

CONFLICT IN ISRAEL/GAZA

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Since Saturday 7 October we have borne witness to terrible atrocities that have been committed in the Southern part of Israel by Hamas terrorists. The stories we have heard, the images and videos we have seen are the ultimate proof of the nature of this organisation. Since the Holocaust this is the largest number of Jewish people killed in one day, and sadly, history tells us how this might end.

There are many misunderstandings and misconceptions about the situation and about Israel in general, the most significant of which are discussed below, given they are the ones where the general public seem most at odds with Israel.

MISCONCEPTION #1 **GAZA IS OCCUPIED BY ISRAEL**

Truth: Israel does not occupy Gaza.

In 2005 Israel, unilaterally, that is without a peace agreement decided to withdraw from Gaza in the promise of peace, to allow Palestinians to govern themselves.

Since then, funds committed by other Arab nations as well as well-meaning donations from around the world have been used to fund weapons, rather than schools and infrastructure.

Since 2007 Hamas has ruled Gaza. Hamas is a designated terrorist organisation by Australia and other countries. The Charter of Hamas calls for the complete annihilation of Israel.

Gaza is located between Israel and Egypt. Usually, the Erez border crossing, which Hamas used to infiltrate Israel just days ago, allows thousands of Gazans to enter Israel to work every day. Supplies, including medical goods, food and fuel pass into Gaza daily from Israel. There is also a crossing between Egypt and Gaza, but this is closed to people and supplies.

MISCONCEPTION #2 **THE LAND BELONGS TO PALESTINIANS AND ISRAEL IS A COLONIAL ENDEAVOUR**

Truth: Israel is the birthplace of Jewish ethnic identity, language, culture, and religion, and Jews have maintained a constant presence there for over 3,000 years. Archaeologists have proven the connection between Jewish people and the land of Israel with artefacts found dating back to the 6th century BC.

The only sovereign state that has ever existed in the Land of Israel is a Jewish state, as 3 nation states, through the course of history.

In 1948, when the United Nations supported the declaration of Israel as a Jewish state, it also supported the establishment of a neighbouring Arab state. This state was never accepted by the Palestinian people, who together with Arab allies, launched an attack on the brand new state. Many remained, as Israeli citizens, with the same rights as Jews and have lived in Israel since.

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MISCONCEPTION #3 ISRAEL IS AN APARTHEID OR RACIST STATE

Truth: Israel's Declaration of Independence ensures equality of social and political rights to all its citizens regardless of religion, race or sex, guaranteeing freedom of religion, conscience, education and culture pledging to safeguard holy places of all religions, which it **does**. Israel does not deny anyone else their religious identity.

25% of Israel's population are Israeli Arabs who have equality under the law, many serve in the Israel Defence Force. They are elected officials in government, Judges sitting in the courts, equal in every way.

MISCONCEPTION #4 ISRAEL COMMITS GENOCIDE, SLAUGHTERS INNOCENT PALESTINIANS

Truth: The IDF does not target civilians. Hamas locates military installations in schools, under hospitals and in mosques.

The Israel Defence Force operates under the following values:

- (1) Defence of the State, its Citizens and Residents – the purpose of the IDF is to protect the existence of the State of Israel, its independence, and the security of its citizens and residents.
- (2) Patriotism and Loyalty to the State – service in the IDF is based on patriotism and on commitment and devotion to the State of Israel—a democratic state which is the national home of the Jewish people—and to its citizens and residents.
- (3) Human Dignity – the IDF and its soldiers are obligated to preserve human dignity. All human beings are of inherent value regardless of race, faith, nationality, gender or status.

THIS WAR IS AGAINST HAMAS, A TERRORIST ORGANISATION NOT THE INNOCENT PEOPLE OF GAZA.

