



To: **Mr. Carl Bildt**
Minister for Foreign Affairs
Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Gustav Adolfs torg 1, 10339 Stockholm, Sweden
Fax: +46 8 723 1176
Email: registrator@foreign.ministry.se; carl.bildt@foreign.ministry.se

12 November 2009

Dear Minister,

Re: EU Position on respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law in the OPT

The undersigned organisations would like to bring to your attention their shared concern regarding the EU's apparent inconsistent position on the protection of human rights, justice and the rule of law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT).

One of the "key objectives" of the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) is to strengthen the protection of human rights, justice and the rule of law in non-European Union (EU) countries, and where they are most at risk.

Under the EIDHR, the EU is providing a considerable amount of financial assistance to Palestinian civil society in support of the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, in keeping with the EU's self defined human rights standards.

During the 12th Special Session of the Human Rights Council, Sweden, on behalf of the EU Group, made the following statement: "*The EU has consistently reminded all parties to the conflict of their obligations under international law. An overarching human rights priority for the EU is to combat impunity*".¹

Nevertheless, the EU has consistently failed to show support for the recommendations contained in the report of the independent international Fact-Finding Mission led by Justice Goldstone, as

¹ Statement delivered by H.E. Ambassador Hans Dahlgren, Permanent Representative of Sweden to the UN in Geneva, on behalf of the EU, at the 12th Special Session of the Human Rights Council on 15 October 2009.
<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/specialsession/12/index.htm>

shown by the votes of EU Member States at the Human Rights Council on 16 October 2009, and at the UN General Assembly on 5 November.

The undersigned organisations, some of them recipients of EU aid under EIDHR, are thereby requesting an explanation of the EU's intended action on the matter of war crimes allegedly committed in the course of the so-called "Operation Cast Lead" in Gaza. As recipients of EU aid, organisations are concerned by donor inaction on accountability, and placed in an untenable position vis-à-vis Palestinian society on whose behalf we receive assistance.

It is our belief that lack of accountability for war crimes and other grave human rights violations compromise the promotion of respect for human rights and the rule of law. Without accountability, there will be no serious prospect for peace in the Middle East. Only through justice will the human rights and security of the Palestinian people be realised.

We look forward to your response and an opportunity to meaningfully engage with you on this issue.

Yours sincerely,

Sahar Francis
General Director
Addameer

Khalil Abu Shammala
General Director
Al Dameer Association for Human Rights

Shawan Jabarin
General Director
Al-Haq

Issam Younis
General Director
Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights

Ingrid Jaradat Gassner
General Director
Badil Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights

Rifat Kassis
General Director
**Defence for Children International
-Palestine Section**

Shawqi Issa
General Director
Ensan Center for Human Rights and Democracy

Issam Arouri
General Director
Jerusalem Legal Aid Center

Ran Yaron
Acting Executive Director
Physicians for Human Rights-Israel

Dr. Ishai Menuchin
Executive Director
Public Committee Against Torture in Israel

Iyad Barghouti
General Director
Ramallah Center for Human Rights Studies

Maha Abu Dayieh
General Director
Women's Center for Legal Aid and Counselling