

Rabbi says Israel has the right to defend itself

Oakville Beaver - Published on Jan 14, 2009

While many of us had a two-week vacation, Israelis living in the southern parts of Israel have not had a vacation for the past three years.

Did you know that each day for the past three years, dozens of missiles are launched by Hamas terrorists into Israel indiscriminately, aiming to kill as many civilians as possible?

How much warning does an Israeli living in the Town of Sderot get? When the air-raid siren goes off, they have 30 seconds to find a bomb shelter.

Just last week, a bomb landed in a Grade 9 classroom, spreading shrapnel throughout the room shattering 40 desks.

Luckily school was not in session or there would have been 40 funerals that day.

Israel's response of turning the other cheek finally ended Dec. 27 when they launched a mission to find those responsible for launching the missiles, destroy them and the stockpiles of rockets and bring peace to the region.

Israel only wants peace, in fact there is a mantra in the Israeli Defense Forces, its called "We shoot and we cry."

We have never wanted anything other than to live in peace, but in the real world there is an organization called Hamas — democratically voted into power by the Palestinians who live in the Gaza Strip — whose openly-declared mission is to destroy the State of Israel.

Israel has no choice but to defend itself, despite knowing that there will be civilian casualties among our enemies.

As Hamas fires from among civilian areas and houses bombs in mosques, schools and apartment buildings, the suffering of civilians is heart-wrenching, but inevitable.

Along with Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper, Opposition Leader Michael Ignatieff, and Oakville MP Terence Young, there is a lot of support for Israel to defend itself, until a peace agreement can be reached where Hamas pledges to stop bombing Israel.

At that point Israel will withdraw.

Israel already demonstrated it will give land for peace, by withdrawing all troops from Gaza in the summer of 2005.

All we want is Shalom, all we're asking from Hamas and its Palestinian supporters is to give peace a chance.

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SHAAREI-BETH EL SYNAGOGUE