

Executive Council of Australian Jewry Inc.

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**MEDIA RELEASE
18 May 2007**

Growing violence and chaos in Gaza

Grahame Leonard, the President of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, the peak body of the Australian Jewish community, said today:

“Terrorist organisations have fired rockets against civilians in Southern Israel from Gaza for the last five years, despite Israel’s withdrawal from Gaza in 2005. Bombardment has increased in the last few days.

While the Israeli government has shown restraint in the last two months, its civilians are daily being attacked from Gaza which Israel left in order to give Palestinians the opportunity to lead normal lives. Israel now has no choice but to defend its citizens from these hostile and unprovoked actions.

Hamas has been smuggling and amassing large amounts of weaponry, making Gaza a strategic threat to Israel and its ability to protect its own civilians. Hamas, which heads the government of the Palestinian Authority and seeks international recognition, has taken responsibility for the latest Qassam attacks upon Southern Israel. This prevents any possibility of serious peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians.

Israel bears no responsibility for the chaos and civil war currently taking place in Gaza. Civilians on both sides have been affected by the internal Palestinian violence. Israel continues to strive for a situation whereby both humanitarian issues and final status agreements can be reached. This is impossible given current conditions.

The Australian Jewish community calls upon our government, the International Community and particularly the leaders of the Arab World to do all they can to stop further deterioration of the situation in Gaza”.

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