

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/israel/Story/0,,1822058,00.html>

Douglas Hogg (Letters, July 16) outlines Hamas's responsibilities in ending rocket attacks. But, frankly, no Palestinian authority, elected or unelected, Islamist or secular, would be able to stop actions against Israel, especially its army, while Gaza remains under siege and occupied. Israel withdrew from the inside of Gaza last year but remained prison wardens by air, land and sea, permitting restricted access for goods and people on its terms. The Palestinians still have no state, no passports and no liberty.

Moreover, in the West Bank, while Hamas may not have recognised Israel, the latter has not given up its huge territorial appetite for Palestinian land. In short, Israel has been allowed by the US and a compliant British government to act as a rogue state above the law. For years Palestinians invested hope in international law, security council resolutions, conventions against torture and the like, but now these have lost any meaning for them. Is it any wonder that, having lost patience waiting for the end of occupation, the return of their stolen land, and the release of thousands of illegally abducted family members including women and children, Palestinian groups started operating outside the law? The only way forward is to start by insisting that all parties adhere scrupulously to international law, as a foundation for negotiations.

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