a better future for Palestinian children too.”*

*“I know that in trying to defend its children and citizens from terrorists that Israel has accidentally hurt innocent people. But what can Israel do to defend itself? If more than 6000 rockets had been fired into your neighborhood, across American borders, what would you expect of your government?”*

### **EMPATHY**

While Israel is well within its rights to defend itself against terrorists, this also means that at minimum the lives of innocent Palestinians will be disrupted by military action, and very likely there will be casualties and deaths. It is of utmost importance that you express empathy for these victims. **BUT YOU MUST POINT OUT THAT IRAN-BACKED TERRORISTS ARE USING HUMAN SHIELDS WHICH IS AN INTERNATIONAL WAR CRIME.**

This is about peace for BOTH sides. The first step to winning trust and friends for Israel is showing that you care about peace for BOTH Israelis and Palestinians – particularly for the children. Indeed, the sequence of your conversation is critical and you must start with empathy for BOTH sides first. Begin with empathy before bridging to a different message.

**There is an immediate and clear distinction between the empathy Americans feel for the Palestinians and the scorn they direct at Palestinian leadership and for Iran-backed terrorists.** You must take pains to focus on the suffering the Palestinian people now face because of the years of corruption under Arafat's leadership and current leadership of Iran backed Hamas. You CANNOT attack the Palestinian people along with them.

## Words That DO Work

*“The death of a Palestinian child is no less of a tragedy than that of the Israeli child. I know that the vast majority of both Palestinian and Israeli mothers want an end to this conflict; they want a better more peaceful future for their children. But when will the Iran-backed Hamas terrorists stop firing rockets from Gaza into Israel? When will they stop using civilian areas as launching grounds?”*

*“Cutting off supplies and closing border crossings are horrible, ugly, difficult things. I see the same pictures as you do and I am very troubled that Iran-backed Hamas is forcing Israel to take these measures to defend its citizens. Israel left all of Gaza in hopes of peace, but since Hamas and other terrorists are allowed and encouraged to attack Israel from Gaza, we must protect our citizens.”*

## **ISRAEL WANTS PEACE ISRAEL WANTS PEACE ISRAEL WANTS PEACE**

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No, that wasn't a mistake to repeat that heading over and over again. It is a reminder that this is what communicators for Israel must do! Consistently in our research we have found that this message moves persuadables to be more supportive of Israel, BUT, they don't necessarily believe it to be true, which is an even more compelling reason to get this message out to the world during any military action in Gaza or the West Bank.

Whoever is on the side of peace will win more American hearts and minds for Israel. Don't forget to use examples of historic steps Israel has taken for peace: peace with Egypt, withdrawal from the Sinai, peace with Jordan, withdrawal from Gaza, and the acceptance of a two-state solution.

## Words That DO Work

*“Israel is committed to a better future where both Israelis and Palestinians can live side by side in peace. Israel realizes that it needs to share responsibility with the Palestinians for the conflict and for the damage to innocent lives. Israel wants the pain and suffering to end, and is committed to working with the Palestinians toward a peaceful, diplomatic solution where both sides can have a better future.”*

*“Israel made painful sacrifices and took a risk to give peace a chance. They voluntarily removed over 9,000 settlers from Gaza and parts of the West Bank, abandoning homes, schools, businesses, and places of worship in the hopes of renewing the peace process.”*

*“We want more words and less wounds, more dialogue and less death, this is why the peace process is so important.”*

*“Despite making an overture for peace by withdrawing from Gaza, Israel continues to face terrorist attacks, including rocket attacks and drive-by shootings of innocent Israelis. Both sides deserve a better more peaceful future.”*

*“Israeli children learn about peace and tolerance in school, their school halls are filled with posters of astronauts, scientists and athletes. I pray for the day when Hamas will teach Palestinian children to aspire to be doctors, lawyers and teachers, not suicide bombers, not to aspire to death. Don't you think that is child abuse?”*

*“I long for a time when Palestinian TV will show a Mickey Mouse that is fun – not a Hamas Mickey Mouse that glorifies terrorism. I want Palestinian children to grow up – not blow up. Isn't it time for them to replace jihad with jobs and hate with hope?”*

## The Peace Process

It is essential that while Israel is taking these actions, it is understood that despite these threats that they face, they still are trying to advance the peace process. This is not a conflict that will be solved overnight, so refer to language below to build more realistic expectations among your audience.

- **“Working toward a solution”**: Americans don’t expect the dispute between Israel and the Arabs to end overnight, but they do need to know that *“We are working to find a solution that is acceptable to everyone involved.”* This suggests movement. This suggests progress. This suggests hope. And all three are important components of a successful communication effort.
- **“Cooperation and compromise”**: This is an emotion one doesn’t expect to hear from either side, yet it is at the core of how Americans believe the conflict must be solved. The side that uses these words will definitely have an advantage.
- **“We need to take this one step at a time, one day at a time”**: It is essential to lower expectations and reduce the pressure on Israel to rush into an agreement that is either not in its interests or jeopardizes its security. The *“one step at a time”* language will be accepted as a common sense approach to the land-for-peace equation.
- **Optimism**: *“The day will come when Israeli children and Palestinian children will grow up together, play together, and eventually work together side-by-side not just because they have to but because they want to.”*
- **Respect**: *“We are hoping that the Palestinian people recognize that the leadership they had for so many years unfortunately had a very different agenda from the real agenda of the Palestinian people. We do not have the right to tell the Palestinians whom to elect to represent them. The political landscape has dramatically changed for the Palestinian people. We know Abbas is working towards peace but that in Gaza the Palestinians are led by Hamas – which wants to destroy Israel – even if that means destroying the Palestinian people in the process. The Palestinians deserve leaders in Gaza who will care about the well being of their people, who understand that firing rockets into neighborhoods out of civilian areas is not working for peace or a future Palestinian state. The Palestinians need homes and jobs AND peace.”*

## Appendix A: Sample talking points for letters to the editor or op eds:

- Israel gave up all of Gaza more than three years ago in the hopes of peace, evacuating 9,000 Israeli civilians from this territory. What has Israel gotten in return? More than 6,300 rockets shot towards Israel – rockets that are aimed at kindergartens and other civilians.
- 335 rockets were fired from Gaza into neighborhoods in one week. As many as 150 rockets have been fired at Israel in one DAY.
- No responsible Member State would sit back in silence and do nothing as its citizens and territory are under constant attack. They would not be idle as the alarms in Sderot - and now Ashkelon - blare "Colour Red, Colour Red", giving Israeli civilians less than 15 seconds - 15 seconds of terror - that's all it takes, before the rocket slams into their lives, their homes, hospitals, kindergartens, schools, and playgrounds
- Thirteen Israelis, including innocent toddlers have been killed by rockets from Gaza. Hundreds have been injured. Residents of Sderot have been dealing with this for seven years! An entire town is terrorized and traumatized by the daily onslaught and randomness of rockets targeting their homes, schools, and businesses.

- Children can't sleep, can't go to school, and can't live normally. And why? What have these people done? What did the Israeli father of four who was brutally killed while seeking a diploma at Sapir college do to be killed?
- There should be no doubt in our minds that Hamas' true vision is the extermination of the State of Israel, and not to live peacefully side by side with Israel. Iran-backed Hamas does not even seek to restore normalcy for the sake of the people of Gaza. It was the same with Iran-backed Hezbollah who, like Hamas, also used civilian shields in Lebanon. The world should stand up for Arab civilians who are being used as human shields by Iran-backed terrorists!
- Hamas, an internationally recognized terrorist organization is in charge in Gaza. It permits, encourages, funds and conducts terror attacks from Gaza into Israel. They have declared war on innocent Israelis and their proclaimed goal is not resistance to occupation of Gaza and the West Bank, their goal is the destruction of all of Israel.
- With funds and arms coming from Iran into the Gaza strip, the reach of their rockets, the damage they inflict and the danger to the southern part of Israel are growing every day.
- One must wonder about the timing of Hamas' escalation of violence, and whether its purpose is to distract the international community's attention today and this week from the real threat to the world – a nuclear Iran.
- Now as many as 150 rockets a day are being shot into Israel from the Iran-backed Hamas. An Israeli father of four was killed by rockets. His crime? He dared go back to Sapir college in hopes of a diploma so he could make a better life for his family.
- Israel is working for a peaceful solution with Palestinian leader Abbas. However, Iran-backed Hamas controls Gaza and Abbas is either unable or unwilling to stop the rockets to date.
- Now the rockets firing at Israel are increasing in both number and range. This puts all the families in the town of Sderot and all of the 120,000 people in Ashkelon at risk.
- Rockets from Iran-backed terrorists in Gaza are hitting Israeli living rooms, kindergartens and playgrounds. Children in towns near Gaza, many having spent now two years sleeping in bomb shelters, are growing up traumatized. Indeed, 74% of children in Sderot aged 7-12 suffer from post-traumatic anxiety.
- In all, thirteen civilians in Israel have been killed by the rocket and mortar fire and more than 780 have been injured.
- In response to the daily targeting and killing of its civilians, Israel is trying to target terrorists and terrorist infrastructure only, and doing its utmost to avoid harming any Palestinian civilian. Sadly, however, Iran-backed terrorists in Gaza deliberately hide in highly dense civilian areas – putting Palestinian civilians at risk. By using Palestinians as human shields, Iran-backed terrorists are causing the loss of lives on both sides.
- Iran-backed Hamas has generated a humanitarian crisis in the Gaza strip, firing more than 220 Qassam rockets at Israeli children in more than 4 days and forcing Israeli authorities to take measures to protect its population, and thus reducing fuel shipment to Gaza. What other country would give power and supplies to neighbors who murder their civilians and want to destroy them?
- While the Gaza strip is still receiving three quarters of its electricity supply from Israel and Egypt, Hamas terrorists deliberately decided to cut off the only power plant in Gaza, letting 5 Palestinians in the hospital die as a direct result of their actions. Hamas was still able to provide all the electricity necessary for the launching of rockets into Israel.
- As the civilian population from Gaza finds themselves prisoners of the Iran-backed terrorist organization Hamas, Israel decided to make a humanitarian gesture and renewed its shipments of fuel into the Gaza Strip.

- Hamas terrorists are receiving very large sums of money from Iran, but instead of using this money to help their population, they use it to fire more Qassam rockets on Israeli children (according to the Israeli General Security Services, on Jan. 13 last year Hamas had managed to smuggle \$100 million into the Gaza Strip).
- Given the onslaught of rockets into Israel from Gaza, what is Israel to do to protect their citizens? When will Arab and Iran-backed terrorists stop the rockets so that both Israelis and Palestinians can have a better future?

### One pager to take with you to interviews

The side that is most for peace will always win the PR war. Israel must defeat those who would undermine peace so that real work can be done for all sides - Israelis and Palestinians - to have a better future.

Please try to avoid the word NO. Use the word YES and the word PEACE (not quiet, which means nothing to Americans)

Example:

**Reporter:** Are you going to support the cease fire?

**Sample answer:** Israel says YES to peace every time we can. Israel urgently wants peace for both sides. And that is why we cannot stop what we are doing until we have completed our task of preventing Hamas from killing innocent civilians. Israeli civilians took thousands of rockets over 8 years. We gave up all of Gaza in hopes of peace - and we got only rockets in return. We say YES for a paradigm shift in the region so that all sides can have a peaceful and better future. This is not an easy job. Israel's enemies have been working for decades to destroy us. Peace will not come overnight but we are willing to do the work so that both Israeli and Palestinian children can be raised with hope.

**Reporter: Isn't this disproportionate force?**

**Sample answer:** I ask you, what is proportional when our children have been attacked by rockets for 8 years? Back in 2004 people said we were attacked because we "occupied" Gaza. So in 2005 we left Gaza. 9,000 Israelis gave up their homes, places of business, worship and school. Every Jew left Gaza. We wanted a two state solution. What did we get? This year alone more than 3,000 rockets have been sent by Iran-backed terrorists in Gaza to hurt or kill Israeli civilians. I ask you, if rockets were coming into your town day after day, year after year, what would you want your government to do?

**Reporter:** Why are you targeting civilians?

**Sample answer:** We are doing all we can to target only military targets. But Hamas is using civilian shields. So the responsibility for civilian deaths is theirs. We long for a time when there will be peace so both sides have a better future. We mourn the loss of every innocent person on both sides.



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#### **Iran-based Hamas: Security threats**

- Israel withdrew from the Gaza Strip over 3 years ago, with no intention of returning. Every man, woman, child, soldier left Gaza in the hands of the Palestinians in **hope of peace**.
- Despite this, more than 4,000 rockets have been fired into Israel since the withdrawal from Gaza. **Of these, some 3,000 rockets have fired since the beginning of 2008.**
- The Gaza Calm began in June of this year, yet the violence **has not ceased**. For example, in November, 150 rockets were launched into southern Israeli communities. These rockets are deliberately aimed at Israeli civilians and are fired from within civilian populations in Gaza.

- Israel sympathizes with Palestinian civilians and understands that it is the terrorist regime controlling the Gaza Strip which threatens both Israelis' and Palestinians' safety and security.

### Humanitarian situation

- Israel wants peace with the Palestinians and toward this goal aims to improve the quality of life in both West Bank and Gaza. Yet these efforts in Gaza have been hindered by **repeated attacks on the border crossings**.
- In the past six months, --- trucks carrying fuel, food, medicine, and humanitarian equipment have crossed into Gaza.
- In 2008, more than 12,000 Palestinians entered Israel in order to receive medical attention.
- In comparison to the situation in the Gaza Strip, Israel has been pursuing peace with its Palestinian partners in the West Bank for the past three years, and there has been much progress. For example, through the "Jenin Pilot", Israel is working to raise NIS 1.63 million (\$417,000) in international aide, and with Israel's support, 550 Palestinian police officers have been deployed in Hebron to provide security to the streets of the city.

### Gilad Shalit

- Israel soldier Gilad Shalit was captured by Palestinian terrorists in June 2006 through a tunnel on the Israel-Gaza border.
- Despite ongoing efforts by Israel, Shalit has yet to be released.
- No international organization has been allowed by the Hamas government to visit Shalit since his capture. We again call on Hamas to allow the Red Cross access to Shalit.

### Iran

- Iran **arms and funds** terrorist groups such as Hezbollah and the Gaza-based Hamas and Islamic Jihad and has recruited 40,000 suicide bombers.
- Iranian-made rockets that were smuggled into Gaza through various means, such as the complex underground tunnel system, are fired into Israel from Gaza on a regular basis.
- A nuclear Iran could spark an arms race in the Middle East and could pose a nuclear threat to Europe and the United States.
- Iran could give nuclear weapons to terrorist groups, who could then use them in the Middle East or smuggle them into countries abroad.

### Looking Forward...

- Restate Israel's formula for positive change, e.g. the recognition of Israel by Hamas, cessation of violence, etc.

## Human interest stories to work into your interviews etc

### 1. Osher Twito

Two boys, Osher and Rami Twito, brothers aged 8 and eighteen were walking home through the town square when the Qassam warning siren rang out. The brothers had 15 seconds to take cover. They didn't make it. The Qassam rocket fired from Iran-backed terrorists in Gaza hit the square, critically injuring Osher and moderately injuring Rami.

Osher, who loved soccer, had a leg amputated that night. Osher's older brother Rami had a lengthy operation after two severe breakages to his leg. Osher is now confined to a wheelchair.

His parents moved to Ashdod, a city outside of rocket range. Now, with technology obtained from Iran, Hamas fired missiles that hit Ashdod this week.

Today Israel is working to defend the Twito family and all the other children of Israel. Isn't that what any moral country would do?

## **2. Tzahar Shitreet**

Tzahar is resident of Sderot. He is nine-years old and loves to ride horses at a nearby ranch. Tzahar is deaf and cannot hear the "Color Red" alarm giving him 15 seconds to get to a bomb shelter when a Qassam is fired. As a result, he has been injured twice by Qassam rocket fire. Despite it all, Tzahar strives to play outside without rocket fire and in peace.

Today, Israel is working to defend Tzahar and all the other children of Israel. Isn't that what any moral country would do?

## **3. Gaza School Girls Killed by Iran-backed Hamas Rocket**

5-year-old Hanin Abu Khoussa and her 12-year-old cousin, Sabah Abu Khoussa were killed in their home on Dec. 27 by a missile fired by Hamas. But these two young girls don't live in Israel. They live in Beit Lahiya, in Gaza. A missile that was intended to kill Israeli children, instead killed two Palestinians by accident instead when it misfired.

Today, Israel is working to defend all the children of Gaza who are victims of Iran-backed Hamas's cynical use of civilian shields and rockets to achieve its extremist agenda. Isn't that what any moral country would do?

## **Gaza by the Numbers**

***On Dec. 27, Israel began "Operation Cast Lead" to stop Iran-backed Hamas in Gaza from continuing its years-long campaign of attacking Israeli civilians with thousands of rockets, missiles and mortars. Following are facts and figures to help journalists cover Israel's defensive efforts in Gaza:***

### **Iran-backed Hamas Rocket, Mortar Attacks and Nuclear Developments**

- 9,400+** rockets and mortars fired from Gaza since 2003. [1]
- 3,200+** rockets and mortars fired from Gaza in 2008 alone. [2]
- 6,500+** rockets and mortars fired from Gaza since Israel withdrew from Gaza in 2005. [3]
- 543+** rockets and mortars fired from Gaza into Israeli territory during the ceasefire from June 19 to Dec. 19, 2008. [4]
- 28** deaths caused by rockets and mortars fired from Gaza into Israel since 2001. The dead include Israelis, Palestinians and foreign workers. Since

the ceasefire ended, Iran-backed Palestinian groups in Gaza fired rockets and mortars that killed an Israeli-Arab construction worker and a mother of four who was seeking shelter in a bus station as a rocket warning siren sounded. [5]

- 1,000+** people in Israel injured from rockets and mortars fired from Gaza since 2001, including Israelis, Palestinians and foreign workers. Since the ceasefire, **44** Israelis have been injured and **200** have been treated for shock. [6]
- 20,000** Hamas troops Israel is targeting as part of "Operation Cast Lead." [7]
- 750,000** number of Israeli civilians Hamas is targeting and can reach. [8]
- 15** seconds Israelis have to get to a bomb shelter once a warning siren has sounded. [9]
- 8** years that Israel has been hit by rockets and mortars from Gaza [10]
- 3** mosques in Gaza used as weapons, ammunitions and explosives depots that were struck by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) during the operation in Gaza. [11]
- 4** UN Security Council resolutions passed since 2006 to try to stop Iran from enriching uranium. [12]
- 5,000+** number of centrifuges operating in Iran to enrich uranium, the material used to produce a nuclear weapon. [13]

### Israel's Humanitarian Aid to Gaza

- 179** truckloads of humanitarian aid that have been delivered through Israeli crossings into Gaza since the beginning of Operation Cast Lead, including basic food commodities, medication, medical supplies, donations of governments and blood units.
- 106** additional truckloads of humanitarian expected to arrive in Gaza on Jan. 31 [14]
- 6,500** tons of aid transported into Gaza at the request of international organizations, the Palestinian Authority and various governments since the beginning of Operation Cast Lead. The World Food Program informed Israel that it will cease shipment of food to Gaza because warehouses are at full capacity, with enough food to last two weeks. [15]

### What Israel Gave Up in Hopes of Peace - Gaza Withdrawal Aug. 2005

- 100%** proportion of the Gaza Strip evacuated and handed over to the Palestinians. [16]
- 300** square miles of the West Bank evacuated. [17]
- 21** Israeli settlements uprooted in the Gaza Strip. [18]
- 4** Israeli settlements uprooted in the West Bank. [19]
- 48** graves uprooted in Gaza's former Gush Katif Cemetery, including six graves of area residents murdered by terrorists. [20]
- 9,000** approximate number of Israelis, including 1,700 families, who lived in Gaza and the northern West Bank. All of them were moved out as part of the withdrawal. [21]
- 38** synagogues dismantled in the Gaza Strip. [22]

<b>5,000</b>	school-age children who had to find new schools. [23]
<b>42</b>	daycare centers that were closed in the Gaza Strip. [24]
<b>36</b>	kindergartens that were closed in the Gaza Strip. [25]
<b>7</b>	elementary schools that were closed in the Gaza Strip. [26]
<b>3</b>	high schools that were closed in the Gaza Strip. [27]
<b>320</b>	mobile homes, ordered by Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, to serve as temporary housing for settlers. [28]
<b>45,000</b>	Israeli soldiers and policemen who participated in the Gaza withdrawal. [29]
<b>\$1.7 billion</b>	the approximate cost to the Israeli government for the withdrawal initiative. [30]
<b>166</b>	Israeli farmers who were moved out of Gaza. [31]
<b>800</b>	cows, which comprised the second largest dairy farm in Israel, moved out of Gaza's Gush Katif community. [32]
<b>\$120 million</b>	value of flowers and produce exported annually from Gush Katif and lost following the evacuation. [33]
<b>1</b>	zoo, the "Katifari," that housed hundreds of animals and was moved. [34]
<b>10,000</b>	people who were employed in agriculture and related industries in Gush Katif, including 5,000 Palestinians. [35]
<b>60%</b>	proportion of Israel's cherry tomato exports that came from the Gaza Strip. Israel's withdrawal from Gaza extinguished this economic resource. [36]
<b>3.5 million</b>	square meters (almost 1,000 acres) of greenhouses abandoned in Gaza. [37]
<b>70</b>	percentage of Israel's organic produce grown in Gaza – another economic resource lost in the evacuation. [38]
<b>60</b>	percentage of herbs exported from Israel that came from Gush Katif. [39]
<b>15</b>	percentage of Israel agricultural exports that originated in Gaza – exports lost following Israel's withdrawal from Gaza. [40]
<b>\$360,000</b>	expected average compensation amount Israel expected to pay to relocate each family. [41]
<b>\$870 million</b>	approximate cost for Israel to facilitate the resettlement of former West Bank and Gaza residents elsewhere in the country. [42]
<b>\$500 million</b>	amount of money Israel's security establishment spent to relocate Israel Defense Forces bases outside the Gaza Strip and build new border crossing facilities. [43]

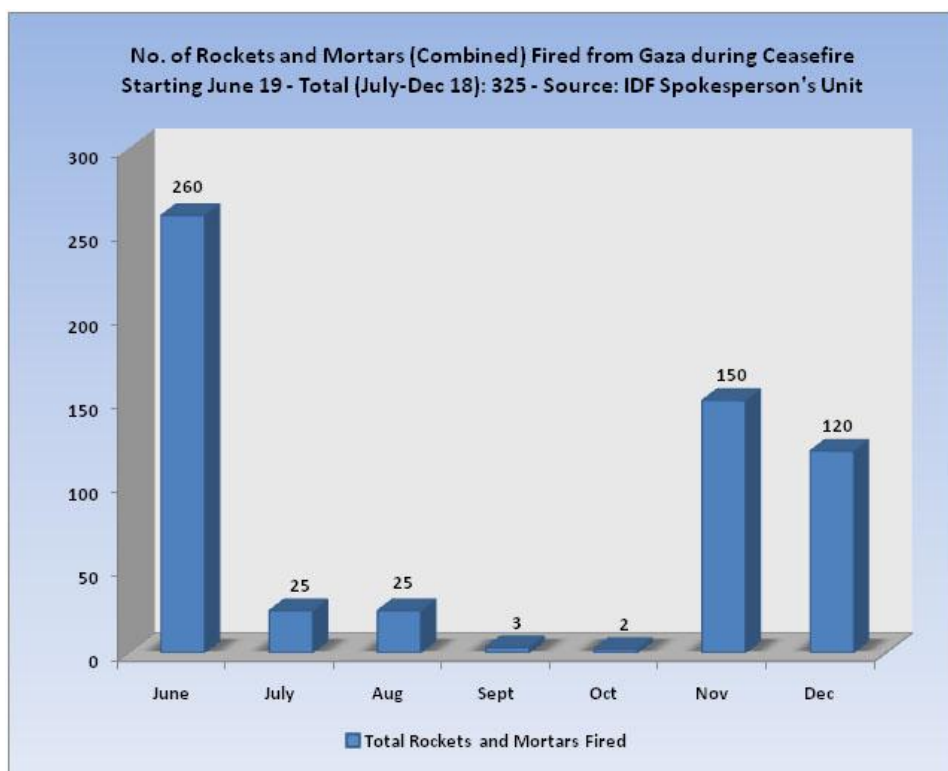
### **After Israel's evacuation from Gaza...**

<b>430,000</b>	West Bank Palestinians able to move freely within and between Palestinian-controlled areas. [44]
<b>1</b>	Israeli remaining in Gaza. Staff Sgt. Gilad Shalit was abducted from Israel on June 25, 2006 by Hamas in a bloody cross-border raid in which the terrorists also killed two IDF soldiers and wounded four others. [45]
<b>1.2 million</b>	Arabs who remained full and legal citizens of Israel. All Israeli citizens – Christians, Muslims, and Jews – have freedom of speech, religion, press, and the right to vote. [46]

- 1.3 million** Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip many of them in Palestinian Authority-controlled refugee camps, who live under their own leaders. [47]
- 820,000** Jewish refugees forced to flee without their belongings from Arab countries between 1947 and 1949, and who have never been compensated by Arab governments for their losses. [48]
- 650,000** Arab refugees who left Israel from 1947-1949 and still need Palestinian leaders who will end terrorism and the culture of hate. [49]

Israel's withdrawal from four northern West Bank settlements created an area more than [twice the size of Gaza's 140 square miles under Palestinian control](#) and devoid of any Israeli presence. [50]

## Graph: Rockets and Mortars Fired From Gaza June – December 2008



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BIOS for select Washington- and New York-based officials and experts:

H.E. Sallai Meridor, Israel's Ambassador to the United States

Before becoming Israel's ambassador to the United States in late 2006, Ambassador Sallai Meridor served as Chairman of the Jewish Agency for Israel and the World Zionist Organization (WZO) from 1999-2005. Prior to this, Mr. Meridor served as treasurer of the Jewish Agency and the WZO and as head of the Settlement Division of the WZO.

Prior to his work with the Jewish Agency, Mr. Meridor served as an advisor to the Minister of Defense and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the State of Israel. In his governmental service, he was involved in the designing of Israel's foreign and defense policies, played a role in the peace process leading to the Madrid Peace Conference, participated in the negotiations that followed as the representative of the Ministry of Defense, and led Israel's Inter-Agency Steering Committee on Arms Control.

Born and educated in Jerusalem Mr. Meridor earned a B.A. from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He served as an intelligence officer in the Israel Defense Forces. He is married and has three daughters.

FULL BIO: <http://www.israelemb.org/bios/Sallai-Meridor/Sallai-Meridor.html>

H.E. Jeremy Issacharoff - Deputy Chief of Mission

2005: Minister and Deputy Chief of Mission to Embassy of Israel in Washington D.C.

2003: Asked by United Nation's Secretary-General to serve on his Advisory Board for Disarmament Affairs, consisting of experts in the realm of arms control and disarmament from approximately twenty countries.

2001: Deputy Director-General For Strategic Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Overall responsibility for arms control, non-proliferation, counter-terrorism, export controls and regional security.

1999-2001: Head of Regional Security and Arms Control, MFA.

1998-1999: Member of the Strategic Policy Planning Group and the Joint Strategic Planning Committee, both designed to be senior consultative working groups with the United States on strategic and military affairs. In addition, appointed Representative of the Foreign Minister to the Inter-Ministerial Committee, to establish the National Security Council in Israel.

1993- 1998: Minister-Counselor For Political Affairs in Embassy in Washington DC. Responsible for liaison with the State Department and the National Security Council on bilateral policy issues including the peace process, multilateral talks, strategic and military cooperation, arms control, disarmament and nonproliferation with particular emphasis on Iran's efforts in WMD and missile areas. Member of Israeli delegation to the Multilateral Working Group on Arms Control and Regional Security.

1993 - 1993: Policy Counselor in the Foreign Minister's Bureau, Jerusalem.

1989-1993: Personal Adviser to the Director General of the Foreign Ministry. Member of Israeli Delegation to peace talks with Lebanon held in Washington pursuant to Madrid peace conference.

1986-1989: Policy Adviser to the Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations in New York. Responsible for range of policy matters including peace process, disarmament and legal affairs.

1985: Israel's Representative to the First Committee on Disarmament Affairs of the UN General Assembly.

1984: Acting Director of the Disarmament Division in Foreign Ministry and Inter Ministerial Coordinator of the project to establish a Voice of America relay station in Israel.

Full bio: [http://www.israelemb.org/bios/Jeremy\\_Issacharoff.htm](http://www.israelemb.org/bios/Jeremy_Issacharoff.htm)

Jonathan Peled, Israeli Embassy Spokesman



Jonathan Peled joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1992 and is currently Minister-counselor and spokesman of the Israeli Embassy in Washington. Before assuming this position he was the Foreign Policy (Diplomatic) Advisor to the Speaker of the Knesset.

Between 2004 and 2006 he served as Israeli Ambassador to El Salvador and Belize. Prior to that he was Foreign Ministry Spokesperson in Jerusalem. Jonathan has held diplomatic postings in Turkey and in Argentina, where he dealt with political affairs, press and information. Before his first posting in Istanbul, he served as Assistant Policy Advisor to Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, participating in the peace negotiations following the Oslo Peace Accords.

Jonathan is a graduate of Tel-Aviv University in Political Science and Economics. He holds the rank of Major (res.) in the Israeli Air Force, where he served for 7 years as an Aircrew officer.

Before joining the Foreign Service, and while studying, he worked for EL- AL Israel Airlines.

In addition to Hebrew and English, Jonathan is fluent in Spanish and has a command of German.

Full bio: <http://www.israelemb.org/bios/jonathan%20peled.htm>

**H.E. Gabriela Shalev, Israel's Ambassador to the United Nations**

Ambassador Gabriela Shalev is Israel's 14th Permanent Representative to the United Nations. She began her tenure on Sept. 3, 2008, marking the first time a woman was appointed to this post.

Amb. Shalev is a leading expert in Israel in the fields of contract law and procurement contracts. Until her early retirement in 2002, she was a full professor of contract law at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and wrote nine books and more than 100 articles about contract law. She was formerly the President of the Academic Council and Rector of Ono Academic College in Israel. Amb. Shalev was also a visiting law professor at universities in the U.S., Europe and Canada, including Harvard Law School, Temple University and Boston College. She has received numerous awards and has served on several prestigious boards.

**Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi, Founder and President, The Israel Project**

Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi is the founder and president of The Israel Project (TIP), an international non-profit organization devoted to educating the press and the public about Israel while promoting security, freedom and peace. TIP has offices in Washington and Jerusalem.

Mizrahi meets regularly with top Israeli leaders such as Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, President Shimon Peres, Ambassador Sallai Meridor, author Natan Sharansky and many others. She also works frequently with pro-Israel organizations including the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, Jewish federations, Jewish community relations councils and Hillel organizations.

Mizrahi previously served as a foreign affairs legislative assistant to the U.S. Congress. She studied at Hebrew University in Jerusalem and has degrees in International Relations and Judaic Studies from Emory University. Her work earned her recognition as a "Point of Light" by President H. W. Bush. Mizrahi also has been honored with the Louis D. Brandeis Award by the Baltimore Zionist District. The Forward newspaper has twice listed Mizrahi in its "Forward 50" most influential Jews in America. Mizrahi was recently named to the March of the Living's newly established advisory board.

Full Bio: [\[html\]](#) [\[pdf\]](#)

**Marcus Sheff, Executive Director, TIP Israel Operation**

As Executive Director of The Israel Project's Israel Office, Sheff leads The Israel Project's team in Israel. In this capacity, he manages the delivery of information from Jerusalem to over 56,000 journalists

around the world, as well as day-to-day direct outreach to the 450 members of the foreign press based in Israel. The Jerusalem-based operation drives TIP's unique programs in Israel, which include regular press conferences and press events, the 'Intellicopter' (helicopter) and specially crafted ground tours for the media, as well as TIP's Media Center in Sderot. TIP's Israel Office also conducts media training of pro-Israel advocates and outreach to the Arab-language press in Israel and around the world.

Sheff and the Israel team created what has become a vital resource for the media based in Israel, where 70% of the news about the region is gathered. He meets regularly with Israeli leaders, spokespeople, diplomats and NGOs on strategic communications issues and appears regularly in the international media. Sheff has worked as a media and communications professional in Israel for 20 years, beginning as a political reporter for the *The Nation* and later becoming an editor at *The Jerusalem Post*. He then set up a strategic communications company whose clients included government ministries, many of Israel's top 20 companies and international publishers and advertising agencies. The company became the leader in its field. After selling the company, Sheff represented international publishers and media organizations in Israel and around the world.

As a reserve officer in the IDF Spokesperson's Unit, Sheff was a prominent spokesperson for the IDF during all recent crises and trained senior IDF officers in media skills. He has appeared on behalf of the IDF on the BBC, ITV and Sky News, as well as dozens of other US and European TV and radio outlets. He serves on the editorial board of "Engage," an organization that challenges contemporary anti-Semitism. Sheff studied at the University of Leeds, where he was elected General Secretary of the Leeds University Union and was active in national student politics.

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אל: כל הנציגויות

דע: תפוצת הסברה

מאת: מנהל מח' מידע ואינטרנט – אגף תקשורת

אירוע בבית ספר בעזה – תדריך רקע ראשוני הנדון:

### The Tragedy at the School in Jebaliya

Preliminary Background Briefing – 6 Jan 2009

Today, a reported 30 Palestinians were killed in a heartrending tragedy at a school in Jebaliya. Initial investigations indicate that Hamas terrorists fired mortar bombs from the area of the school towards Israeli forces, who returned fire towards the source of the shooting. The Israeli return fire landed outside the school, yet a series of explosions followed, indicating the probable presence of munitions and explosives in the building. Intelligence indicates that among those killed were Immad Abu Iskar and Hassan Abu Iskar, two known Hamas mortar crewmen.

Innocent civilians should not have died. However, **it is vitally important to understand how this horrific incident occurred and who truly bears the responsibility for it.**

Hamas began the current conflict when, three weeks ago it unilaterally violated the state of calm, and launched unprovoked rocket and mortar barrages on Israeli cities. This act of aggression was a clear violation of international law, and highlights a basic fact – **not a single Israeli nor a single Palestinian would have been hurt had Hamas not launched its brutal attacks.**

Israel had to respond. No government would stand idly by while its citizens are subjected to rockets and mortar attacks. **Self-defense is an inherent right, and responsibility of every state.** It is enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and remains a cornerstone of international law.

While the investigation of the incident continues, one crucial detail is already apparent: **this tragedy occurred because Hamas consistently uses its own population as human shields.** While betting that Israel will hesitate to strike back at areas with civilians present, Hamas covers its bet with the knowledge that should civilians be harmed, Hamas still wins since Israel will be censured by the world's media.

The best way to avoid the use of Palestinians as human shields is for the international community to begin to place the blame where it truly belongs – on the Hamas terrorists who exploit the suffering of their own people for political gain. **Only the concerted international censure of Hamas will cause that terrorist organization to stop this perverted practice.**

While Hamas exploits its own civilians as human shields as it deliberately targets the civilians of Israel, the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) does its best to avoid harming civilians on either side. Many Israeli anti-terrorists operations have been aborted at the last minute, due to the untimely presence of civilians in the target area. Unfortunately, tragedies happen in wartime, particularly when one side violates international law by firing while hiding behind civilians.

During its operations in Gaza, the IDF is making every effort to comply with the two basic legal tests of international humanitarian law: (1) are the targets legitimate military objectives and (2) is an action likely to cause disproportionate damage to the civilian population and their property.

Israel faces a particular challenge with regards to determining the legitimacy of intended targets. **The presence of civilians in an area of conflict does not stop a military objective from being a legitimate target.** This is both the letter of international law and a reflection of state practice. The deliberate positioning of Hamas military targets among Palestinian civilians presents a problem with which Israel must consistently contend.

**The Iranian-backed Hamas**, as a matter of strategy, **refuses** to uphold one of most fundamental requirements of international humanitarian law – that of **distinguishing between combatants/military installations and civilians/civilian properties.** It follows therefore that while Israel does all it can to avoid harming non-combatants, under international law, any collateral injury to them is the responsibility of the Hamas, which deliberately chooses to operate from civilian structures and fire behind human shields.

For further information regarding the Hamas exploitation of civilians as human shields see:

1. Terrorists fire mortars from UNRWA boys' school in Gaza 31-Oct-2007

<http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Terrorism-+Obstacle+to+Peace/Hamas+war+against+Israel/Terrorists+fire+mortar+shells+from+boys+school+in+Gaza+31-Oct-2007.htm>

2. Hamas Exploitation of Civilians as Human Shields

[http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam\\_multimedia/English/eng\\_n/html/hamas\\_e028.htm](http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/html/hamas_e028.htm)

3. Hamas exploitation of civilians as human shields: Photographic evidence

<http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Terrorism-+Obstacle+to+Peace/Hamas+war+against+Israel/Hamas+exploitation+of+civilians+as+human+shields+-+Photographic+evidence.htm>

חיים שחם