

Report of the United Nations Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict

Tuesday, 15 September 2009, the report by the fact-finding mission on the Gaza conflict commissioned at the beginning of this year was released by the UN Human Rights Council. The mission, mandated by the President of the Human Rights Council in April 2009 and headed by Justice Richard Goldstone, found evidence that both by the Israeli Defense Forces and armed groups from Gaza had committed serious war crimes and breaches of humanitarian law, which could amount to crimes against humanity. The report will be presented to the UN's Human Rights Council in Geneva on 29 September 2009. *The report recommended the Security Council pass a resolution requiring Israel and Hamas to launch domestic investigations into these crimes and report on both the findings of these investigations and the prosecutions of the perpetrators. The report also recommended that if good-faith investigations in line with international standards are not underway in either Israel or Hamas six months after the passage of the recommended resolution, the UN Security Council should refer as appropriate one of both of the parties to the International Criminal Court.*

The mission investigated events, studied documents, and obtained and analyzed interviews and official statements pertaining to the period between 27 December 2008 and 18 January 2009. The mission also conducted two sets of public hearings in June and July in Gaza and Geneva, and took into consideration past event and relations related to the Gaza conflict. With the cooperation of the Egyptian government and the Palestinian Authority, the mission gained entry to the Gaza Strip, but the mission received no cooperation from the Israeli government.

Findings during the mission included imposed blockades on Palestinians by Israeli Defense Forces that created emergency situations and deprived Gaza residents basic necessities including food and healthcare, questionable Israeli military operations, deliberate attacks on civil populations by both Israel and Hamas, the use of human shields, and the irresponsible use of certain weapons. The full description and analysis of findings can be accessed in the Report, linked at the bottom of the page.

The mission was headed by Justice Richard Goldstone, former member of the South African Constitutional Court and former Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda. The other three members of the mission were Professor Christine Chinkin, Professor of International Law at the London School of Economics and Political Science, who was a member of the High Level Fact Finding Mission to Beit Hanoun (2008), Ms. Hina Jilani, Advocate of the Supreme Court of Pakistan and former Special Representative of the Secretary General on Human Rights Defenders, who was a member of the International Commission of Inquiry on Darfur (2004), and Colonel Desmond Travers, a former officer in the Irish Armed Forces and member of the Board of Directors of the Institute for International Criminal Investigations (IICI). (Titles and Bios of Mission members found on the UN Human Rights Council Website:

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/specialsession/9/FactFindingMission.htm>
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Read the

[Report of the United Nations Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict](#)

and the Executive Summary

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http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/specialsession/9/docs/UNFFMGC_Report.pdf