

Translation for:

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## **Preventing the humanitarian crisis in Gaza – an Israeli interest**

**An old Arab phrase says the following: “if you decide to feed your enemy, do so until he is fed. If you decide to strike your enemy, do so until he is hurt”. This is the way Israel should act in regards to our neighbors across the border in Gaza.**

The basis for the discussion regarding the humanitarian crisis in Gaza should commence with a clear statement: It is not Israel’s responsibility. The degree of Israel’s responsibility for what has happened in Gaza until the disengagement is up for debate, but since Hamas took over – it is the organization’s responsibility to provide Gaza’s residents with all basic needs and services. That said, Israel has a clear interest to prevent the humanitarian crisis.

The humanitarian crisis in Gaza is in the headlines yet again because of Israel’s statement that it will decrease the amount of electricity provided to Gaza due to the Palestinian Authority’s refusal to pay for it. The electricity crisis is not a new one. The electricity provided to Gaza has been inconsistent for a while, and its residents have been living with frequent power outages.

This is not the only crisis. A few weeks ago, the Israeli government stated that they are considering to open the Erez border crossing for trucks carrying supplies such as food, medicine and construction materials. Currently, all supplies are transferred through the Kerem Shalom border crossing, while the Erez crossing is only used for ambulances and authorized pedestrians. Using only one border crossing for food and medicine creates severe traffic problems while jeopardizing the residents of the Eshkol region and other drivers in the area.

The humanitarian crisis in Gaza is not Israel’s fault. Although the IDF’s curfew on Gaza does indeed increase the crisis regarding food and other basic needs for Gazans, but it is essential for preventing the smuggling of ammunition and rockets into Gaza. These rockets are fired at us, the residents of the Gaza Envelope. Blaming Israel for the lack of medicine in Gaza’s hospitals, is like blaming Israel for hurting Gazans freedom of movement due to the destruction of the smuggling tunnels.

That said – Israel should do everything to alleviate the crisis across the border.

An old Arab phrase says the following: “if you decide to feed your enemy, do so until he is fed. If you decide to strike your enemy, do so until he is hurt”. This is the way Israel should act in regards to our neighbors across the border in Gaza. The people of Gaza are the enemy,

they are our bitter enemy that doesn't stop attempting to hurt us. An enemy that intentionally fires rockets at civilian populations. This enemy should be struck anytime and anywhere he attempts to hurt us.

But, simultaneously, we must remember that across the border live men, women and children which are not bloodthirsty terrorists. These civilians need food, water, electricity and a source of livelihood. Three years ago, in the midst of operation "Protective Edge", the former Minister of Security, Moshe Ya'alon said: "if Hamas's needs were met a few months ago, it is possible that this escalation would have been prevented". I would phrase this somewhat differently: "if the needs of Gaza's resident's would have been met, they might have opposed the escalation during the summer of 2014". This is true today as well.

The famous Roman saying goes as following: "If you want peace, prepare for war". Even more accurate in the current situation is the saying "If you want to push war away, prepare for peace". It is in our interest, that of the Israeli government and the citizens of Israel – to do the best we can to alleviate the suffering of our neighbors/enemies. "Best we can" does not mean increasing the risk for us, and destabilizing Gaza's Envelope's security. "Best we can" means, finding ways to transfer more goods into Gaza, treating sick individuals in our hospitals, providing medicine and doing the best we can so the people on the other side of the border can keep a normal life routine.

Translated by Itamar Wigoder 5/6/2017