European leaders met in Paris today to discuss the renewed fighting between Israel and the Hamas terrorist organization, as Operation Cast Lead entered its fourth day. They are expected to pronounce a joint communiqué on the crisis following their meeting. The hostilities began after Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh decided not to renew a truce with the Jewish state which was set to expire earlier this month. Hamas stepped up its rocket and mortar attacks on southern Israeli towns, drawing a fierce response from the Israeli government. Over 80 Israeli aircraft took part on the first strike, which saw much of Hamas' police and security infrastructure destroyed. The Israeli government has vowed that it will continue the campaign until Hamas ends its attacks on Israeli civilians. Four Israelis and nearly four hundred Palestinians have been killed in the latest conflict. The EU has been divided in its response to the fighting, with German Chancellor Angela Merkel supporting Israel's response, and British Prime Minister Gordon Brown and French President Nicholas Sarkozy calling for an immediate end to the hostilities. Quartet Special Envoy to the Middle East, former British Prime Minister Tony Blair
, is expected to visit the region next week to press for an immediate ceasefire.

Quote: *"The former prime minister, who is the envoy for the EU, Russia, United States and UN, spent yesterday contacting senior figures including the Israeli Defence Minister, Ehud Barak, as international pressure for a ceasefire mounted, the Independent reports. Britain has strengthened its rhetoric on the Israeli attacks recently. A Downing Street spokesman said: "We reiterate our call to Israel and Hamas for an immediate ceasefire to prevent further loss of innocent life. “In his discussions today with Prime Minister Olmert and [Palestinian Authority] President [Mahmoud] Abbas, the Prime Minister has also pressed for full, unimpeded and urgent access for medical teams: a humanitarian breathing space. There is no military solution to this situation. "*

It's ironic. Israel battles an Islamic terrorist organization on its border which has been launching daily attacks against Israeli civilians for over three years, and all the Western world can do is condemn Israel for its 'disproportionate response' and call for an immediate cease fire. The rocket attacks on Israel did not start after the Jewish state imposed its blockade on Gaza, nor did they start after Israel began targeting Hamas operatives. The rocket attacks continued even as Israel was withdrawing from Gaza, and were intended to show the Palestinian people who it was that 'drove Israel out of Gaza'. The Hamas terrorist organization was swept into power after the United States demanded Israel allow them to take part in Palestinian elections. Israel imposed its embargo on the Gaza Strip in order to prevent the smuggling of hundred of tonnes of weaponry and explosives from Egypt, which were fuelling not only the conflict with Israel, but also President Abbas' Fatah party. Hamas later drove the Palestinian Authority out of Gaza in a bloody coup while the Western world turned a blind eye to the 'internal Palestinian affair'. Hamas' rocket attacks continue to this day to show the Palestinian people 'who has their best interests at heart'.

That is the Israeli-Hamas conflict in its proper context, which the press generally chooses to

ignore. For Hamas, the issue is not about the 'occupation'. The Hamas charter still calls for the complete destruction of the state of Israel and the Jewish people. There is no amount of land that Israel could give up that Hamas would be satisfied with. The press likes to report the conflict as a tit-for-tat issue, with Palestinians responding in the only way they know how against the Israeli siege and settlements. But that is simply propaganda. Israel never targets Palestinian civilians. In fact they do everything in their power to avoid injuring civilians. Hamas deliberately targets Israeli civilians on a daily basis. Hamas operatives cower behind human shields, they t each their children to hate and kill, and then send them to their deaths with explosives strapped to their wastes. And the international community condemns Israel's 'disproportionate response'? What Israel is doing now they should have done over two years ago. Of course as Christians we know there is another side to this issue. There is a spiritual aspect to it which cannot be ignored. The Bible predicted that all of this would happen, that the nation of Israel would be reborn (Ezekiel 37), and that they would have war with their enemies until the time comes when they are ready to accept the One that they rejected (Zechariah 12). What about you? Have you accepted Jesus Christ as your Saviour? Do you enjoy the peace with God that Christ obtained through His sacrifice on the cross (Colossians 1:20)? Or is the battle still raging within your heart? Without Christ there can be no peace. Trust in Him for salvation today.

Genesis 49:10
The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.

Source AFP , Telegraph