

August 4, 2014

His Excellency  
Ban Ki-moon  
Secretary-General  
United Nations  
New York

Dear Mr. Secretary-General:

We write to express deep concern about your choice of language in addressing the ongoing hostilities between Hamas and a United Nations member state, Israel, compelled again to protect its citizens from that Palestinian terrorist organization. We remain alarmed at the failure of the UN to speak and act forcefully, and consistently, over the course of years of grave anti-Israel threats and violence – instead doing so, again, only once Israel assertively responds to these.

Most recently, yesterday, you deplored military shelling outside an UNRWA school in Gaza as “a moral outrage” and even “a criminal act,” adding that “the parties” must “return to the path of peace. This madness must stop.”

We join you in genuine distress over any civilian casualty. However, we must ask: Why is the most strident of language reserved only for reported *Israeli* defensive actions? Has nearly a decade-and-a-half of rockets from Gaza into Israel – now subjecting nearly all Israeli civilians, of all backgrounds, to incessant air raid sirens and bomb shelters – not constituted “a moral outrage and a criminal act”? Does a multi-million-dollar network of underground, cross-border terrorist infiltration tunnels not constitute “madness” that must be definitively ended? Is the storing by Palestinian terrorists of heavy munitions in UNRWA schools – repeatedly uncovered by UNRWA itself over recent weeks – not eminently relevant to the current situation and demanding of your personal intervention of the most urgent kind?

As importantly, is it constructive to speak of a “return” by “the parties” to peacefulness when one of the parties – the terrorist movement that has controlled Gaza – is openly and doctrinally committed to the prevention of peace?

To suggest that a sovereign nation’s response to attacks by a terrorist organization holding human shields is a “criminal act” is to irresponsibly imply criminalization, and thus prevention, of counterterrorism and self-defense under such circumstances. To do so, moreover, is precisely to incentivize and reward the heinous atrocities of groups like Hamas, and indeed to position the United Nations as an impediment to the pursuit globally of security and peace.

We do acknowledge and commend you, Mr. Secretary-General, for having condemned Hamas last Friday for its swift, lethal violation of one more humanitarian ceasefire accepted by Israel – and for your having spoken out, yesterday, against a new “upsurge in anti-Semitic attacks, particularly in Europe.”

At the start of recently intensified Palestinian-Israeli hostilities, you also expressed “sympathy” over the abduction of three innocent Israeli boys by Palestinian terrorists, who, we later learned, had murdered those young civilians.

We remind you, though, that such an attack preceded current Israeli defensive operations in the Palestinian territories – and that all attacks like that one deserve no less attention and no less emotive condemnation than the deaths, owing to deplorable terrorist tactics, of Palestinian civilians.

Israel withdrew completely, Mr. Secretary-General, from Gaza nine years ago. Over one decade earlier, it assumed the painful and serious risks of initiating a process of Palestinian autonomy also on the West Bank – and, since then, conservative and liberal Israeli prime ministers alike have endorsed the two-state solution, something unequivocally rejected by Hamas.

If Hamas were appropriately engaged in improving the lives of Palestinians rather than assaulting the people of Israel, there would be no Israeli military activity in Gaza and no need for very strict border controls to limit the weaponization of that territory. Far from showing desperation for Israeli withdrawal from Gaza, however, Hamas is impeding a drawdown by Israel by proceeding, and pledging, to resume attacking Israelis.

We urge you, accordingly, to focus your vital efforts on ensuring the full and immediate demilitarization of the Gaza Strip. It is especially critical that your words and deeds do not contribute to reinforcing the unconscionable behavior of terrorist organizations standing in the way of calm and of peace.

Sincerely,

Allan J. Jacobs  
President

Daniel S. Mariaschin  
Executive Vice President

David J. Michaels  
Director of UN and Intercommunal Affairs