

ISRAEL UNDER FIRE

'We stand in solidarity with Israel'

Anton Block

President, Executive Council of Australian Jewry

THE Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ) condemns the actions of Hamas, Islamic Jihad and other terrorist groups in Gaza which over the last two days have fired more than 600 rockets, mortars and other explosive projectiles targeted at civilian population centres in southern Israel, including the cities of Ashkelon, Ashdod and Beersheva. The attacks have claimed the lives of four Israelis, Moshe Agadi, 58; Ziad Alhamamda, 47; Pinchas Menachem Prezuazman, 21 and Moshe Feder, 68. More than 80 Israeli civilians were injured.

Whilst we deplore the death and injury of innocent civilians on both sides, the responsibility for the outbreak of violence lies squarely with the terrorist groups in Gaza and primarily the Hamas rulers of the territory, whose charter calls for Israel to be "obliterated", and who deliberately target Israeli civilians while cynically using the people of Gaza as human shields.

Our prayers and sympathies go out to the families of the victims. We stand in solidarity with the people of Israel, who regularly face murderous attacks from the terrorists, and wish them strength and steadfastness in the face of the attacks to which they have been subjected..

Colin Rubenstein

Executive director, Australia/Israel & Jewish Affairs Council

ONCE again, these terrorist organisations have both killed and wounded innocent Israeli civilians and been responsible for death and suffering amidst the people they purport to lead.

All fair-minded people will stand with Israel, as that country endures the largest barrage of rocket, mortar and missile attacks from the Gaza Strip since the 2014 Gaza War.

Hamas bears full responsibility for this escalation, which has already cost the lives of at least four Israeli civilians and injured dozens more, during intense rocket barrages on its towns, villages and cities, including Beersheva, Ashkelon, Ashdod and others.

Furthermore, Hamas' cowardly targeting of an Israeli civilian vehicle with a Kornet anti-tank missile shows the extent to which the terror group



A man prays at the grave of Moshe Agadi who was killed outside his home in Ashkelon by a rocket fired from Gaza last weekend.
Photo: AP Photo/Sebastian Scheiner

is prepared to go in order to further escalate the situation.

The increased role of the Iranian-backed Palestinian Islamic Jihad and the flow of Iranian money to fuel Gaza's war machine further exposes Iran's role behind the scenes in igniting this escalation.

While a ceasefire now appears to be holding, Hamas and Islamic Jihad should not be rewarded for initiating this violence. Israel has defended itself, as it must. Hamas must now permanently and unconditionally put an end to attacks on Israel emanating from territory under its control.

Jeremy Leibler

President, Zionist Federation of Australia

PALESTINIAN terror organisations Hamas and Islamic Jihad have the blood of innocent Israeli civilians on their hands. Over the past few days, southern Israel has been bombarded with incessant rocket attacks which have resulted in multiple deaths and injury to tens of civilians.

In addition to civilians who have sustained physical injuries from shrapnel, many of the injured are also being treated for anxiety. This is an unfortunate reminder of the deep psychological trauma which is ever-present in southern Israel where civilians are regularly forced to take shelter from Hamas attacks.

Hamas is committing a double war crime. Not only is Hamas targeting

Israeli civilians, but it is firing its rockets from densely populated civilian areas in Gaza and using its inhabitants as human shields. The international community's silence in the wake of these warm crimes is deafening.

If not for the Iron Dome air defence system, many more innocent Israeli civilians would have been murdered at the hands of Palestinian terror. We are thankful to the brave soldiers of the IDF and the Iron Dome which have ensured that the number of casualties was significantly lower.

Our thoughts are with the families of Moshe Agadi, Moshe Feder, Ziad Alhamamda, Pinchas Menachem Prezuazman as well as the people of southern Israel who have been bombarded with hundreds of terrifying rockets over the past few days.

Dvir Abramovich

Chairman, Anti-Defamation Commission

WE express our solidarity with the Israeli nation during this difficult time. Once again Hamas and the other terrorist organisations operating in Gaza have shown their true nature, deliberately seeking to target Israel's civilian population and to murder innocent men, women and children.

We mourn for the four Israelis who lost their lives to the deadly fire, and offer our condolences to their loved

ones. We also pray for the full and speedy recovery of the injured.

Let's recall that Israel pulled out from Gaza 14 years ago, transferring the entire territory to the Palestinian Authority.

We call on the Australian government and all other parties to not only condemn this violence, but to recognise Israel's legitimate right to take all necessary measures to protect its citizens. No government would tolerate allowing its populace to be subjected to unceasing rocket attacks, and the clear message that must be conveyed to Hamas and to its affiliates is that this escalation and assault must stop immediately.

Liam Getreu

Executive director, New Israel Fund Australia

WE stand with our many partners and grantees who are working for a future in which no parent or child, in the south of Israel or in Gaza, will know war.

There is no justification for Hamas rockets fired indiscriminately toward civilians. And the Israeli government will not bring about a peaceful future by escalating a military operation in Gaza; only a long-term agreement will end the rockets and address the humanitarian situation. A peaceful future cannot be built on war.

We are with the families of the innocent people who have been killed or harmed.

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