

Gaza In Crisis: What You Should Know

Israel claims that it does not deliberately target civilians, but Hamas does.

False

Human Rights Watch says that both are targeting civilians.

Gaza is one of the most densely populated areas in the world and over half the people are children under 14. Precision strikes are impossible here. In fact, Israel is collectively punishing the entire population for the acts of a few, by economic blockade and now by a vastly lopsided war. Collective punishment is against international law. (Fourth Geneva Convention, Article 33)

Israel claims that its attack is necessary to stop the plague of Qassam rockets.

False

Israel's attack is hugely disproportionate; far worse, say, than Russia's attack against Georgia last summer, which the US condemned.

So far, more than 360 Palestinians have been killed, only 4 Israelis. Only a handful of Israeli civilians have been killed by the primitive, inaccurate Qassams, though thousands have been fired since 2001. In contrast, hundreds of Palestinians have been killed by Israeli raids against the Qassams.

The token, largely ineffective resistance offered by the Gazans against a brutal siege does not change the moral dimensions of the situation, that Israel is a brutal occupier.

Israel's vicious conduct will not make its citizens safer. It will kill or maim huge numbers of innocent Palestinians without reducing the already small number of Israeli casualties. The only rational way to protect civilians on both sides is by a ceasefire. The ceasefire agreed by Israel and the Gaza government was imperfect, but it largely held until Israel massively violated it with a raid on 4 November.

What needs to be done?

The US should demand an immediate, unconditional ceasefire to apply to the West Bank as well as Gaza. The blockade of Gaza—which has ruined the economy and brought an epidemic of childhood malnutrition, and a food, fuel, water, and health care crisis—has to end immediately.

The US should demand this of Israel or else downgrade diplomatic relations with it. The US should announce that it will no longer use its Security Council veto to shield Israel from accountability. The US should endorse the Arab League peace plan, which trades an Israeli withdrawal to the 1967 borders for diplomatic recognition of Israel by all Arab States. Then the parties can resume negotiations for a final status agreement, with an independent, viable and fully sovereign Palestine existing side by side with a secure Israel.

Read more

A description of conditions prevailing in Gaza during the ongoing blockade, by **SARA ROY**, who teaches at Harvard's Center for Middle Eastern Studies and is the author of *Failing Peace: Gaza and the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict*.

http://www.lrb.co.uk/v31/n01/roy_01.html

A joint statement by **CARE INTERNATIONAL** and other aid agencies criticizing the Quartet (the European Union, Russia, the United Nations, and the United States) for failing to live up to its obligations and mentioning the crisis in Gaza. This was in September, during the truce.

<http://www.care-international.org/index.php/Middle-East-Quartet-is-Failing-warn-aid-agencies>

A BBC interview with **MARY ROBINSON**, former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and former President of Ireland. She visited Gaza just before the truce broke down and spoke about the appalling conditions there. She is a widely respected figure.

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7708670.stm

A letter to Israeli Attorney General Menahem Mazuz complaining that Israel was attacking civilian targets, from **B'TSELEM** on 31 Dec. 2008. (B'Tselem—the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories—is an internationally respected human rights organization. It is cited, for example, in the *Economist's* recent special report on Israel, Apr. 5-11, 2008, p. 4.)

http://www.btselem.org/English/Gaza_Strip/20081231_Gaza_Letter_to_Mazuz.asp

Join us



people for justice in palestine

listserve : groups.yahoo.com/group/iowapjp
subscribe : iowapjp-subscribe@yahoogroups.com
unsubscribe : iowapjp-unsubscribe@yahoogroups.com
post message : iowapjp@yahoogroups.com
website : www.iowapjp.org

People for Justice in Palestine is a nonpartisan group of people from the Iowa City community concerned about the crisis in Israel and the occupied territories. Our mission is to unite Jews, Muslims, Christians, and others in the pursuit of the following goals:

- Ending the Israeli occupation of all Arab land taken in 1967, reversing the Israeli settlement of that land, and providing a just solution for Palestinian refugees
- Ending U.S. military aid and investment that fuels Israeli human rights abuses
- Compelling Israel to comply with human rights conventions, United Nations resolutions, and other relevant international law