

OPEN LETTER TO GORDON BROWN ON THE GOLDSTONE REPORT: BRITISH JEWS DO NOT SPEAK WITH ONE VOICE

Dear Prime Minister,

We appreciate your Government's stated intention to build bridges with the Jewish community in the light of responses to the Goldstone report. To achieve this, it is vital for you to recognise that British Jews do not speak with one voice on this matter.

We welcome the Goldstone Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza conflict as a key document in the upholding of international law in situations of violent conflict, and regret your Government's failure to endorse the Report and its recommendations at the United Nations General Assembly.

We condemn the vilification of Richard Goldstone, an internationally acclaimed jurist who has made a substantial contribution worldwide to the development and maintenance of international humanitarian law, and his distinguished co-authors.

We note that the preparation of the Report was severely hampered by the refusal of the Israeli authorities to respond to reasonable enquiries or to facilitate access by the mission to Gaza or the West Bank and that it was only Egypt's assistance which eventually allowed the Mission to gain access to Gaza. We further note that the Report unequivocally condemns not just Israel's devastation of Gaza but also Hamas's indiscriminate rocket attacks against Israeli neighbourhoods and does not in any way deny Israel its right to legitimate self-defence. We fully support its recommendation that both parties conduct full investigations into the allegations of war crimes in the Report.

We believe Israel cannot afford, nor should it wish, to exempt itself from the scrutiny of the international community on these matters. We consider that it is the attempt to do so, rather than the Goldstone Report, that is damaging Israel. We therefore urge you to endorse the Report at the next available opportunity.

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