

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

AI Index: IOR 41/003/2009
9 January 2009

Amnesty International calls on Security Council to establish full accountability for crimes committed in Gaza conflict and for deployment of human rights monitors

As fighting continues in violation of the UN Security Council's near unanimous adoption last night (8 January) of resolution 1860 calling for an immediate and durable ceasefire in Gaza, Amnesty International calls on the Security Council to take firm action to ensure full accountability for war crimes and other serious abuses of international human rights and humanitarian law.

In an open letter sent today to the Security Council, Amnesty International also urged the Council to ensure that international human rights monitors are immediately despatched to Gaza and southern Israel to investigate and report on continuing abuses by all parties to the conflict.

Israeli forces continue to carry out attacks directed at civilians or civilian buildings in the Gaza Strip, or which are disproportionate. Palestinian armed groups continue to carry out rocket attacks directed at Israeli population centres. The toll of civilian casualties continues to rise alarmingly.

UN Security Council resolution 1860 calls for an "immediate, durable and fully respected ceasefire", for unimpeded provision of humanitarian assistance and the reopening of crossing points into Gaza. However, the resolution failed to state that parties must stop violations of international humanitarian and human rights law. Nor does the resolution address the mounting evidence of war crimes and other serious abuses of international law, or provide for an investigation and for those responsible to be held to account.

The Security Council must ensure that there is full accountability for all such crimes committed during the conflict. Amnesty International urges the Security Council to immediately establish a full, independent and impartial enquiry to investigate all alleged abuses of international human rights and humanitarian law by the parties to the conflict.

Amnesty International also urges all states to be ready to initiate criminal investigations and carry out prosecutions before their own courts if the evidence warrants it.

Background

After prolonged debate, the Security Council adopted resolution 1860 (2009) on 8 January 2009 calling for an "immediate, durable and fully respected ceasefire, leading to the full withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza". The resolution was adopted by a vote of 14 in favour. The United States abstained.

The resolution also calls for the unimpeded provision and distribution throughout Gaza of humanitarian assistance, including food, fuel and medical treatment, and calls for the sustained reopening of crossing points on the basis of the 2005 Agreement on Movement and Access between Israel and the Palestinian Authority.

Public Document

For more information please call Amnesty International's press office in London, UK, on +44 20 7413 5566 or email: press@amnesty.org

International Secretariat, Amnesty International, 1 Easton St., London WC1X 0DW, UK
www.amnesty.org