



General Assembly
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Report of the Human Rights Council

H.E. Mr. Morten Wetland
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

President,

We have, in recent years, seen too many instances of lack of effective protection of vulnerable groups in armed conflict. We have seen too many victims, both children, women, innocent bystanders. We have seen parties to armed conflicts acting in ways which we cannot accept and which are unlawful under international humanitarian law.

Norway believes we have a responsibility to act. We can and must restore the role of international humanitarian law and the full respect for fundamental principles which are at the foundation of the UN.

The role of humanitarian agencies and workers are increasingly under threat. There are clear cases where impartial agencies, protected under international humanitarian law, have been denied access to victims in need. It is imperative that international humanitarian law be protected, defended and expanded. All parties to a conflict must respect International Humanitarian and Human Rights Law.

Norway has since the outbreak of the Gaza conflict emphasized that the parties to the conflict bear the primary responsibility to investigate and prosecute possible violations of humanitarian law conducted by forces under their command.

This is necessary in societies based on the rule of law. It is necessary to prevent a culture of impunity. It is also necessary for the long-term prospects of peace and prosperity in the region and for reconciliation between its people.

(Check against delivery)

President,

We welcome the fact that the Goldstone Report is comprehensive, well documented and generally well prepared.

The Fact Finding Mission has interpreted its mandate to include any actions by all parties that might have constituted violations of international human rights law or international humanitarian law.

This is important. Its value extends far beyond the conflict in question as the international community continues to study the limits of permissible action and the extent of proportionality in modern warfare. These are existential questions here at the UN.

The report raises allegations of the most serious nature. It alleges that both Israel and Palestinian groups may have been responsible for grave violations of international human rights and humanitarian law and therefore we are obliged to deal with it in a meaningful and credible manner here in the UN.

The report contains a number of recommendations to the parties. National implementation of these recommendations must comply with relevant international standards. International monitoring of the implementation by the parties is therefore crucial. In this context we believe both the Secretary General and the Human Rights Council have key roles to play.

In the follow-up of the recommendations in the report complex challenges will have to be addressed, among them the fact that the recommendations are directed towards both state and non-state actors.

President,

It is our firm view that the UN General Assembly should send a clear and unambiguous message on the follow-up to the report. In order for this message to be effective, it is important that it enjoys the broadest possible support.

We must secure a coordinated approach by relevant UN organs and avoid competing processes. It is essential to ensure that the decision by the UN General Assembly complements the ongoing process in the Human Rights Council.

We believe the focus of the draft resolution on the obligation of the parties to undertake independent and credible investigations in conformity with international standards is relevant and constructive. In order for this message to come through, we encourage the main sponsors of the draft resolution to take fully into consideration proposals that would allow for a broadest possible support.

Norway is determined to contribute to a meaningful and credible process on the Goldstone-report, both in the General Assembly and in the Human Rights Council. We hope to see the same commitment from all other members.