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UN body okays Goldstone Gaza report accusing Israel of war crimesBy **Jack Houry** and **Barak Ravid**, Haaretz Correspondents, and Agencies

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South African jurist Richard Goldstone, who headed a UN investigation commission into the conduct of Israel and the Palestinian group Hamas during Israel's offensive in Gaza last winter, criticized on Friday the United Nations Human Rights Council's decision to endorse the report his commission had compiled.

The council on Friday endorsed the report which accused both Israel and the Palestinian militant group Hamas of committing war crimes during their December-January conflict in Gaza.

Goldstone told the Swiss newspaper Le Temps before the vote that the wording of the resolution was unfortunate because it included only censure of Israel. He voiced hope that the Human Rights Council would alter the wording of the draft.

In a special session Friday, 25 of the Human Rights Council's members voted in favor of the resolution that chastised Israel for failing to cooperate with the UN mission led by Goldstone. Another 6 voted against and 11 abstained.

The resolution agreed in Geneva simply calls for the UN General Assembly to consider the Goldstone report and for UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to report back to the Human Rights Council on Israel's adherence to it.

The report calls for the UN Security Council to refer the matter to the International Criminal Court if the Israelis or Palestinians fail to investigate the alleged abuses themselves.

The countries that voted against the report included the U.S., Italy, Holland, Hungary, Slovakia and the Ukraine.

China, Russia, Egypt, India, Jordan, Pakistan, South Africa, Argentina, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Ghana, Indonesia, Djibouti, Liberia, Qatar, Senegal, Brazil,

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Mauritius, Nicaragua and Nigeria voted in favor of the report.

The abstaining countries included: Bosnia, Burkina-Faso, Cameroon, Gabon, Japan, Mexico, Norway, Belgium, South Korea, Slovenia and Uruguay. Madagascar and Kyrgyzstan were not present during the vote.

"This resolution goes far beyond even the initial scope of the Goldstone Report into a discussion of elements that should be resolved in the context of permanent status negotiations between the Palestinians and the Israelis," US envoy to the UN Douglas Griffiths said, when explaining why his country was voting against the document.

The US has said the report was unfair towards Israel, something Goldstone repeatedly denied, noting he investigated all sides of the conflict.

France called on Friday to delay the UN Human Rights Council vote in Geneva regarding the adoption of the Goldstone Gaza Report by half an hour in a last-minute attempt to lobby allies to reject the report's findings.

The French delegates joined Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's recent diplomatic attempts to lobby European counterparts, including Holland, Spain and Denmark, to back Israel's rejection of the report's findings. Officials from Adalah - the Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel - said the French representative in Geneva asked to postpone the vote minutes before the council adjourned for a break.

Days before the vote Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu attempted to lobby diplomatic support to back Israel's objection of the report which accuses Israel of war crimes

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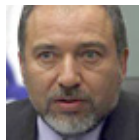
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| 5. Another UN kangaroo court | 14:48 Petra | 16/10/09 |
| 6. goldstone | 16:27 doubter | 16/10/09 |
| 7. A great victory for the victims of war and the rule of law. | 16:31 Johan Odin | 16/10/09 |
| 8. Its a tragedy that the US caved into pressure & opposed it... | 16:31 american observer | 16/10/09 |

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