Written by Simon Roberts

While Tony Blair, as Middle East envoy, may be finding it difficult to gain direct access to Hamas, Sir Jeremy Greenstock is not. Through his work with the charity Forward Thinking, Sir Jeremy has made direct contact with Hamas and in an interview with BBC Radio Four's Today programme, discusses the merits of open diplomacy.

The whole tenor of the interview is that Hamas and the Palestinian cause is a much misunderstood one. Sir Jeremy cites the fact that Palestinian Muslims are of the Sunni rather than the Shi'ite faction and thus are not beholden to Iran nor do they want to establish a Taliban style government in Gaza.

Through his work with Forward Thinking, Sir Jeremy has been able to introduce Hamas to members of Sinn Fein in order to give their leaders an idea as to how a revolutionary group, that employed violence in the past, can take steps towards and indeed accomplish non violent actions. It is understood that the Hamas leaders are very interested in the example set by Sinn Fein in Northern Ireland where by they can move from a more militant movement to a more respected political force.

He claims the "tragedy" of the current situation, lies with the failure of Israel to uphold its obligations under the June ceasefire to open the crossings between Gaza and the West Bank. This issue must form part of the discussion into ending the current problems; however, it was an option open to all parties from the beginning.

Sir Jeremy also makes the point that the rockets being fired into Israel are not being launched by Hamas, but by the Fatah militant group (who were defeated by hams in elections) and Islamic Jihadists; details of which are not revealed to the public at large, thus creating for the West a far more skewed view of Hamas than perhaps there should be.

The full interview can be heard on the BBC 4 website here