

For the next few months my wife and I live in Tel-Aviv, Israel where we both study at the Tel-Aviv University. I was born in Israel in a sleepy bedroom community – now the city of Rehovoth. I was there last week on the very evening when for the first time in 63 years an air raid siren went off. The piercing sound of the siren ran a shiver down my spine. I remember this sound from when I was just five year old. Whenever it went off my mother used to wrap me up in a blanket and we rushed to the ditch behind our house where we all huddled listening to the sound of Egyptian aircrafts above and praying that the “booms” we were hearing will not get any closer. As a Canadian you likely never heard this sound before unless you came to Canada from Europe after WW2 or lived in London during the Blitz. It is an un-mistakenly frightening shrieking sound signaling clear and present danger. A few minutes later the all clear siren sound came on. I remember that sound as well. It meant that we could return home to our own beds even though we couldn't fall asleep for a long time. The grad rocket fired by the Islamic Jihad from the Gaza Strip fell only 12 kilometers from my birth place. In this instance there were no casualties.

The next day grads or scuds were again fired from the Gaza strip and this time one civilian was killed, few injured, thousands of little boys and girls were frightened to death and thousands of families were wondering why their government cannot protect them from these rocket attacks and the terrorizing consequences of living with this reality for almost 10 years. The Globe and Mail reported on the incident with the following headline: ***“Israeli air strikes kill nine in Gaza, Palestinians fire back with rockets”*** Similar “incidents” were reported before with emphasis on the fact that there were no or few casualties, that little to no damage was done and that fierce Israeli air strikes killed many Palestinians.

In a few months I will be going back to Toronto, but the 70,000 children who did not go to school for the past 3 days and who spent the last few nights terrorized and traumatized in bomb shelters do not have the same option.

Rocket attacks in Toronto are an incomprehensible concept. But what if a group of “who knows who” from “who knows where” were to fire rockets on Toronto? How would Torontonians respond? Would the Globe and Mail opine that most of the rockets fell in open areas and caused little to no damage and that after all Torontonians are their sworn enemies, this group is angry, they have grievances, they are resisting. No. You would demand that the Canadian Forces will track down and eliminate “You Know Who”.

If the Palestinians want their own state, that in my opinion they need and deserve, they must abandon the dream that somehow Israel will go away by war, by terror, by demographics, by boycotts, by divestitures, by sanctions, by hatred. I live in this country now and let me tell you – Israel is here to stay.