

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

On 15 September 2009, the UN report from 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 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 to 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 parties to the International Criminal Court.

Findings during the mission included imposed blockades on Palestinians by Israeli Defense Forces that created emergency situations and deprived Gaza residents of 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 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).

More information and full report: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/specialsession/9/FactFindingMission.htm>