



Security Council

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Identical letters dated 12 May 2021 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I write with great urgency regarding the latest acts of terror against Israel perpetrated by Palestinian terrorist groups, first and foremost Hamas, over the past two days.

Since Monday morning, 10 May 2021, over 1,500 rockets have been launched by Palestinian terror groups from the Gaza Strip towards Israeli civilian communities and major metropolitan areas throughout the country, including Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Ashkelon and Ashdod. These attacks have resulted in seven fatalities, among them a 16-year-old girl, her father and a 6-year-old boy, and hundreds more have been injured. As of today, millions of Israeli civilians are under relentless attacks by these terrorist organizations and are forced to remain in shelters. Schools and kindergartens are closed owing to the threat, and one rocket hit a school in Ashkelon.

Hamas, an internationally designated terrorist jihadist group supported by Iran, is responsible for these murderous attacks. The indiscriminate rocket fire constitutes a double war crime: targeting Israel's civilian population and launching the rockets from within Gaza's civilian neighbourhoods and institutions. Hamas purposely places its terror facilities in the heart of the civilian population, including within multistorey buildings, cynically using the local Palestinian population as human shields.

In addition, Hamas is presenting itself as the "defender of Jerusalem and the holy sites". This is, of course, a lie. It is clear that Hamas premeditated this escalation in violence and terrorism and is happy to pay the price of casualties on both sides in order to strengthen itself politically.

Israel has taken far-reaching de-escalatory steps to prevent any unrest and violence. These included prohibiting the entrance of Jews to the Temple Mount on Jerusalem Day, as well as changing the route of the parade that was planned for that day. Palestinian terrorists responded by ramping up their terror, firing hundreds of rockets and missiles at Jerusalem, as well as other cities across Israel.

Israel continues to ensure freedom of worship for Muslims on the Temple Mount. Every year hundreds of thousands of Muslims visit the site: that status quo has not changed and will not change.

This latest round of escalation, which has caused great suffering to countless innocent civilians, is a direct consequence of an ongoing incitement campaign by the Palestinians, directed by the upper echelons of the Palestinian Authority. This irresponsible and hateful act has fanned the flames of violence all across Israel by



exploiting religious fears. It is abhorrent that the Palestinian leadership has chosen to exert its influence in such a way.

The State of Israel is not interested in an escalation. However, Israel has the right and duty to defend its people and sovereignty and will continue to do so vigorously.

I call upon the international community to unequivocally condemn the indiscriminate attacks by terrorist groups in the Gaza Strip against Israeli civilians and population centres and to support Israel's fundamental right to self-defence.

I would be grateful if you would distribute the present letter as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Gilad **Erdan**

Ambassador of Israel to the United States and the United Nations
