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It's Time To Stand Up for the People of Sderot

Opinion

By Scott Garrett

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Last week the Israeli town of Sderot was once again subject to the inhumane violence of Palestinian terrorists. Rockets rained down on a children's playground, injuring two young sisters and sending their mother into shock.

Enough is enough. It's time for the global community to stand up to Palestinian extremists and fight to protect the innocent Israelis in harm's way.

Israeli communities like Sderot and Ashkelon have been victims of these horrific rockets attacks for far too long. Last year more than 2,000 rockets landed in Sderot and the surrounding area, and the violence has only gotten worse. And since the beginning of this year, terrorists have fired more than 420 rockets and mortar shells into Israel — an average of 12 per day.

The targets of this almost-daily rocket fire have largely been civilian communities like Sderot and Ashkelon. Sadly, if this was taking place on American soil, the violence and horrific attacks would have been addressed a long time ago.

Israeli towns like Sderot look much like small American towns. There are grocery stores, playgrounds, hospitals and homes lining paved streets. Yet the constant danger and unexpected attacks are unlike anything we face in this country.

Here, residents do not live with the daily fear that a destructive rocket might hit them, their family, home, business, church or even community. We do not wake and fall asleep to the sound of launching missiles. We do not face the threat of being an unfortunate target of terrorist aggression every minute of every day. The way of life in Sderot is unimaginable to us.

Hundreds of Sderot residents have already vacated their homes, but countless others can't afford to leave. To some their home is all they have, and if they were to move they'd have nowhere to go. Others leave, hoping to find a safe place to raise their children and live a normal life, but often they have no idea where that place might be.

Last week I introduced a bipartisan resolution in the House of Representatives that condemns the ongoing Palestinian terrorist strikes on Israeli civilians and supports Israel's effort to justly respond to these rocket acts. This resolution, which currently has 70 cosponsors, is an important step toward raising public awareness here about these horrific attacks. It's critical that my fellow representatives, Democrats and Republicans alike, set aside their political preferences and work together to stop these egregious bombings.

The violent Palestinian groups and terrorist organizations must be held accountable for their actions. Groups like Hamas, Islamic Jihad and the Popular Resistance Committees need to understand that when they attack the people of Israel, the United States and other countries will hold them accountable. Their unjust actions must not go unpunished.

Rep. Scott Garrett is a New Jersey Republican.

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