



DEMOCRACY COALITION PROJECT

October 15, 2009

Mr. Michael Posner
Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor
Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Assistant Secretary Posner,

I am writing to urge the United States government to support the adoption of a follow up resolution to the Goldstone report on the UN fact-finding mission on the Gaza conflict during the upcoming UN Human Rights Council (HRC) "Special Session on the Human Rights Situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory including East Jerusalem" being held this Thursday, October 15 – Friday, October 16.

During the Twelfth session of the HRC, Justice Richard Goldstone, a prominent and universally-respected international jurist, presented his report which found evidence of serious human rights violations during the Gaza war in early 2009 by both Israeli forces and Hamas fighters. The report calls for independent and impartial investigations of the conduct of the armed forces of both parties to the war. Justice Goldstone recommended that if the UN Security Council were to find that these investigations had not been administered within six months, then the matter should be referred to the International Criminal Court.

Despite the evidence, the US administration lobbied for and won a deferral of a vote on the Goldstone Gaza report until March 2010 on the grounds that Israel, as a democracy, would be able to carry out its own investigations into the allegations. However, to date, both Israel and Hamas have shown an unwillingness to carry out serious investigations into alleged war crimes. The position taken by the United States has caused great concern both domestically and internationally as it assumes some states to be above international law and scrutiny. Such a position is problematic because it is perceived as unfair by most. As such, it could have deeply damaging consequences for ensuring international accountability for crimes, and securing commitments by states toward strengthening the international human rights system.

I call upon the United States to uphold Justice Goldstone's recommendations at the upcoming Special Session. This longstanding conflict demands that the United States take a balanced, yet principled position to ensure accountability for victims, and that it begin advancing a vision that is objective, and aimed at upholding the rights of all parties. It is this approach that holds the highest likelihood of achieving long-term peace, a goal that we wholeheartedly support.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dokhi Fassihian", written in a cursive style.

Dokhi Fassihian
Executive Director
Democracy Coalition Project