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Human rights scholar to speak about controversial Gaza report Feb. 17

WATERLOO – A report alleging war crimes by both Palestinian militants and Israeli Defence Forces during the 2008-2009 Gaza war is the focus of a lecture by prominent legal scholar William Schabas. It will be held Feb. 17 at 4 p.m. in the Paul Martin Centre.

The Goldstone Report created a tempest when it was released in September 2009. Drafted in the wake of a United Nations fact-finding mission led by Justice Richard Goldstone, it alleged both sides had committed war crimes and crimes against humanity during the three-week Gaza conflict. It also urged the Human Rights Council and the international community to end impunity for violations of international law and bring those responsible to court.

Schabas will analyze the findings of the Goldstone Report, the controversy that followed its release and the proposal that allegations be taken to court in his lecture: "Gaza, the Goldstone Report, and the International Criminal Court."

The lecture is part of the Canada Research Chair Series. It is being co-sponsored by the Department of Global Studies.

"This is not going to be a partisan talk. This is going to be a talk by an international lawyer about the Goldstone Report and what it said," said Rhoda Howard-Hassmann, the Canada Research Chair in International Human Rights and a professor in the Department of Global Studies and the Balsillie School of International Affairs. "It's an extremely controversial report, and Mr. Goldstone is extremely controversial for having written it."

Schabas is director of the Irish Centre for Human Rights at the National University of Ireland, Galway, where he also holds the chair in human rights law. He is also a *professeur associé* at the Université du Québec à Montréal and a visiting fellow at Kellogg College of the University of Oxford. He has BA and MA degrees in history from the University of Toronto and LLB, LLM and LLD degrees from the University of Montreal.

Author of more than 20 books and 275 journal articles, Schabas has written extensively on international human rights law and international criminal law. From 2002 to 2004 he served as one of three international members of the Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission. He is chairman of the Board of Trustees of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Technical Assistance in the Field of Human Rights, president of the International Association of Genocide Scholars, president of the Irish Branch of the International Law Association and chair of the International Institute for Criminal Investigation.

Schabas is an Officer of the Order of Canada and a member of the Royal Irish Academy.