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IMPORTANT LEGAL POINTS FOR MEDIA INTERVIEWS –
OPERATION GUARDIAN OF THE WALLS

Strikes Against Buildings

DO SAY:

- ✓ The IDF only strikes military targets
- ✓ **Always emphasize the military use of the buildings** – weapons storage sites, command and control centers, etc. The IDF strikes targets that may seem civilian (houses, multi-story buildings, mosques, or governmental offices and symbols) but **only does this due to their military use.**
- ✓ The IDF only strikes military targets after examining the principle of proportionality – that is, whether the expected harm to civilians and civilian objects *is not excessive* to the expected military advantage gained from the attack.
- ✓ Tunnels that Hamas uses are used for military purposes and are therefore legitimate military targets – this includes the buildings that cover the openings to such tunnels.

DON'T SAY:

- ✗ The IDF strikes civilian structures and facilities to teach them not to attack us.
- ✗ The IDF strikes militants' homes or government offices simply due to them being as such.
- ✗ The strikes are carried out for the purpose of punishment or as a means to pressure Hamas by taking away people's homes.
- ✗ The IDF strikes governmental buildings to make it harder for Hamas to run daily life in Gaza.

Strikes Against People

DO SAY:

- ✓ **Emphasize the military activity of the targeted person** – their active role in the terror organization. Sometimes we may attack someone who has two ‘jobs’ - eg he works in the education ministry, but he also is a militant in the military wing.
- ✓ Sometimes we may attack a building in order to attack the person **inside** – so may need to stress who we are attacking. For example if the IDF hits a house, it may be because we are aiming for the person inside. So it is important to check the facts.
- ✓ Here too we assess proportionality – that is, we only attack the person after examining whether the expected collateral damage to civilians and civilian *is not excessive* to the expected military advantage gained from attacking that person.

DON'T SAY:

- ✗ The IDF intentionally strikes civilians.
- ✗ The IDF strikes governmental officials who don't contribute to the military effort of Hamas.
- ✗ “No one is safe”.

Advance Warnings

DO SAY:

- ✓ The IDF takes all **feasible** precautions in order to **mitigate** harm to civilians during operational activities.
- ✓ **When possible**, the IDF provides advanced warning to civilians and provides them sufficient time to evacuate the site.
- ✓ The IDF warns the civilian population to stay away from Hamas' military assets in a time of emergency, as well as during routine.
- ✓ This is **not fool-proof**, as we **don't always have information about civilian presence**, and Hamas tries to cause harm to its own civilians.

DON'T SAY:

- ✗ The IDF ALWAYS warns the civilian population.

- ✗ The IDF assumes that all civilians have evacuated after the warnings.
- ✗ Whoever does not evacuate the area – their death is on their own hands, or Hamas’.
- ✗ Post warning, whoever does not evacuate – it’s their problem.
- ✗ Evacuations are used to make Gazans realise that we are in control.

Firepower

DO SAY:

- ✓ The IDF operates in a forceful\ strong\ necessary\ appropriate manner.
- ✓ The IDF only employs lawful weapons. The Orders and Directives for use of these weapons are set in accordance with the relevant principles and rules of the laws of armed conflict.

DON’T SAY:

- ✗ The IDF will hit back disproportionately.
- ✗ The whole of Gaza is shaking.
- ✗ Gaza will wake up tomorrow and regret what they’ve started.

Hamas Accountability

DO SAY:

- ✓ Hamas holds the **ethical/moral** responsibility for the destruction of the Gaza Strip, by refusing to desist its banned fighting methods.
- ✓ The IDF does all it can to minimize civilian harm, while Hamas places the civilian population in danger, operating in heavily populated areas, and hiding behind civilians.

DON’T SAY:

- ✗ Hamas is **fully** responsible for civilian casualties because it is embedded in civilian population and civilian areas, or **only** Hamas is responsible for civilian casualties.
- ✗ **The IDF is not responsible** for the death of civilians in the Gaza Strip.
- ✗ Hamas puts its civilians in danger, so we have no responsibility for the harm to their civilians.