



Human Rights Council Resolution: A Step towards Justice for Victims of the Gaza Conflict

Joint Press Release
For Immediate Release
Date: 25 March 2011
Ref. no.: 129/2011

As Palestinian human rights organisations, we welcome today's adoption of a resolution by the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council that advances the cause of justice for victims of Israel's December 2008 – January 2009 offensive on the Gaza Strip. The resolution paves the way for recourse to mechanisms of international justice by recommending that the report of the UN Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict be sent to the UN General Assembly for further action, including submission to the UN Security Council for a Chapter VII referral to the International Criminal Court.

We commend the States that supported our call for justice and the efforts of the Palestinian Mission in Geneva in achieving this much needed result. At the same time, we regret the European Union's (EU) demonstrated inability to take a strong position in support of justice for victims of "Operation Cast Lead." This stance stands in conflict with the EU's own stated values and evidences a disregard for the universality of human rights and the equal application of the rule of law.

The resolution acknowledges that domestic mechanisms have failed to deliver justice to victims and welcomes the report of the UN Committee of Independent Experts. This is in line with our judgment that Israel has been unwilling to carry out genuine criminal investigations and that the Palestinian authorities, despite some noted efforts, have failed to deliver justice. Moreover, Israel, which also refused to heed UN demands for cooperation, has a consistent record of flawed investigation, as evidenced by the recent conclusions of the independent commission of inquiry into the assassination of Salah Shehadeh in 2002. In light of the above, it is imperative that urgent recourse be made to international mechanisms of criminal justice.

To date, Human Rights Council resolutions have been insufficient to redress serious violations of international law in the OPT. It is now up to the General Assembly to ensure further action is taken through the Security Council and the International Criminal Court to ensure justice for victims and accountability for perpetrators of international crimes.

Firm steps towards accountability are now more crucial than ever to stop the escalation in violence demonstrated by the recent incidents in the OPT. The international community of States has an obligation to hold all perpetrators of serious violations of international law accountable in order to prevent further violence against innocent civilians.

Addameer Prisoners' Support and Human Rights Association
Aldameer Association for Human Rights
Al-Haq
Al-Mezan Center for Human Rights
Badil Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights
Defence for Children International - Palestine Section
Ensan Center for Human Rights and Democracy
Jerusalem Center for Legal Aid and Human Rights
Ramallah Center for Human Rights Studies
Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling
The Civic Coalition for Defending Palestinians' Rights in Jerusalem

- Ends -