

## Israel's Conflicts in Gaza - 2008/2012/2014

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Since Hamas forcibly took over Gaza from the Palestinian Authority in 2007, the terrorist organization has repeatedly attacked Israeli cities and towns in the Southern and Central parts of the country using an arsenal of missiles, rockets and other projectiles.

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. During all three operations, a number IDF soldiers were killed in the fighting, as well as Israeli civilians who were killed by rockets fired into Israel from Gaza. Many Hamas fighters were also killed, as well as numerous civilians 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 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.

During the 2014 operation, the IDF's military operation focused on curtailing 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.

During that operation, a number of Hamas rockets reached deep into Israel, including Tel-Aviv, Jerusalem, and as far north as Haifa, a distance of over 85 miles from Gaza. Two-thirds of Israel's civilian population were directly threatened by missiles from Gaza. Israel's Iron Dome missile defense system intercepted approximately 600 projectiles fired into Israel, including missiles fired toward Ben Gurion International Airport, saving countless Israeli lives.

The IDF, following its own internal ethics guidelines and rules of engagement, required its forces to make every effort to limit civilian casualties during each conflict. Yet despite Israel's best efforts to avoid harming non-combatants, many civilian injuries and deaths were reported in Gaza during all three conflicts. Many of the rocket storage sites were deliberately positioned by Hamas in densely populated areas, including in private homes, mosques, schools and medical facilities, a violation of the Law of Armed Conflict (which prohibits a party to hostilities from deliberately making civilians the object of attack). Hamas wantonly launched rockets outside apartment buildings, stores, schools and mosques.

Throughout each operation, Israel also undertook to ensure the flow of humanitarian aid into Gaza. Israeli government officials met regularly with representatives from the United Nations and humanitarian organizations to ensure that Gazans were provided with the necessary aid, food and medical supplies.