

Gaza: Canada Should Not Endorse Human Rights Violations

Vote against UN Human Rights Council resolution

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We reject Canada 's endorsement of Israel 's human rights violations, expressed in its vote against the UN Human Rights Council resolution condemning Israel 's military attack on Gaza .

After nearly three weeks, over 900 killings, including massacres at United Nations sites, thousands of wounded, and the "systematic destruction of Palestinian infrastructure", the UN Human Rights Council finally adopted a resolution condemning Israel 's military offensive. The UNHRC - meeting in special session for the first time since the most recent outbreak of violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in November 2008 - said Israel 's operation had "resulted in massive violations of human rights of the Palestinian people". The resolution also called for a fact-finding mission to assess the humanitarian situation in Gaza .

The Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories presented the following recommendations to the UNHRC:

- (1)To request restoring access for Special Rapporteur to the occupied Palestinian territories as an essential feature of UN monitoring role;
- (2)To seek General Assembly initiatives with respect to investigating allegations of war crimes;
- (3)To propose long-term truce based on cessation of rocket launchings from Gaza and unconditional lifting of blockade;
- (4)To request an Advisory Opinion from the International Court of Justice to assess the legal status of Israeli control in Gaza subsequent to Israeli 'disengagement' in 2005.

The Special Rapporteur described the situation as a "humanitarian emergency", directly disputing the claim of Israeli foreign minister Tzipi Livni. The report noted that prior to the attacks, 75% of the population lacked sanitary water and electricity, 45% of children suffered from acute anemia due to malnutrition, 80% of Gaza were under the poverty line, 75% unemployed, and the health system was near collapse due to the blockade. The attacks have made the situation far worse, which is why they have drawn near-universal

condemnation.

Israel claims that the intention of its attacks is to stop the rockets from Gaza , and Canadian officials, including Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Peter Kent, have used the rockets as their reason to endorse Israel 's attack. But the UNHRC resolution called, in addition to an end to Israeli attacks, for an immediate end to the "launching of the crude rockets against Israeli civilians". Despite this, Canada cast the sole vote against the resolution (the resolution passed 33-1, with 13 abstentions), going beyond the abstentions of the European countries, Japan , and South Korea .

With this vote, the Canadian government has further isolated Canada 's position from the rest of the world, discredited its claims to uphold human rights, and displayed a contempt for international law. This vote should be reversed and an apology should be made.

Signed,

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