



Executive Council of Australian Jewry

ECAJ condemns assault on Israel **13 May 2021**

The ECAJ, the peak national representative body of the Australian Jewish community is appalled by the unremitting rocketing of Israeli towns and cities by the terrorist organisation Hamas, which rules the Gaza Strip, and other terrorist groups. Whilst shielding themselves behind Palestinian civilians in Gaza, they have fired more than 1300 rockets at Israel's cities, with the clear intention of causing maximum civilian casualties.

These war crimes highlight the utter disregard for human life, Jewish or Muslim, by Hamas. Among those killed by its attacks were 8 Palestinians, including 2 children, who were killed when a rocket intended for Israel struck a home in Gaza; an Arab-Israeli man and his daughter from Lod; an Israeli woman in her 80s and her Indian carer, and a 6 year old boy from Sderot.

We are appalled by the carefully orchestrated violence by Palestinian groups in Jerusalem which preceded the rocket attacks from Gaza. This included the stockpiling of slabs of stone in a Muslim holy place and a persistent campaign of incitement to racist violence using the age-old myth that the Al-Aqsa Mosque was in danger of Jewish desecration, which the Palestinian groups themselves were committing. Hamas has cynically exploited this situation and the legal dispute in Sheikh Jarrah to undertake a vast and clearly premeditated military operation.

Israel has every right, morally and legally, to use necessary force to destroy Hamas's capacity to commit these atrocities and to protect the large numbers of its citizens being attacked. Other States whose citizens were similarly under attack would do no less.

We further condemn any statements that seek to draw an equivalence between the actions of terrorist organisations intended to cause maximum carnage and loss of life and the response of a sovereign state to defend itself and its citizens.

Our grave concerns and prayers are with the people of Israel and with all civilians imperilled by the crimes of Hamas and other Palestinian terrorist groups.

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