



Defence for Children International

Geneva

26 September 2009

Your Excellency,

**Re: The Goldstone Report – An end to impunity?**

When the ceasefire was announced at the end of the 23-day offensive in Gaza on 18 January 2009, over 1,400 Palestinians and 15 Israelis were dead. This death toll included 352 children, of which 101 were eight years old or younger.

In response to widespread and repeated allegations of war crimes having been committed by both sides during the offensive, the UN Human Rights Council (the Council) established an independent fact finding mission, headed by Justice Richard Goldstone in April 2009 (the Goldstone Mission). Thirty-three members of the Council out of a total membership of 47, voted in favour of establishing the Goldstone Mission (with 13 abstentions), chaired by a highly respected and eminent South African jurist.

On 15 September 2009, the Goldstone Mission published its 575 page report (the Report), investigating the allegations of war crimes in Gaza, as directed by the Council. The report is independent, detailed and methodical. The Report found evidence indicating that serious violations of international law were committed during the war.

The Goldstone Mission recommends, *inter alia*, that the Council endorses all recommendations in the Report, and requests the UN Secretary-General to convey the Report to the UN Security Council as soon as possible and submits the report to the General Assembly and the Prosecutor of the ICC for appropriate action.

I would like to take this opportunity to urge you, as a member of the Council, to ensure that effective action is taken to implement all of the recommendations made by the Goldstone Mission. I am of the view that the best way of achieving peace and justice in the Middle East is to ensure that there is accountability on all sides, and an end to impunity.

On behalf of all the victims of the offensive, please be courageous and take decisive action, consistent with the principles contained in the Charter of the United Nations and the recommendations contained in the Report.

Yours sincerely,

Rifat Kassis  
President  
Defence for Children International