

Rabbis for Human Rights North America

In response to the crisis in Gaza, and in support of the statement issued by our colleagues in Israel, RHR-NA has released the statement below.

Dear Supporters:

As Jews, committed to the dignity of all human beings, we affirm the human rights of those civilians in Gaza suffering from the Israeli blockade, and those in Sderot suffering from the attacks by Kassam rockets fired from Gaza. Both the blockade and the shelling of civilian areas are serious human rights violations. As American citizens, we urge our government to move both parties towards an end to hostility and violence. We reaffirm the statement of our colleagues in Israel that any effort aimed only at one side in this conflict will not stop this unfolding desecration of all that we hold sacred.

Please share this statement with colleagues and friends and we encourage you to convey this message to your Senators and Congressional representatives.

May a new light shine upon Zion and upon all its inhabitants!

Shalom,

Rabbi Brian Walt
Executive Director, Rabbis For Human Rights-North America

Zion Will be Redeemed through Justice (Isaiah 1:27)
A Call for the End of Israel's Blockade of Gaza
and Palestinian Rocket Attacks on Israeli Civilian Populations
A Statement by Rabbis for Human Rights-North America

As Rabbis in North America committed to supporting the security of Israel and the Jewish tradition of human rights, we join our Israeli colleagues of Rabbis for Human Rights in calling for an immediate cessation of the collective punishment through Israel's blockade of Gaza and Palestinians' firing of Kassam rockets into Israeli civilian areas. We join them in affirming that "Only a concerted effort aimed at getting all parties to honor God's Image within every human being, as well as international law, can stop this unfolding desecration of all that we hold sacred."

The recently imposed blockade by the Israeli Government has created a serious human rights crisis among the citizens of Gaza, impairing the health care infrastructure and the availability of critical fuel and supplies needed for the wellbeing of innocent civilians in the region. While the partial lifting of the blockade is a welcome sign, continuing the restrictions on civilian access to daily necessities violates the basic human rights of the residents of Gaza. The constant barrage of rockets on civilian populations, in Israel fired

from Gaza with impunity, is also a violation of human rights with devastating and untenable impact on innocent civilians.

As Rabbis in North America, we call on the American government to do all it can to resolve the current crisis and to move the parties in a positive direction so they might provide security for their people on both sides of the conflict.

Many believe that a mutual ceasefire and negotiated agreement between the Israeli government and the Hamas authorities in Gaza and the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank is the most realistic path to ensure the safety and human rights of people on both sides of the conflict. Neither military solutions nor occupation have led to the end of the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, and the loss of life and desecration of human rights continues. Until the day of peace between Israelis and Palestinians arrives, both parties, as well as the world leaders who influence them, must work to end the violent responses that exacerbate human suffering.

We stand in solidarity with the people of Israel in their desire for peace and security. We pray that our efforts to uphold human rights will bring an end to the suffering of Israelis in the Sderot region and civilians in Gaza and will fulfill the promise of the Holy land - "Zion will be redeemed through justice" (Isaiah 1:27).