



Rodney Alexander / Louisiana's 5th District
UNITED STATES CONGRESSMAN

THOUGHTS FROM CAPITOL HILL
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I Stand with Israel

WASHINGTON, D.C. – As Israel responds to the ongoing indiscriminate assault from Hamas terrorists in Gaza, I stand firmly with our democratic ally.

Israel is absolutely warranted in defending itself and in taking all the necessary military steps to guarantee the safety and security of its people from the constant rocket and mortar attacks.

Since Israel's 2005 withdrawal from Gaza, Hamas has launched more than 6,300 rockets and mortars—including 600 in the past six weeks.

Israel, while employing an appropriate application of force, is taking decisive action to minimize civilian casualties by providing advance warning to the public in targeted regions—even if it puts its own soldiers at risk.

In stark contrast, Hamas has executed calculated attacks on Israeli civilians and uses its own people as human shields.

According to recent reports from the United Nations and Gaza health officials, the war has resulted in more than 550 Palestinian deaths—including approximately 200 civilians.

This blatant disregard for the lives of innocent civilians by Hamas serves as a continuous reminder that it subsists as nothing more than a terrorist organization.

After accepting Egypt's proposal for a six-month cease-fire last spring, Hamas used the time to increase its rocket and other weapon capabilities by smuggling arms into Gaza from Egypt essentially doubling its rocket stockpile. As Israel concentrated on peace, Hamas repeatedly violated the agreement terms by launching approximately 400 rockets and mortars at Israel.

Until Hamas decides to permanently halt this relentless cycle of terror, I will firmly stand with our democratic ally as Israel fights to restore security in the region, and to protect its people.

Today, the U.S. House of Representatives decided to take action. I was proud to be listed among several of my Republican and Democratic colleagues as a cosponsor of H. Res. 34 which recognizes Israel's right to defend itself against attacks from Gaza, reaffirms the United States' strong support for Israel, and supports the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. It passed with an overwhelming majority.

H. Res. 34 makes clear the strong support of the House for Israel's right to protect its citizens in the country's struggle with a terrorist enemy that not only targets Israeli civilians but also bases itself among Gazan homes, schools, mosques, and hospitals in order to use innocent civilians as human shields.

The resolution also urges the White House to support a durable and sustainable cease-fire that prevents Hamas from retaining or rebuilding its terrorist infrastructure, including the capability to launch rockets and mortars against Israel. Lastly, H. Res. 34 reaffirms the support of the House of Representatives for a fair and sustainable end to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in order to ensure a viable, independent, and democratic Palestinian state neighboring a safe and secure State of Israel.

Likewise, the U.S. Senate agreed to a parallel resolution on January 8, 2009.

During this difficult time in the Gaza strip, Israel has taken actions necessary to defend itself and its people—this is the fundamental right of every sovereign nation. My resolve is stronger than ever to provide the support our ally needs to establish a lasting peace in this part of the world.

U.S. Rep. Rodney Alexander, R-Quitman, represents the 5th Congressional District and serves on the House Appropriations Committee and the House Budget Committee. He can be reached at the Monroe District Office (318-322-3500), the Alexandria District Office (318-445-0818) or Washington, D.C. (202-225-8490.) Visit Alexander's Web site at www.house.gov/alexander or write him at 316 Cannon House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515.

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