

AUSTRALIANS FOR PALESTINE

PO Box 2099
Hawthorn VIC 3122
Melbourne - Australia
Tel: 03 9818 5080
Fax: 03 9818 5009

info@australiansforpalestine.com
www.australiansforpalestine.com

MEDIA RELEASE 17
21 September 2009

Prepared by SK/AFP

Goldstone Report on Israel's Gaza assault

Providing a Voice

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Press Release No 17 – 21 September 2009

The just-released Goldstone report documenting war crimes committed during Israel's attack on Gaza over three weeks in December 08-January 09 reveals that the bombardments of infrastructure and appalling massacres inflicted on Palestinian civilians were deliberate and on a scale amounting to crimes against humanity. It concluded that they were grave violations of international law.

Australians for Palestine welcomes its findings.

The report comes at a time when the Palestinians in Gaza are still suffering from the deprivations and humiliations of Israel's punitive sanctions imposed in June 2007. These sanctions have denied the Palestinians almost all basic household staples, construction materials to rebuild destroyed homes and medicines to relieve the pain and suffering of the thousands injured as well as the acutely and chronically ill. This, the report stated, was evidence of Israel's intent "to punish, humiliate and terrorize a civilian population, radically diminish its local economic capacity both to work and to provide for itself, and to force upon it an ever increasing sense of dependency and vulnerability."

While Palestinians were also found to have committed war crimes, the proportions in the report are revealing- nine-tenths of the report is devoted to Israeli war crimes and only one-tenth to Palestinian war crimes. The ratio of killings was about a hundred to one with more than 1400 Palestinians killed to 13 Israelis (4 by friendly fire). While several houses were damaged by Palestinian rocket fire, the Israelis reduced to smouldering rubble thousands of Palestinian homes, offices, factories and other infrastructure.

The report includes amongst the destruction of infrastructure, Gaza's last remaining flour mill, repeated strikes on a water well complex, bulldozers that buried 31,000 chickens in rubble in a chicken farm and the bombardment of a raw sewage lagoon causing spillage of 200,000 cubic metres of fetid sewage.

Furthermore, contrary to Israel's assertions, no evidence was found of Hamas using its own people as human shields, but there were numerous incidents cited of Palestinians being used as human shields by Israeli soldiers.

By any measure, Israel should be held accountable under international law and humanitarian law for the atrocities committed in Gaza as well as the repeated violations against the Palestinians that have seen them dispossessed, displaced, occupied, oppressed, slaughtered, imprisoned and reduced to utter economic dependency and despair over the last sixty years.

After decades of trying to impose accountability on Israel under international law, the Goldstone report provides a legal basis for doing so. As a signatory to the Geneva Conventions, Australia has an obligation to demand that claims of war crimes against Israel be heard before the International Criminal Court of Justice if Israel fails, as proposed in the report, to conduct credible internal investigations over the next six months.

Australians for Palestine calls on the Australian government to abandon its unequivocal support for Israel in light of the incriminating evidence lest it be seen to accept Israel's war crimes as normal and appropriate. The report's findings only confirm what has long been public knowledge about Israel's systematic violations against the Palestinians. Remaining silent now would make us all complicit.

For further information contact:

- Michael Shaik 0431 573 368

END

