

## *In a war, how far does the limits of defense actions go and start the attacks?*

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The world has witnessed several attacks by a terrorist group called *Hamas* against Israel, which resulted in thousands of deaths and injuries, not to mention the countless people kidnapped, not only Israelis, but from a variety of other countries (WHO, 2023). The Israeli armed forces continue with counteroffensives, including ground invasions in the Gaza Strip, ongoing and with no probable end date.

There have been several incursions all over this territorial portion, supposedly in search of hostages or to find new terrorist installations, which has left more destruction and more people massacred and injured.

The question that remains is how far the limit of “defense” actions goes and where can we conceptualize such actions as “effective attacks”? Is it possible to justify the death of a population, practically defenseless, so that terrorists, probably infiltrated among this population, can be punished?

As far as we know, international law calls for maximum effort to distinguish between who are combatants and who are civilians, so that innocent lives can be preserved. It is important to reject with all our strength any attempts to equate the population, those who incite war and extremist terror, but it is also necessary to admit the possibility that there are other ways of dealing with conflicts of this nature.

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There is no such a thing as “fair” war, just as it is difficult to imagine that Israel would have an equivalent “right of response” to the terrorist attacks perpetrated by Hamas. There is no equity in such proposals, nor is it a comparison between available arsenals and the number of victims left to their own devices. It is necessary to strongly condemn terrorism, as well as the way to combat it.

We are facing a humanitarian catastrophe, where Hamas uses the Palestinian population as a kind of human shield, regardless of whether they are children, women, defenseless citizens (CNN, 2023). Revenge has been the media rhetoric to justify a cruel and unequal practice. It seems to us that Israel has used similar practice, establishing an unhealthy polarization that makes any type of agreement unfeasible, with the aim of putting an end to this absurd war.

It has reached the point of non-compliance with established international agreements, such as the rules guaranteeing the right to life, establishment of humanitarian corridors and/or possible evacuation routes for the civilian population, creating confusion and commotion throughout the world (UN, 2023).

Add to this, deprivation of access to those in the Gaza Strip of essential items for life, such as fuel, electricity and drinking water, to say the least, implies genocidal effects.

Few actions to ease this blockade have been implemented, although international actions have sent some basic inputs, these do not arrive in sufficient quantities, or are not allowed to reach those who urgently need them.

When people lose their homes, their dignity, their stories and the integrity of their bodies, we start to reflect on the real meaning of life.

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