

October 14, 2009

Your Excellency,

We, the undersigned civil society organizations, are writing to urge your 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 and crimes of war during the Gaza conflict in early 2009 by both Israeli forces and Hamas. The report urges impartial and thorough investigations of the conduct of the armed forces of both parties to the war. Justice Goldstone recommended that if the UN Security Council finds that these investigations had not been administered within six months, then the matter should be referred to the International Criminal Court.

Despite the evidence, pressure from the United States and other governments led to the Council deferring a vote on the Goldstone Gaza report until March 2010. The refusal to uphold the recommendations of Justice Goldstone's report marked a major failure of the Council to ensure accountability for war crimes committed during the invasion of Gaza.

In this regard, we call upon members of the Council to uphold the recommendations of Justice Goldstone's report at the upcoming Special Session. There should be no further delay in ensuring justice for innocent victims of this conflict. It is impunity that obstructs peace and security, not accountability before the law.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of our highest consideration.

Dokhi Fassihian
Executive Director
Democracy Coalition Project

Jeremie D. Smith
Director, Geneva Office
Cairo Institute of Human Rights Studies