

Advertisement

Gaza: The missing truth

Israel's actions, founded on self-defence, are both legal and moral

Newspaper photos of dead Palestinian children and headlines screaming "massacre" have dominated the Mideast news and led many Kiwis to see Israel as an evil nation killing innocent people. Here are some facts, missing from most accounts, that may change your minds.

Background. Four years ago Israel pulled out of Gaza with the hope and expectation of living in peace with its neighbour. Hamas had other plans and began raining rockets on Israel. As Barack Obama said, "If somebody was sending rockets into my house where my two daughters sleep at night, I'm going to do everything in my power to stop that. And I would expect Israelis to do the same thing." They finally did.

Casualties. In Israel's initial precision bombing, 15% of those killed were civilians; during the ground offensive, the number rose to 30-40%. These numbers are quite remarkable, given that Hamas operates from civilian buildings and uses civilians for support - even children, as scouts and couriers - and then displays their bodies for TV cameras while crying "massacre".

Because of the heavy casualties, Israel has been

accused of a 'disproportionate' response. However, trying to destroy your enemy while minimising civilian casualties is not, by international law, disproportionate. It is the targeting of civilians as done by Hamas that is disproportionate.

The blockade. When Hamas took over Gaza, given its stated goal of destroying Israel and its many attacks and suicide bombings, Israel imposed a *partial* blockade. According to the UN charter, a blockade is one of the first actions that should be taken to stop an aggressor. Yet Israel was careful to see that humanitarian needs were met, and even during the present crisis has offered to allow wounded Gazans to enter Israel for medical treatment.

What would NZ do? If New Zealand were in Israel's shoes, how many rockets would have to fall, how many Kiwi children would have to be maimed, before we took action? Instead of condemning Israel for defending itself, if New Zealand and other nations of the world would stand up to Hamas and say "We will never let you destroy your neighbour, nor will we tolerate continued attacks on it", that's when peace might be possible.

This advertisement was paid for by Kiwis for Balanced Reporting on the Mideast. To read more, visit kbrm.org.nz and click on Jan. 7 post. KBRM neither condones nor condemns Israel's actions, but wants Kiwis to know the whole truth so they can make up their own minds. If you would like to support KBRM, click on "Contact Us" and "Drop us a line".