

December 30, 2008

Israel Forced to Defend Its Citizens Against Onslaught of Hamas Rocket Attacks

Urge members of Congress to issue statements in support of Israel's right to defend its citizens from terrorism

Israel began forceful action this past weekend to quell Hamas' terrorist threat to Israeli civilians. Since Israel's 2005 withdrawal from Gaza, Hamas has indiscriminately fired more than 6,300 rockets and mortars—including 600 in the past six weeks—at Israeli population centers. Last spring, Israel tested whether Hamas would move toward peace by accepting Egypt's proposal for a six-month lull in the fighting. Instead, Hamas significantly enhanced its arsenal, and ultimately resumed its rocket assaults. Despite Hamas' aggression, Israel continues to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance and is acting to limit civilian casualties in Gaza.

A bipartisan coalition of American leaders is voicing critical support for Israel's defensive actions in Gaza. These officials, as well as some leaders in the Arab world, have placed the blame for the renewal of hostilities on Hamas.

[Click here](#) for statements in support of Israel.

ACTION

Please call members of Congress and encourage them to issue statements in support of Israel's right to defend its citizens from terrorism. Members can be reached through the Capitol switchboard at (202) 224-3121. If you have any questions or feedback, please contact Julie Peretz at (202) 639-5192 or jperetz@aipac.org.

TALKING POINTS

- Israel's full withdrawal from Gaza in 2005, a move strongly backed by the United States, was an effort to reduce violence and lay the groundwork for a future Palestinian state.
- Instead of seizing this historic opportunity to build a better life for the people of Gaza, Hamas and other terrorist groups have turned the area into a launching pad for more than 6,300 rocket and mortar attacks against Israel since the summer of 2005.
- As Hamas abandoned a sixth-month lull in fighting with Israel, the Iranian-backed terrorist group fired more than 600 rockets and mortars into Israel during the past six weeks.
- Like every other sovereign nation, Israel has the right and duty to defend its citizens from attack. Hamas' acts of terror have left Israel no choice but to take stronger measures to defend its citizens.
- Israel is taking steps to limit civilian casualties. Most of those killed to date have been Hamas terrorists. Israel's actions have specifically targeted Hamas command centers, security installations, rocket-launching sites, weapons stockpiles and weapons smuggling tunnels.
- During the six-month calm, Israel facilitated the transfer into Gaza of more than 14,000 trucks, 185,000 tons of food and other supplies, more than 7,000 tons of heating gas and more than 10 million gallons of fuel. More than 4,000 people needing medical treatment were allowed to cross into Israel to find treatment in Israel or other countries.
- Despite the recent violence, Israel continues to facilitate humanitarian assistance to Gaza. In just the past few days, while Hamas has continued to fire rockets into Israel, more than 60 truckloads of humanitarian supplies and 105,000 gallons of fuel were transferred to Gaza. Israel also continues to provide 70 percent of Gaza's electricity.