Response To Common Inaccuracy: Israel's Military Operations in Gaza

Inaccuracy: Israel's military operations in Gaza in 2008/09, 2012 and 2014 were excessive and they caused deliberate and undue damage and injury to Palestinian civilians in Gaza.

Response

In 2008, 2012 and 2014 Israel launched military operations in Gaza after it determined it had no choice but to respond to intensifying rocket and missiles attacks launched by Hamas and other terrorist organizations in Gaza. In 2008 and 2012, Israel's main military objective was to end Hamas' ability to launch rockets into Israel, while in 2014 there was an additional objective of destroying Hamas' tunnel network, which was used by Hamas to infiltrate into Israel in order to kidnap and kill Israeli civilians and soldiers. In all three instances, Israel was fulfilling its duty and responsibility to protect its citizens from deadly rocket assaults and terror activities. In the months and years leading up to these military actions, Israel demonstrated the utmost restraint in dealing with Hamas's blatant hostility and tried to stop the attacks through a variety of measures including diplomatic and political, but to no avail.

Most recently, in 2014's Operation Protective Edge, the IDF's military operation aimed to curtail Hamas’ ability to attack Israel – through stopping the rocket, missile, mortar attacks, and eradicating an extensive network of underground tunnels leading into Israel designed to enable terror attacks and kidnappings of Israeli civilians and soldiers. Targets in Gaza included Hamas operational centers,
storage facilities and rocket launching sites, the labyrinth of tunnels, as well as locations where terrorist leaders were hiding out. Many of the rocket storage sites were deliberately located by Hamas in densely populated areas, including private homes, mosques, schools and medical facilities. Hamas wantonly launched rockets outside apartment buildings, stores, schools and mosques.

The IDF, following its own internal ethics guidelines and rules of engagement, require its forces to make every effort to limit civilian casualties under these very challenging conditions. In all three operations, Israel enacted procedures to warn civilians though leafleting and phone calls, that their neighborhoods and buildings were located. In the aftermath of the conflicts, Israel has investigated (and in the case of the 2014 operation, continues to investigate) whether errors were made by its soldiers and if legal action is required.