

## Letters to the editor, June 6

### Frustrating peace

The Jewish Community Relations Council of St. Louis grieves the loss of life because of the violence instigated by those on board the Gaza-bound boat, the Mavi Marmara, on May 31.

Unfortunately, groups supposedly bringing "aid" to the people of Gaza have a history of using purported acts of humanitarianism as cover for weapons smuggling. Israel must defend its citizens from the consequences of such illicit transfer of arms. Israel's repeated offers to deliver the shipment of humanitarian aid by land, after a security inspection, were rejected by those aboard the Mavi Marmara. The other five vessels responded peacefully and were escorted unharmed to Israel, where the humanitarian aid they carried could be transferred by land.

Video footage shows a premeditated attack on Israeli soldiers, with the use of metal bars and other weapons. The Israelis had to defend themselves.

We reaffirm the need to address the larger tragedy of the region caused by Hamas' efforts to delegitimize Israel and then eliminate Israel. Our hearts go out to the people of this troubled region. Hamas' ongoing use of the Gaza strip as an armed base from which to launch rocket attacks against Israeli citizens obstructs Israeli and international efforts at bringing peace.

The JCRC continues to hope that those who have chosen actions designed to frustrate the cause of peace in the Middle East will join with those who desire peace and work for peace.

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