

## UN chief voices concern over war crimes investigations



UN chief Ban Ki-moon has expressed concerns over the credibility and independence of Israeli and Palestinian probes into alleged war crimes during Israel's 22-day offensive in Gaza in December 2008.

By [News Wires](#) (text)

**AFP** - UN chief Ban Ki-moon said Thursday he could not determine whether Israel and the Palestinians have met UN demands to carry out credible, independent probes of alleged war crimes in the Gaza Strip.

He made the assessment in a report to the General Assembly which had given both sides until Friday to conduct independent probes after a UN inquiry panel accused both Israel and Palestinian militants of war crimes during the 22-day conflict in Gaza more than a year ago.

"No determination can be made on the implementation of the (UN) resolution by the parties concerned," Ban said in his report to the 192-member assembly that contains responses provided by Israel and the Palestinians.

Last Friday, the UN chief received a 46-page report from Israel in which the Jewish state denied violating international law, but admitted "tragic results" due to the "complexity and scale" of conducting a military operation in a heavily populated area.

In his report, Ban highlighted Israel's assertion that two of its senior officers -- a brigadier general and a colonel -- were disciplined for the

firing of white phosphorous shells toward a UN compound during the Gaza war.

Also last Friday, the UN secretary general was handed a preliminary report from the Palestinian side in which it said a commission of five well-known judges and legal experts had been set up to look into allegations that Palestinian militants committed war crimes during the conflict.

Ban on Thursday recalled that he had on several occasions urged all the parties "to carry out credible domestic investigations into the conduct of the Gaza conflict."

"I hope that such steps will be taken wherever there are credible allegations of human rights abuses," he added.

A UN spokesman said the General Assembly would meet in the near future to weigh Ban's Gaza report.

A UN study authored by South African judge and former international war crimes prosecutor Richard Goldstone last September accused both Israel and Palestinian militants of war crimes in the Gaza war.

It recommended that its findings be passed to the prosecutor at the International Criminal Court at The Hague if Israel and Gaza's Hamas rulers fail to carry out credible independent investigations of the claims.

Israel launched its 22-day onslaught on the Gaza Strip on December 27, 2008 with the stated goal of halting rocket firings from the Islamist-run territory into southern Israel.

The war killed 1,400 Palestinians and 13 Israelis, and it sparked widespread international criticism of Israel for using disproportionate force.

<http://www.france24.com/en/20100205-gaza-assault-un-investigations-israel-war-crimes-ban-ki-moon-credibility>

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