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## **No peace until Palestinians abide by the rules**

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The suggestion made by some recently that the Jewish people are no longer victims of racial hatred and instead are practitioners of racism is morally perverse in the extreme.

Israel permits Jews and Arabs to be its citizens, requiring only that they live in peace with each other. Neither Hamas nor Israel's other neighbours permit Jews to be their citizens. They say Muslims but not Jews have a right of self-determination. Again, there is racism directed against Jews.

Israel does not send people to blow themselves up on civilian buses or in crowded public areas on the Palestinian side. The Hamas promotion of terrorism and violence among Palestinian children continues unabated. There is no equivalent government-ordained teaching of hatred by Israel. Nor would any reasonable person expect there to be any.

For decades, Palestinian spokespersons said: "End the occupation, for then we can negotiate peace." About 18 months ago, Ariel Sharon gambled that disengaging from Gaza had real potential to create goodwill and ultimately peace. Israel ended the occupation of Gaza.

In the months that followed, the Palestinians have demonstrated that the conflict is not about the occupation of territory occupied in 1967 at all. Israel's southern town of Sderot, the western Negev and now the city of Ashkelon, have been struck with hundreds of Qassam rockets since the disengagement, in a blatant escalation of unprovoked attacks since Israel withdrew from the Gaza Strip. These rockets have killed and wounded scores of Israeli civilians. The rockets that struck Ashkelon landed in a school playground in the heart of the city.

Now, unlike six decades ago, the children of the survivors of the Holocaust are not defenceless. They have a nation of their own and an army that has, after months of restraint, taken action to stop the rockets and to deter future terrorism.

War is not pretty, and Palestinians do not follow the international law of war. They shoot from civilian centres, placing their children on the battle front. Yet they demand Israel fight according to the rules they reject.

Israelis are tough and determined, and Israel will continue to offer a two-state solution to the Palestinians, but to achieve that, the Palestinians have to learn to love their children more than they hate their neighbour.

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