



Talking Points on:

Israel's **Siege** of the Gaza Strip

- **Israel closed all of Gaza's borders in June 2007, laying siege to nearly 1.5 million civilians.**

Israel's blockade of the Gaza Strip has been devastating to Palestinians who live in the occupied Gaza Strip, almost half of whom are children under 18 years old. Israel has blocked humanitarian aid shipments of food, medical supplies, and school books, as well as fuel supplies to power Gaza's electricity and water treatment plants. This kind of collective punishment is illegal under international law, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention

Israel continues to control all access to the Gaza Strip via the Mediterranean as well as overland via Israel and via Egypt through agreements with the Egyptian government.

- **One year ago, Israel, not Hamas, broke a cease-fire in Gaza and Southern Israel.**

Both Hamas and Israel respected a cease-fire for four months in 2008, until the Israeli military crossed into the Gaza Strip on November 5th, 2008. This raid killed six Palestinian militants, injured four Israeli soldiers, and restarted the cycle of violence that would lead to the December 2008/January 2009 assault on the Gaza dubbed "Operation Cast Lead" by the Israeli military.

- **The United States directly supported Israel's deadly assault on the Gaza Strip**
Israel used weapons paid for and supplied by the United States during "Operation Cast Lead." U.S. F-16s, hellfire missiles, and ammunition used by the Israeli military devastated the Gaza Strip for 22 days. The United States should hold Israel accountable for its malfeasance in the Gaza Strip and immediately cease military aid to Israel.

- **Israel's siege has prevented the reconstruction of Gaza following Israel's assault.**

Israel's siege has prevented the importation of building supplies to Gaza. Israel's "Operation Cast Lead" destroyed over 14,000 buildings in the Gaza Strip, including schools, mosques, hospitals, civil administration buildings, and homes. "Operation Cast Lead" left 71,675 Palestinians in the Gaza Strip homeless, most of whom remain that way today due to lack of construction materials.

- **The Goldstone Report must get a fair hearing in the U.N. and its recommendations should be abided by.**

The Goldstone report is a fair and thoroughly researched account of crimes committed by both Israel and Hamas during "Operation Cast Lead." Both Israel and Hamas need to be held accountable for war crimes, and possible crimes against humanity. If Israel refuses to hold war criminals responsible then the International Criminal Court should be invoked to do so.