## **Between Goldstone and Gaza, what’s one more zero?**

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Sandbox

http://martinkramer.org/sandbox/2009/12/between-goldstone-and-gaza-whats-one-more-zero/

I’ve been reading through the part of the [Goldstone Report](http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/specialsession/9/docs/UNFFMGC_Report.pdf) treating the economic impact of Operation Cast Lead—a part that hasn’t gotten much attention. It’s largely a crib of a March 2009 [report](http://web.archive.org/web/20160405210801/http%3A/www.lacs.ps/documentsShow.aspx?ATT_ID=2080) compiled by the Palestinian Federation of Industries, whose deputy general-secretary, Amr Hamad, was interviewed three separate times by the mission. The mission deemed both the report and Hamad’s testimony to be “reliable and credible.”

The most important sentence in this section of the Goldstone Report is this one: “Mr. Amr Hamad indicated that 324 factories had been destroyed during the Israeli military operations at a cost of 40,000 jobs” (paragraph 1005). I did a double-take when I read that: 40,000 would be astonishing in an economy like Gaza’s. This is what Hamad said in his [testimony](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/SpecialSession/Session9/Transcript28062009AM.doc) (June 28, Goldstone in the chair):

The industrial sector that was destroyed, for example, the 324 factories that were destroyed, that we[re] destroyed used to employ four-hundred thous-, uh, 40,000 workers. And these have lost their uh, jobs, uh, forever.

So that’s the source of the number. But if you return to the [report](http://web.archive.org/web/20160405210801/http%3A/www.lacs.ps/documentsShow.aspx?ATT_ID=2080) of the Palestinian Federation of Industries, it puts the job losses at these 324 factories not at 40,000, but at 4,000. That’s an order-of-magnitude misrepresentation by Hamad of his own organization’s findings. The Goldstone Mission should have wondered at the figure, checked Hamad’s testimony against the Palestinian Federation of Industries report, detected the discrepancy, and gotten it right. But it didn’t. Perhaps the mission members, hearing the word “factories,” thought that 40,000 jobs sounded credible. In fact, more than a quarter (88) of these 324 “factories” employed five people or less, and over half (189) employed from five to twenty people (Federation report, p. 12). The vast majority of these “factories” should really be described as “workshops.” Only three employed a hundred or more people.

Of course, that 40,000-lost-jobs figure has made its way to numerous websites, and might eventually surface in an op-ed in a major newspaper. (That sort of thing has [happened](http://www.martinkramer.org/sandbox/2008/01/gaza-buried-in-flour/) before.) So it would behoove the mission to issue a correction, and post a corrected version of its report. After all, this isn’t a matter of interpretation.

And as you ponder all those figures in the Goldstone Report, just keep in mind that it contains at least one order-of-magnitude error regarding a very basic statistic. The report isn’t just biased. It’s shoddy.