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Press release | 10.03.2010

MEP delighted at Goldstone report vote

Press release by SNP MEP Alyn Smith

Alyn Smith MEP has today (Wednesday) hailed a vote in the European Parliament endorsing the findings and recommendations of the Goldstone Report into human rights violations committed by Israeli forces during Israel's attack on the Gaza Strip last year. The Parliament voted to approve the motion and rejected an alternative resolution put forward by the pro Israeli lobby.

The Resolution on the Goldstone Report, which was adopted by the Parliament by 335 votes in favour with 287 against, accepts findings by a UNHCR Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza conflict headed by Richard Goldstone. The final report was released on 15 September 2009 and documents numerous violations of international human rights law during the conflict.

Smith has made two visits to Gaza, and most recently in January this year where he witnessed at first hand the devastating effects of the most recent war.

Speaking after the vote Mr Smith said:

"The Goldstone Report is a meticulous, well-researched, fair and accurate assessment of violations of human rights during the conflict by all parties; and that its judgement that the IDF were largely to blame for the human rights violations is correct. Crucially the Parliament has backed the report as credible and impartial, despite the disgraceful attacks and smears from the Israeli government and their propagandists.

"Israel's attack on Gaza last year was disproportionate, reckless, and more to the point illegal. Thanks to the Goldstone Report, and its positive acknowledgement by the European Parliament, steps can now be made to ensure its recommendations are implemented."

NOTE TO EDITORS

A briefing on the highlights of the Resolution is attached.

The compromise resolution was adopted with 355 in favour, 287 against and 43 abstentions This resolution reiterates the position of parliament regarding following points:

- **strong EU position on the follow-up to the Goldstone report** is requested **by publicly demanding the implementation of its recommendations and accountability for all violations of the international law**

- **all parties have to conduct investigations that meet with international standards within 5 months**
- **an active monitoring of the implementation of the report by the HR/VP and EU MS is requested**
- **the HR/VP must assess the results of the investigations by all parties and report back to Parliament**
- **the responsibility and credibility of the EU and its MS requires full monitoring of the investigations**
- **concern is expressed by parliament about pressure made on NGOs involved in the elaboration of the Goldstone report and in the follow-up investigations, including reference to the restrictive measures towards their activities**
- **parliament welcomes the call by the Council of 8 December 2009 for an immediate sustained and unconditional opening of crossings**

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