

"I am reporting on what is happening here," said the young 'journalist'.

Hamas's incessant rocket salvos violate international law, but caused only one death. Although every life is valuable, the magnitude of Hamas's violations pale in comparison to Israel's war crimes. We must remember that the Holocaust does not give Israel immunity from criticism, nor can every critique on Israel's policies be brushed off as anti-Semitism.

The real question is this: What are the objectives of Israel—the superior power in this asymmetrical conflict—in Gaza? A war every two or three years isn't particularly convincing. When there is no clear-cut strategy on either side, both can claim victory, which they have.

In fact, the overwhelmingly disproportionate responses by the Israeli war machine are creating a new kind of problem for Israel—in the domains of diplomacy, regional politics and international law, Israel's legitimacy is seriously questioned. In European capitals and elsewhere, Israel is being denounced as a "terrorist state."

In a recently published article in *Project Syndicate*, Shlomo Ben-Ami, a former Israeli foreign minister, writes, "Contrary to what Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu believes, the main existential threat facing the country is not a nuclear-armed Iran. The real peril is to be found at home: the corrosive effect of the Palestinian problem on Israel's international standing. The devastation caused by Israel's periodic asymmetrical confrontations, combined with the continuing occupation of Palestinian lands and the ever-growing expansion of settlements, has fueled a growing campaign to undermine Israel's legitimacy."

Many believe that Israel's Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement will serve no other purpose than bringing about the implosion of the Jewish state. The challenge, therefore, for Israel is to set clearly defined political goals. As long as the Palestinian conflict remains unresolved, Israel's moral foundations and international standing keep getting weaker.

Israel must start with lifting the blockade and opening Gaza to the world. The social conditions the people in Gaza live in should be improved. Hamas must disarm. At the same time, The US, the UN, the EU and Russia must use all their muscles—political and diplomatic—to resume negotiations for a solution acceptable to both parties.

No Israeli civilians were killed by Hamas in 2013 or 2014 before Israel Defence Forces launched Operation Protective Edge on July 8 in the Hamas-governed Gaza Strip.

The Israel-Palestine conflict is unique. It is an infinitely complex odyssey of two nations with exclusive claims on sacred lands and religious shrines that are central to the faiths of millions of people worldwide. Conflicts like this never determine who is right—only who is left. Innocent lives including those of children are lost. But who's counting with both sides claiming God to be on their side?

Our little boy does not understand all that. In the middle of the macabre calculus of bloodshed, he dresses up as a journalist. He wants to live. But he does more than just that. Instead of just trying to survive, which he could have achieved by hiding somewhere, he finds a purpose to *live for*. "I am reporting on what is happening here," he says. He wants the world to know.

May be it is the power of his "reporting" that has brought about the ceasefire. ■