



HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTE OF SOUTH AFRICA

1st FLOOR, LUNGA HOUSE, 124 MARSHALL STREET, JOHANNESBURG CBD, SOUTH AFRICA.

✉ PO.BOX 31267, BRAAMFONTEIN, 2017, SOUTH AFRICA.

TEL +27 (0)11 4920568

FAX +27 (0)11 492 0569

EMAIL info@hurisa.org.za

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Statement re Richard Goldstone

We, the undersigned, are South Africans who have worked and continue to work for the transformation of our country from an apartheid state into an open and democratic society based on human dignity, equality and freedom in which government is based on the will of the people and every citizen is equally protected by law.

We are abhorred at the recent Israeli attempt to rewrite South African history through scurrilous accusations against Judge Richard Goldstone relating to his service on the bench (1980-1994) prior to his appointment to the Constitutional Court of South Africa by President Nelson Mandela.

Such attacks on Judge Goldstone are attacks against all South Africans who cherish equality, human rights and the rule of law and we condemn them in the strongest of terms.

During his service as a judge on what was then the Transvaal Supreme Court, Judge Goldstone earned a reputation as one of the few judges who was prepared to apply the law fairly to all South Africans, irrespective of race. In cases, like *S. v. Govender* (1982),

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'16 years in promoting Human Rights, Peace and Democracy in South Africa and beyond'

Judge Goldstone undermined the pernicious *Group Areas Act*, one of the legal cornerstones of apartheid.

Judge Goldstone used his position as a judge to visit thousands of people who were imprisoned by the apartheid state without trial. His actions let those persons and the apartheid state know that the detained had not been forgotten.

Judge Goldstone and several of his colleagues kept alive the flame of hope in the Rule of Law and in equal justice under law during the very dark days of apartheid. Those sparks allowed South Africans to keep faith in the law and an independent judiciary as the foundation for a new democratic South Africa and helped pave the way to the enactment of the first democratic Constitution for South Africa in 1993.

It was because of Judge Goldstone's reputation for integrity and even-handedness that he was appointed to head the Commission of Inquiry Regarding the Prevention of Public Violence and Intimidation (Goldstone Commission) from 1991-1993. The wide-ranging work of the Goldstone Commission produced 47 reports to the State President and became well-known in South Africa and abroad for its independence and its zealousness for justice. The Goldstone Commission played a critical role in the democratic transition of South Africa and the prevention of violence. The Human Rights Institute of South Africa is just one of its concrete legacies.

The efforts of Judge Richard Goldstone helped pave the way for a democratic, non-racial South Africa in which respect for human dignity lies at its core. We are proud to champion him as a great jurist and a great South African.

Endorsement to Judge Richard Goldstone's statement

Organisation	Name and Surname	Telephone	Email
Inkwazi Consulting	Dr. Johan Olivier	012 315 5708	fish eagle@imagnet.co.za
Foundation for Human Rights	Ms Yasmin Sooka	011 339 1234	jsteffers@fhr.org.za
SACC	Mr. Eddie Makue	011 241 7817/082 853 8781	tmm@sacc.org.za
Ceasefire Campaign	Ms. Laura Pollecut	011 339 1363	pollecut@mweb.co.za
CRL Commission	Adv.Sipho Mantula	011 537 7600	sipho@crlcommission.org.za
Economists Allied for Arms Reduction-South Africa	Mr. Terry Crawford Brown	021 555 4059	ecaar@icon.co.za
University of Cape Town	Dr. Lilian Chenwi	021 959 3704/2950	lchenwi@uwc.ac.za
Zimbabwe Exile Forum	Adv. Gabriel Shumba	012 322 6969	gabmrech@yahoo.com
University of Cape Town	Professor Kader Asmal	021959 3193	kasmal@uwc.ac.za
IFAISA	Adv. Paul Hoffman	021 789 2126	phoffman@ifaisa.org
Centre For Constitutional Rights/FW De Klerk Foundation	Adv.Nicola De Havilland	021 9303622	ndehavilland@cfc.org.za
Island Group of Advocates	Adv. Salim Ebrahim	011 291 8600	salimebrahim@mweb.co.za
Vice Chancellor (University of Cape Town)	Dr Max Price	021 650 2105	vc@uct.ac.za