



ISRAEL SOLIDARITY: Foreign Secretary David Miliband with Fabian Hamilton Mp, Sue Dorsey, Howard Foreman, Raina Sheaf and Martin Harris

# Miliband and Fitzsimons show support for Israel

FOREIGN Secretary David Miliband and BICOM chief executive Lorna Fitzsimons backed Israel at solidarity meetings in Leeds last week, writes DAVIDSAFFER.

Speaking to 600 people at Etz Chaim Synagogue last Thursday, Mrs Fitzsimons described the conflict as a tragedy and failure on international proportions.

"~ country should not be left in a situation where after eight years of trying to find non-military solutions, after 8,500 rockets, it is left to defend itself~" she said.

"It is an international scandal that more pressure was not applied by the international community to stop the smuggling of arms.

"Israel continually asked the international community to act but time and again was asked to take more pain."

She added: "The biggest danger we have is that people try denying the true nature of Bamas.

"People react as they do when they see horrific images of children in pain but that does not mean that Israel is guilty. Israel should not have had to take more pain and turn its cheek."

Israel Ambassador Ron Prosor opened the event with a video message to the Jewish community.

"Bamas is toxic, both for countries in the region and anyone who wants to achieve peace in this region," he said. "~ll we are trying to do is achieve a sustainable peace for our citizens in the boundaries of the State of Israel."

There was also a live link-up with Leeds-born Rob Cohen, working in Sderot to redress the media balance to world press and undertaking creative media projects with traumatised children.

Fabian Hamilton MP introduced Mrs Fitzsimons, Dan Cohen offered a vote of thanks.

Philip Margolis of Leeds Zionist Federation organised the event.

Mr Miliband addressed lay leaders at a breakfast meeting at the community centre on Friday.

Speaking to the *Jewish Telegraph* after the meeting, he said: "The cease-fire is very fragile and we are v-ery concerned.

"Every Foreign Minister I speak to sees this as a very dangerous situation but there is international unity about what is necessary to stop the cease-fire ending."

Be added: "Very few big problems of the world can be solved without America and you cannot address the problems of the Middle East without the United States.

"I think the Obama-Clinton-Mitchell team is very strong and committed. They are very committed to Israel and the Palestinians. They don't see those two things as contradictory.

"In the end it is a safe neighbourhood that Israel needs and that requires the Palestinians and Arabs to come to terms with Israel's existence."

As for Jewish-Muslim relations locally, he noted: "There is a message coming through loud and clear for Government from the Jewish community about fear and there are certainly increased levels of rising attacks.

"Passion and anger about politics needs to be directed to political channels not against individuals who are randomly attacked for wearing a yarmulke.

"What is hardest at this time is to build links between Muslim and Jewish student groups, and Muslim and Jewish communal organisations. One should not be naive about it but in a way it's more important now to try."

The event was organised by Leeds Jewish Representative Council.



INSPIRATIONAL: Lorna Fitzsimons

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