

Free Gaza—from Hamas  
Gerald M. Steinberg

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Under the façade of human rights, anti-Israel campaigners have been promoting the theme of “Free Gaza,” falsely alleging that Israel’s blockade is responsible for the suffering of millions of Palestinians. They organized “humanitarian aid” flotillas (carrying almost no aid) in order to provoke violent confrontations with the Israeli Navy, and held hateful protests at universities around the theme of Palestinian victimization and the invented slogan of “collective punishment.”

In the second Gaza war, the promoters of the Free Gaza campaign share major responsibility in producing and marketing this tragedy. With their backing, the Hamas leadership was confident (overly confident, it turned out) that it could escalate attacks on Israelis, and count on international media and political campaigns to prevent Israel from maintaining a strong counterattack. This strategy worked for them in the first Gaza war (December 2008 to January 2009), as it did for Hezbollah in 2006. The stream of “flotillas” and accompanying publicity created a fabricated image of Israeli aggression and Palestinian suffering which Hamas leaders have successfully exploited for many years.

One of the most active groups involved in the “Free Gaza” industry is an Israel-based NGO known as Gisha (“Legal Center for Freedom of Movement”). Gisha has waged a media campaign to promote what they portray as Israel’s policy of starving the population of Gaza and preventing them from unencumbered imports and travel. In their public relations efforts, Gisha and its allies have largely erased all traces of Hamas—including their brutality against their own people, and the acquisition of thousands of rockets hidden in schools, mosques and homes.

Anyone who is actually concerned about the welfare of the people of Gaza, and does not belong to the church of “it’s all Israel’s fault” would have focused the generous resources provided by foreign donors (including the New Israel Fund and anonymous European government officials) on liberating Gaza’s citizens and Israelis from Hamas.

But instead they constructed a fictitious Gaza, based on the total disconnect (overlooked by journalists committed to the Palestinian victimization promoted by NGOs) between the image of deprivation and the huge sums spent on rockets and missiles to attack Israel. According to the IDF, in the past decade, more than 13,000 rockets and mortars—an average of three per day—were launched against Israel. More than 1,500 were fired in the eight days of this conflict, beginning Nov. 14.

The missile industry—the biggest in Gaza—consumes huge resources and tens of millions of dollars, pounds, euros and dinars. How many school lunches, prenatal and infant care medical checks and other social welfare measures could this money have been used to buy, if only the Hamas overlords of Gaza were so inclined?

Similarly, according to media reports, Gaza has “15,000 Qassam fighters who are responsible for most of the rocket blitzes.” Thousands more were involved in building and operating over 200 tunnels that were dug under the border between Egypt and Gaza—many large enough to bring rocket sections through—in order to maintain the war against Israel.

While some societies encourage their best and brightest to go to universities, become scientists, build businesses and create jobs, in Gaza’s Palestinian society, the best jobs are making, smuggling and

shooting rockets to kill Israeli civilians.

All of this is erased in the distorted universe of the NGO human rights network and their funder-enablers, such as the New Israel Fund and hidden European government officials. In their absurd, patronizing and morally inverted version of reality, all responsibility and blame lies with Israel.

Another radical fringe group with a major bank account calls itself “Breaking the Silence” (\$523,342 by the NIF from 2006 through 2011; additional funds from Europe). BtS plays a central role in the dissemination of false “war crimes” accusations against Israel, including in the notorious Goldstone report of 2009. Now, BtS is seeking to repeat this process by drawing comparisons between the fictitious “crimes” of four years ago, and the current Israeli operation in Gaza. As in the case of Gisha and many others, there is no mention of Palestinian war crimes (such as every rocket attack) and the intimidation through which Hamas controls Gaza. On these issues, the silence is deafening.

There are many more examples selling more or less the same defective product. In contrast, a real and moral Free Gaza movement would close the missile industry and help Israelis and Palestinians in liberating themselves from the tyranny of Hamas. With yet another ceasefire, the “human rights activists” have another opportunity to do the right thing, and demand that instead of investing massively in restocking rockets for another round of warfare, Palestinian leaders invest in the welfare of their own people.

Gerald M. Steinberg is president of Jerusalem-based research institution NGO Monitor and is professor of political science at Bar Ilan University.