

**Canadian Friends of Peace Now  
Shalom Achshav Peace Foundation**

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## NEWS

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### PEACE NOW RENEWS CALL FOR CEASEFIRE-PLUS

TORONTO--[January 9, 2009]

Wednesday's three-hour lull in the Gaza War to allow humanitarian relief was no substitute for a durable, internationally-enforced ceasefire between Israel and Hamas. Equally, such a ceasefire can be no substitute for a meaningful peace process between Israel and the Palestinians to end the occupation and give the Palestinian people self-determination, Canadian Friends of Peace Now said today.

In this unnecessary conflict, neither side has shown much concern for civilians in Gaza. Hamas fighters positioned themselves so as to turn the Palestinian people into potential targets of Israeli air and artillery strikes, and the Israelis have predictably played into Hamas's hands--with the result that 225 of the 700 Palestinian killed have been civilians, according to the U.N.

The deepening ground offensive is further evidence of a recklessness in Israeli policy. If intended to oust Hamas, it would be overweening in its ambition. That would require reoccupation of Gaza. If intended to silence all the Qassams, it would be unrealistic. Even reoccupation could not guarantee that.

Instead, Israel is using unlimited means to achieve limited aims: wrecking enough havoc on Hamas and Gaza to set the stage for a better short-term ceasefire. Although Israel has pressed on with its offensive, the government has reportedly accepted the "principles" of a truce drafted by Egypt and France. Israel wants UN monitors to staunch the flow of new Hamas arms through tunnels on the Gaza-Egypt border.

We support such a UN deployment--as part of a ceasefire that would also include the lifting of Israel's economic siege of Gaza. Yet it's illusory to believe that internationalizing the ceasefire will guarantee long-term calm. A new, improved ceasefire, though urgently needed, is unlikely to justify the heavy toll that Israel's Gaza War has already taken on Palestinian civilians or on its own reservoir of international goodwill.