

HAMAS TERRORISM

MAY 2021

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Since May 10, 2021, the racist terrorist group Hamas and its allies in Gaza have launched over 2,000 rockets at Israeli civilians and their homes. Israel has responded with hundreds of strikes aimed at stopping terrorists in Gaza from murdering Israelis. Hamas also encouraged mob violence by Arab extremists in Israel, and Jewish extremists retaliated with mob violence of their own. Jewish and Arab leaders across the Israeli political spectrum strongly condemned this, and members of both communities have held rallies calling for peace.

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This violence has been a horrific tragedy for Israeli and Palestinian civilians. Several Israelis have been murdered and hundreds injured by terrorism from Gaza, including both Jewish and Arab citizens. Over one hundred people have been killed in Gaza, with initial reports indicating most were members of terrorist groups. However, Palestinian civilians have been killed and wounded as well.

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The main reason Palestinians in Gaza have died is because Hamas and its allies militarized their neighborhoods. Terrorist groups are committing a double war crime: firing at Israeli civilian communities from within Palestinian civilian communities.

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The only reasons massive numbers of Israelis haven't been murdered are because Israel built bomb shelters in most Israeli homes and because its Iron Dome defense system has shot down countless incoming rockets.

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Hamas is an internationally recognized terrorist group, driven by a toxic mix of genocidal racism and religious extremism. They do not exist to "resist the occupation" or help Palestinians achieve justice and peace. Their goals are to murder Jews, destroy Israel, and replace it with a brutally oppressive regime of religious supremacy.

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Hamas rules Gaza and is heavily funded by Iran's regime, which often makes genocidal threats to destroy Israel. Hamas was named the third richest terror group in the world by *Forbes Magazine*. It uses its funding to oppress Palestinians in Gaza and fuel its endless war against Israel, instead of making peace and building a better future for its people.

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In its conflict with Hamas, Israel is driven by its responsibility to protect Israelis of all backgrounds from terrorism. This is the right and duty of every country, and Israel is no exception.

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The IDF code of ethics requires Israeli soldiers to do everything they can to protect innocent life. Numerous legal and military experts have documented how the IDF does not intentionally target civilians as a matter of policy and goes beyond what the law requires by warning civilians before striking military targets. Nevertheless, it has proven impossible to stop terrorists in Gaza from attacking innocent Israelis without harming innocent Palestinians in the process. This is because Hamas and its allies intentionally put civilians directly in harm's way.

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Hamas launched this assault against Israeli civilians to increase its political power and weaken Fatah—its main rival in Palestinian politics. The terrorist group incited violence in Jerusalem, urging Palestinians there to "cut off the heads of the Jews with knives." It then used escalating tensions as an excuse to start firing rockets at Israel and position itself as the "defender of Jerusalem." While conflicts over the neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah and holy sites in the city are an important issue, they are not the main cause of this crisis. The main cause is that Hamas was determined to spark a violent conflict for political gain.

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All people of good will should unite for a just, peaceful, and secure future for Israelis and Palestinians. This begins with unequivocally condemning terrorism and supporting Israel's right to protect its citizens. We must also pressure the governments of Iran, Qatar, and Turkey to stop funding and supporting Hamas and its terrorist allies in Gaza.