

Too Close for Comfort: Israelis 'Go About the Norm' Despite Terrorist Rockets

Good morning from the Judean mountains. I slept well last night but when I woke up, I realized that just 30-40 miles from my home, for hundreds of thousands of Israelis, it was a horrible night.

Again.

Palestinian Arab terrorists in Gaza fired over 60 rockets at Israeli communities, trying to kill, maim and terrorize as many Israelis as possible. Despite the Iron Dome that typically shoots down 90% of all incoming rockets aimed at Israeli communities, some broke through and there have been injuries.

As immoral as it is for terrorists to deliberately fire rockets at population centers, unfortunately that's very much the norm. The impact is felt far and wide.

Parents who spent all night worried about protecting their kids from rockets, had to wake up (assuming they even slept at all) to get their kids off to school, and get to work. As if everything is normal.

Children who spent all night in bomb shelters ate breakfast, got dressed and ready to go study math, science and history, and socialize with friends. As if everything is normal. They'll play in the playgrounds during recess, but not more than 15 seconds away from a bomb shelter—just in case they have to take cover.

Rocket fire began before they went to bed last night. At the scene of one rocket landing in the middle of a residential

street, kids gathered to have ice cream, displaying their bravery and resolve, as if everything was normal: a rocket lands on your street, and you have ice cream. Normal. But they were standing in front of a car littered with the shrapnel that was packed into the rocket, shrapnel that was meant to cut apart their bodies.

Their teachers have to be the adults in the room but are no less well-rested, no less stressed. They have kids of their own too. Teachers have to engage their children in basic education, but also serve as a sounding board for kids who are physically exhausted from not sleeping and emotionally fearful.

Elderly and infirm Israelis, some Holocaust survivors, will calculate whether they really need to go out for milk or eggs, and may decide it's safest to stay indoors, hiding just like many did to survive the Nazis, just in case.

Thousands of orphans and at-risk children who may not have had parents to protect them overnight, coming from homes that are not safe, have woken up to the reality that they are not safe at home, not safe in their community and struggle with the trauma and stress of all this even if they are too young to articulate why. For those who can articulate it, it doesn't make them less stressed or traumatized.

Just a few miles away, thousands of Palestinian Arabs from Gaza will line up at the Erez Checkpoint to cross the border into Israel, coming to work, shop or receive medical care in the communities, and among the people, who Palestinian Arab terrorists spent all night loading and firing rockets at. Men, women and children. All because the terrorists are evil and don't value the sanctity of life.

Israelis wonder why our government and military don't end the threat of terror from Gaza's Palestinian Arab hate groups and target those responsible. Why are they allowed to hide behind

their civilians, firing rockets from urban areas knowing that Israel won't fire back to take out the terrorists and risk the lives of Palestinian Arab civilians? Are their lives worth more than ours?

People of good conscience around the world who see the black and white, the evil of the terrorists and can't imagine this happening in their community because it never would. But many don't. They think Israel is somehow at fault or deserving of ongoing rocket and other terrorist attacks because for some, morality is malleable.

No other country on earth would not tolerate it. In no other circumstance would it be considered normal. Nowhere else would the terrorist perpetrators be celebrated, and excuses made for their actions, while blaming the victims.

Two months ago, I visited Sderot, the Israeli city that's closest to the Gaza border. It's a lovely, growing community. Less than a mile separates Gaza where terrorists reign, and some 30,000 Israelis just trying to live. I visited a program for orphans and at-risk youth for whom the trauma of their existence requires ongoing care and comfort, and which I have been privileged to support.

They were engaged in a group therapy when I arrived, before playing in the yard and then getting help with their homework and a hot meal before heading home, because their parents are not able to care for them properly. So the community steps up to help. Across the street is a playground made of concrete so that if they are playing and rockets come, they can duck inside one of the "climbing toys" and be protected. This is their normal.

You can join the Genesis 123 Foundation to provide urgently needed and ongoing therapies and care for the most vulnerable orphans and at-risk youth. While we can't stop the rockets, we can build resilience, show love and support and enable these

young people to stay strong, even when living in their normal lives is not normal.

If you woke up rested and not suffering the threat of terror or rockets, not worrying about protecting your children and staying strong for them albeit while you know that you can only protect your kids to a limit, please join us to help parents and children whose days started very differently.
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Jonathan Feldstein was born and educated in the U.S. and immigrated to Israel in 2004. Throughout his life and career, he has been blessed by the calling to fellowship with Christian supporters of Israel and shares experiences of living as an Orthodox Jew in Israel. He is president of the Genesis 123 Foundation, which builds bridges between Jews and Christians. Hear and understand more about this subject, including the backstory on the “Inspiration from Zion” podcast.