



H. E. the Permanent Representative

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Open letter to the Security Council

13 January 2009

I am writing to urge the Security Council to declare an immediate, comprehensive arms embargo on all parties to the continuing conflict in the Gaza Strip and southern Israel. The Security Council must ensure a halt to the flow of arms to the warring parties that continue to be used in blatant violation of international law and that are having a devastating effect on the civilian population in Gaza.

Six days after the Security Council's near unanimous adoption of resolution 1860 (2009), the toll of civilian casualties in the Gaza Strip is mounting alarmingly. More than 900 Palestinians have been killed and around 4,000 more wounded. Nearly half of the civilian victims are women and children. Israeli forces continue to carry out unlawful attacks, including attacks that are disproportionate; they are alleged to have used white phosphorous that causes severe burns and poses unacceptable risks to civilians in highly populated areas. Meanwhile Palestinian armed groups continue to fire indiscriminate rockets into Israel.

There is growing evidence that both sides to the conflict have committed war crimes, other violations of international humanitarian law and serious abuses of human rights law. The embargo must be maintained until effective mechanisms are in place to ensure that weapons, munitions and other military equipment are not used to commit serious violations of international law. We believe that imposition of the arms embargo will also send a powerful signal to Israel and Hamas that the Council is determined to uphold international law and is serious about the implementation of its own resolutions.

Amnesty International also reiterates its call on the Council to ensure full accountability for war crimes and other violations committed during the conflict including by ensuring that a full and impartial investigation is held into allegations of abuses concerning all parties to the conflict.

Further details about the flow of arms into the conflict area are detailed in the press release enclosed [Gaza conflict: full arms embargo vital as unlawful attacks continue.](#)

Yours sincerely,

Yvonne Terlingen

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