

July 28, 2010

The Right Honorable David Cameron
Prime Minister of the United Kingdom

Dear Mr. Prime Minister,

On behalf of B'nai B'rith International, the world's oldest Jewish humanitarian, human rights and advocacy organization, we would like to express our strong disappointment with your recent characterization of Gaza as a "prison camp." This kind of language is used regularly by those who seek to demonize and delegitimize Israel. Sadly, Israel's enemies can now quote the British prime minister in their efforts to undermine the Jewish state.

To blame Israel for the situation of the Palestinians in Gaza is both simplistic and unfair. It ignores the fact that Gaza is under the rule of Hamas, a terrorist organization whose declared purpose is to destroy Israel and who regularly fires rockets against Israeli civilians.

The blockade is not meant to prevent humanitarian aid to come into Gaza (in fact, Israel allows humanitarian aid to enter Gaza on a regular and consistent basis) but to keep weapons to be used against Israel from being smuggled into Gaza. Hamas could end the embargo tomorrow if it decided to recognize Israel's rights to exist, renounce terror, respect previous Israeli-Palestinian agreements, and liberate Gilad Shalit, the Israeli soldier who has been held hostage by Hamas for over four years, without being allowed to receive a single Red Cross visit.

The citizens of Gaza are being victimized not by Israel but by Hamas, which has imposed a repressive Taliban-type regime on the population and often restricted -or even stolen- the humanitarian supplies that were supposed to be received by the neediest people. What democratic, responsible nations should be asking for is an end to Hamas' rule.

It is our sincere hope that your government will recommit to a more balanced and fair approach to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, something that will certainly favor the efforts for stability and reconciliation in the Middle East.

Yours sincerely,

Dennis W. Glick - President

Graham Weinberg - President of B'nai B'rith Europe

Daniel S. Mariaschin - Executive Vice President