

Germany gives support to Israel's so-called right to defense



?Israeli Foreign Minister Gabi Ashkenazi and his German counterpart Heiko Maas meet at the Ben Gurion International Airport near Tel Aviv, Israel, on May 20, 2021. © Reuters / Abir Sultan?

Tel Aviv, May 21 (RHC)-- Germany will continue to make it possible for Israel to defend itself as long as there are forces seeking its destruction, German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas has said during his visit to Israel aimed at promoting "ceasefire."

Germany's solidarity with Israel "is not limited to words only," Maas said as he arrived in Israel for a one-day visit on Thursday. The diplomat insisted the Jewish state had every right to defend itself against what he called "massive and unacceptable attacks."

“As long as there are states and groups that threaten Israel with annihilation, it must be able to protect its citizens,” Maas said, adding that Germany would “make contributions” to ensure Israel’s ability to do just that.

Maas met with Israel’s Foreign Minister Gabi Ashkenazi as well as other senior Israeli officials, including Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, President Reuven Rivlin and Defense Minister Benny Gantz to discuss the measures the international community could take to promote a speedy ceasefire between Tel Aviv and the Palestinian militants in the Gaza Strip.

The German minister’s visit comes amid the ongoing flare-up between Israel and the Hamas militant group in Gaza, which has seen the Palestinians launching hundreds of rockets at Israeli territory in the past 10 days and the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) responding with massive airstrikes targeting the Palestinian enclave.

Shortly after landing in Israel, Maas joined Ashkenazi on a visit to Petah Tikva, a town located some 10km east of Tel Aviv, where a building was struck by a Palestinian rocket. “The fact that we see that Hamas is again firing missiles into the south of Israel, since we have arrived here in Tel Aviv, is for us an indication of how serious the situation is that the people of Israel find themselves in,” the German minister said, earning praise from his Israeli counterpart.

Ashkenazi lauded the fact that Maas had decided to visit the Jewish state at a time when “sirens are sounding” as “the clearest sign of solidarity and Israeli-German friendship possible.”

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