

**United Nations Human Rights Council
21st Special Session, 23 July 2014**

**ICJ Oral Statement in the Special Session on the human rights situation in the
Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem**

**ISRAEL: END MILITARY OPERATIONS IN GAZA AND ALLOW UNRESTRICTED
HUMANITARIAN AND MEDICAL ACCESS**

23 July 2014

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Mr President,

The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) calls for an immediate end to Israeli military operations in Gaza. The Human Rights Council must urge both Israel and Palestinian armed groups to desist from any attacks that harm civilians and to cease hostilities immediately with a view to achieving and implementing an immediate and durable cease-fire. The Israeli military must unconditionally withdraw from Gaza.

Over the last two weeks, due to the disproportionate and often indiscriminate attacks by the Israel Defense Forces, more than 600 people have been killed in Gaza. The overwhelming majority of these were civilians, including more than 120 children. Attacks, many of which have been directed against civilian objects, have also resulted in the destruction of basic infrastructure and civil facilities.

Israel must end these attacks immediately and unconditionally. It must open all of Gaza's crossings and allow for unrestricted access of humanitarian and medical assistance and supplies.

Palestinian armed groups have also been responsible for indiscriminate attacks against the Israeli civilian population, in particular by using rockets that cannot be guided to reach military objects.

Such attacks by both parties constitute crimes under international law and their perpetrators must be held criminally accountable.

This Council should prepare the ground for the investigation and possible prosecution of persons responsible for these crimes, including military, political and armed group leaders. As a first step in this direction, the ICJ calls on this Council to establish a commission of inquiry to investigate all breaches of international humanitarian law and gross violations of human rights law committed during the Israeli military operations in Gaza.

This Council must also urge the Security Council to take robust and effective measures to break the cycle of impunity prevalent in this conflict, including by referring the situation in Gaza to the International Criminal Court.

I thank you.

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