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HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL
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Agenda item 7

HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN PALESTINE AND OTHER OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES

Joint written statement* submitted by the International Youth and Student Movement for the United Nations (ISMUN), le Centre Europe Tiers-Monde (CETIM), non-governmental organizations in general consultative status, the Union of Arab Jurists, the International Organization for the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (EAFORD), Nord-Sud XXI, the International Association of Democratic Lawyers (IADL), ITTIJAH : Union of Arab Community Based Organizations, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), the Arab Lawyers Union (ALU), the General Federation of Iraqi Women, the General Arab Women Federation (GAWF), the Arab Organization for Human Rights (AOHR), the Indian Movement Tupaj Amaru (MITA), the United Towns Agency for the North-South Cooperation, the Indigenous World Association (IWA), the International Committee For the Respect and Application of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights (ICRAC), l'Action Internationale pour la Paix et le Développement dans la Région des Grands Lacs (AIPD), non-governmental organizations in special consultative status, International Educational Development (IED), Inc., the Indian Council of South America (CISA), the International Human Rights Association of American Minorities (IHRAAM), non-governmental organizations on the Roster

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[14 October 2009]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

**NGOs Appeal to Endorse and Implement
The UN-Fact Finding Mission Report on the Gaza Conflict
(The Goldstone Report)***

“The prolonged situation of impunity has created a justice crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory that warrants action, Judge Richard Goldstone”

The UN Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict led by Justice Richard Goldstone submitted its report to the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva on 29 September 2009. It concluded that there is evidence of serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law committed by Israel during the Gaza conflict and that Israel committed actions amounting to war crimes, and possibly crimes against humanity.

The Mission found that, in the lead up to the Israeli military assault on Gaza, Israel imposed a blockade amounting to collective punishment and carried out a systematic policy of isolation and deprivation of the Gaza Strip. It has documented grave and systematic violations during the Gaza war by examining the evidence surrounding the attacks on civilians and non-military targets.

*The following NGOs, are also endorsing and supporting this statement: Association of Humanitarian Lawyers, American Association of Jurists, International Council For Human Rights (ICHR), The Arab Lawyers Net Work in the UK, DROIT POUR TOUS –Geneva, The Spanish Society for Human Rights, The International Action Center-New York, The Iraqi Commission on Human Rights (ICHR), International Coalition against War Criminals (ICAWC), Arab Association of Human Rights (AAHR), The Palestinian Return Centre, UK, Women Will Association (WWA), Women Solidarity for an Independent and Unified Iraq, Ikraam Center for Human Rights, Arab Commission for Human Rights (ACHR), The Italian Association of Democratic Lawyers (IDL), The European-Palestinian Council, Vienna, Al-Basa’er Media Association, The Palestinian Rights Foundation – Ireland, Justice for Palestine- Scotland, National Committee for The Defence of the Rights of internally Displaced Palestinians, The Palestinian Forum – Denmark, Palestine Now Association – Denmark, Canadian Arab Federation (CAF), The Charitable Council in Support of Palestine – France, The Iraqi Independent Press Association (IIPA), The Identity Institution- Norway, The Association of Social and Cultural Foundations – Moscow, Het Palestijns Platform voor Mensenrechten en Solidariteit (PPMS)- Holland, De Palestijnse Raad- Amsterdam, Monitoring Net of Human Rights in Iraq (MHRI), Steun Palestina-Amsterdam, Palästinentische Gemeinde Berlin-Germany, The African Association of Human Rights (AAHR), Pal. Bund Deutschland für Rückkehrrecht –Germany, Palästinentische Gemeinschaft in Deutschland-Germany, Arab Forum Germany, Rättvisecenter för palestinska folket-Sweden, Palestinagrupperna Sverige-Sweden, The Islamic Council – Copenhagen, ABSPP ONLUS-Italy, Comitato Gaza Vivrà – Milano, InfoPal- Italy, Damascus Center for Theoretical Studies and Civil Rights, Association of Iraqi Diplomats, The Association for Aid to the Palestinian People – Italy, Greece-Palestinian Friendship Association- Greece, Palestinian Cultural Organization – Poland, The Indian Movement for Peace and Justice (IMPJ), National Organization for Human Rights in Syria, The United Prisoners in Iraq, Protection of Human Rights Defenders in the Arab World, The African Center for Human Rights (ACHR), Association of Victims of American Occupation Prisons, Association of Iraqi intellectual and Academics, Conservation Centre of Environmental & Reserves in Iraq (CCERF), Le Franco Palestinien – France, The European Campaign to end the siege on Gaza, Organisation of the Solidarity of the People of Africa, Asia and Latin America, Association Culture Syria-Spain, Japan Lawyers International Solidarity, Association (JLISA), Malaysia Jurists for Justice (MJFJ), Palästinentischer Bund, Deutschland für das-Berlin, The Palestinian Women’s Forum – Denmark, Association of Human Rights Defenders in Iraq (AHRDI), Palestinian Center for Rapprochement Between People- Beit Sahour-Palestine, Women Hope Association (WHA), Arab Council for Education and Culture (ACEC), The Palestinian Community in Norway, Millennium Solidarity, The Jordanian Civil Society Coalition for the trial of War Criminals, Spanish Charity For Palestine – Spain, The Palestinian Forum for Rights and Solidarity – Holland, The Cuban Jurists Centre (CJV), Koordination Forum Zur Unterstützung Palästina-Austria, Organization for Justice and Democracy in Iraq (OJDI), Organization for Widows and Orphans (OWO), Women Association for Al-Quds – Amman, Arabian Women Media Centre (AWMC), Adala Association, El Taller International, Tunisia, Asian Women’s Human Rights Council, Philippines - India , Center for Development Studies.

The Report concludes that the Israeli military operation was directed at the people of Gaza as a whole, in furtherance of an overall and continuing policy aimed at punishing the Gaza population, and in a deliberate policy of disproportionate force aimed at the civilian population. The destruction of food supply installations, water sanitation systems, concrete factories and residential houses was the result of a deliberate and systematic policy which has made the daily living, and dignified basic survival, more difficult for the civilian population.

Despite the impartiality of the Report in identifying also violations committed by Palestinian rockets attacks, the Report has nevertheless not been accepted by those who have always insisted on addressing violations by all sides of the conflict.

It is alarming that the Human Rights Council has failed so far to take the appropriate action toward the endorsement of the Report's recommendations.

We, the NGOs who sign this *Appeal*, fully endorse and support the implementation of the Report, and believe that the time for accountability has come. It is now the duty of every state and the international community to stop condoning impunity, and prepare the ground for prosecution of all those responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

We call upon all UN member states to endorse the recommendations of the Report, and to take the necessary measures to ensure that all those who committed crimes against the Palestinian people be prosecuted. In this regard we call on all UN members to be on guard against any attempts to prevent the Human Rights Council, the General Assembly and the Security Council from fulfilling their mandate and promptly taking action on the Report.

We believe that ending the state of impunity will better serve peace and security in the region and the world.

The new USA administration and EU should take this opportunity to prove their commitment to human rights by fully endorsing the report and to act to bring all those who committed war crimes and crime against humanity to justice.

We call upon all NGOs to mobilize efforts in this direction by organizing meetings and conferences to discuss and devise the most effective means to implement the Goldstone Report.

And as the Goldstone Report states: "... ending occupation is a prerequisite for the return of a dignified life for Palestinians, as well as development and a peaceful solution to the conflict". In this regard we reiterate that our solidarity with the Palestinian people who are resisting an illegal and atrocious occupation will remain firm and alive until they have achieved their own independent state.

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