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Item 4

Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

General Debate

Mr. President,

On 14 November 2012 Israeli forces launched a major military operation on Gaza, code-named "Pillar of Defense".¹ In the following eight days before a ceasefire was reached on 21 November, some 150 Palestinians, including more than 30 children and approximately 70 other civilians, and six Israelis, including four civilians, were killed. In the same period, the military wing of Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups fired over 1,500 indiscriminate rockets and mortar shells into Israel, killing civilians and damaging civilian property.

Amnesty International urges this Council to address the human rights violations, including crimes under international law, committed by both parties during this military escalation of the conflict.

Those violations took place after the failure of both the Israeli government and the Hamas de facto administration to conduct investigations in conformity with international law into war crimes and possible crimes against humanity committed by Israeli forces and Palestinian armed groups during the 2008-2009 armed conflict in Gaza and southern Israel. Lack of accountability for these crimes fuels a cycle of impunity and violations.

¹ This statement is drawn from Amnesty International's written statement "Accountability for alleged war crimes and other serious violations of international humanitarian and human rights law committed during the eight-day conflict in Gaza and southern Israel in November 2012," A/HRC/22/NGO/173 of 27 February 2013.

Neither Israel nor the Hamas de facto administration has initiated investigations that satisfy international standards for investigations into alleged crimes under international law during the November 2012 military conflict.

Justice, truth and reparation are the best guards against impunity and future violations. Amnesty International calls on the Human Rights Council to pursue justice, truth and reparation in relation to crimes committed by parties to the Gaza conflict in November 2012 and in December 2008 - January 2009.

This Council should call on Israel and the Hamas de-facto administration of Gaza to conduct prompt, thorough, independent and impartial investigations into reports of crimes under international law and other violations committed in November 2012. It should also urge the international community to keep all avenues for justice, truth and reparation open at the international level, including through universal jurisdiction and the International Criminal Court, and encourage Palestine to accede to the Rome Statute and other relevant international treaties.

Thank you Mr. President.