

Jewish Blood Doesn't Come Cheap

With a ceasefire under way from the intense ground fighting in Gaza and dozens of rockets having been fired at Israel daily (more than 3,000 total since the fighting began) as Israel has eliminated 32 Hamas' terrorist tunnels, many terrorist leaders, casualty numbers on both sides are horrifying. Israelis do not diminish the civilian casualties among Gaza residents, yet we also know that the blood of these people is on Hamas's hands.

This is simply the case because, at the outset, Israel offered Hamas a deal that quiet will be met with quiet. Hamas did not take the deal, and in fact escalated the conflict, goading Israel into a web of booby-trapped tunnels and buildings from which the tunnels emanate. The terms of the ceasefire that they seem to have accepted are largely similar to the terms offered at the outset. Had Hamas accepted then, hundreds of lives could have been spared.

It's been widely documented that Hamas is guilty of crimes against humanity by using their own people as human shields. Women and children are placed on or next to buildings housing Hamas leaders, communications equipment and weapons. Terrorists brazenly fire their rockets from points adjacent to schools, mosques and hospitals, and even fire at Israeli troops from buildings and places like these. United Nations' facilities have become stockpiled for Hamas weapons. There are dozens of photos and videos that bear this out. It's incontrovertible. Yet, many deny this, and still find a way to blame Israel for civilian casualties.

So when Israelis either fire back to defend themselves, or fire at these locations, despite heroic and unparalleled efforts to clear the area of civilians, civilian casualties

are, very sadly, inevitable. The same is true when Israel strikes a known terrorist hideout or weapons cache. Even if one doesn't rightly believe the inflated numbers that terrorist leaders claim as far as total deaths, and even if one removes all the known terrorists killed, or the other Palestinian Arabs killed by terrorists as part of their own internal "justice" system to intimidate others, the results are deeply saddening and criminal. It's clear that Hamas could have stopped all of this. Not only do they choose to escalate things, and have used ceasefires to increase attacks, but that they have called upon civilians to disregard Israel's warnings to evacuate areas under fire.

There are many lessons to be learned from this, and more will be learned after the fighting stops and evaluations are made. However, one thing that has become clear in a battle where black and white and truth and lies could not be more obvious—Jewish blood is not cheap.

Israel has invested an extraordinary amount of money to develop the world's pre-eminent short-range anti-missile defense system, the Iron Dome. With a 90-percent success rate, millions of Israeli lives whose homes are under fire are protected. This may not diminished the fear and anxiety of endless rocket attacks from Hamas on our communities, but it has diminished casualties. If the Iron Dome were only 70- or 80 percent effective, hundreds if not thousands of Israelis would have been hurt and killed. If Israel had not had the Iron Dome, the carnage would be unimaginable.

But Israel invests in these things because Jewish blood is not cheap.

As of this writing, dozens of Israeli soldiers have been killed in battle or died of their wounds. Yet hundreds have been injured, some severely, along with hundreds of civilian who have been in the wrong place at the wrong time. In many cases, the one thing separating saving a life from another

casualty is the ability to provide blood to those injured and in need. Without it, there would also be many more casualties.

Yet Israel's national blood center operates in an underground bomb shelter these days, processing and storing blood, keeping it safe from harm, and being able to dispatch it to the hospitals where those most in need can be saved. The additional expense and strain on the system is profound. Jewish blood is not cheap.

At the rate of \$100 per pint of blood, with a need in "normal" times to collect between 1,200 and 1,400 pints per day, that's \$120,000 to 140,000 per day. This is in times of peace. Today, the need and expense are much more.

While all this is testimony to Jewish blood not being cheap, one of the blessings through all this is the standing together among Jews and Christians to support Israel in general, and the blood services in particular. Heart to Heart () has been especially blessed and uniquely successful from partnerships with dozens of ministries and individuals which have stepped to the plate to help out. Often this takes place in the form of a virtual blood donation, a financial sponsorship of individual units of blood at \$100 each, or the components of the unit of blood at \$60, \$40 and \$25.

Others have stepped up to donate money to buy a new ambulance for Israel which is also a great need, but with a price tag about as much as the need for one day's supply of blood. Ambulances will work saving lives in Israel for up to 10 years, a long-term impact and investment that are invaluable. But Israel cannot live without ambulances at \$100,000, or blood at \$100 per unit.

Though tourism has dropped, those in Israel, or planning solidarity visits especially now, have gone out of their way to donate blood in Israel. Throughout my travels in the U.S. recently, many expressed their wish to be in Israel and be

able to donate blood in person, and even the willingness to donate blood and send it to Israel, something that simply cannot be done. Heart to Heart's virtual blood donation is resonating more and more because those who want to do something recognize that we have to maintain Israel's blood supply, and all the infrastructure to make sure that there's always enough, no matter what threats Israel may face. They recognize Jewish blood is not cheap.

Yet, with a growing number of non-Jews standing with Israel in this way, the notion that it's about Jewish blood is becoming less and less relevant. Sentiments expressed by some donors that reflect this include, "I will only give my blood for the stars and stripes and for the Star of David." "Jesus gave his blood for me, how can I refuse His people."

One of the most exciting efforts to support Heart to Heart in its vital mission is the planned telethon that's in the works and scheduled for September. Coordinated by Son Broadcasting in New Mexico and CrossTalk in Texas, so far several TV ministries have signed on to air the telethon, of which Heart to Heart is a major beneficiary. It's noteworthy that this is happening, and all those participating deserve recognition and our thanks: SON Broadcasting, KSCE TV 38, CrossTalk, Living Faith TV, Cornerstone Television Network, WLMB TV, WBPI TV 49, CFNT, The Walk Television Network, Total Living Network, KTLN TV, KVTN TV, KCHF TV 11.

Indeed, Jewish blood is not cheap. Israel must do whatever is needed to protect its civilians and soldiers alike. As blood is the source of all life, it's heartwarming to see the mingling of blood, the solidarity between Jews and Christians especially now and the outpouring of financial support to complement this as well.

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the calling to fellowship with Christian supporters of Israel and shares experiences of living as an Orthodox Jew in Israel. He writes a regular column for Charisma's Standing With Israel. You can contact Jonathan at firstpersonisrael@.