

Hamas Proves to be Terror Group “~Through and Through,” Says Olmert

After battling Fatah and cross-border attacks on Israel, Hamas further isolates itself as a party of Islamic extremism



Top government officials in Israel last week authorized the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) to respond to what has since been a week-long barrage of Kassam rockets launched from the Gaza Strip into southern Israel, striking targets in Sderot and an Israeli high school in Negev.

Observers say Palestinian members of Hamas, the terrorist organization involved in fierce infighting in Gaza with rival Fatah, are attempting to draw Israel into the Palestinian conflict, which could descend into civil war as Israeli air strikes on Hamas are promulgated by the terrorist group as an Israeli alliance with Fatah.

At the outset of the unrest, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert resisted calls to order the evacuation of southern Israeli communities. “I oppose population evacuations,” he said. “These are the exact pictures that Hamas has been waiting for and I am not prepared to grant any victory to terrorism.”

Olmert said Hamas’ behavior demonstrated a bold but double-minded approach to politics. “The Hamas government is behind the terrorist actions [against Israel] and it cannot be that it also seeks international recognition and economic assistance from the nations of the world,” he said. “The Hamas terrorist organization, which constitutes a significant part of the Palestinian Authority (PA) government, has again proven to the entire world that it is a murderous terrorist organization through and through.”

Israel’s Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni said that Israel views

the Palestinian government itself as fully responsible for the violence in, and spilling from, the Gaza Strip. "The situation in the last two days is unbearable," she said last week.

Livni said Israel has exercised great restraint, but that there needed to be an end to the daily attacks on Israeli civilians from the Gaza Strip—land that Israel's former prime minister handed over to the Palestinians in August 2005 in hopes of encouraging its leadership to become viable partners in the peace process. In democratic elections five months later Palestinians gave Hamas a majority in parliament.

"For no reason, and because of some internal disagreements in the Palestinian Authority, someone has decided to strike the residents of Sderot (Israel) in such a massive and severe manner. This is something we cannot accept," said Livni.

The latest violence in Gaza effectively disintegrated an already fragile Palestinian unity government formed in March in Saudi Arabia between the radical Islamic Hamas and the more secular Fatah. It also put on permanent hold potential peace talks between Israel and the PA.

"We must understand that no one has a magic solution," said Livni. "We will have to act, and the time period will be determined by the circumstances."