



EURO-MEDITERRANEAN HUMAN RIGHTS NETWORK
RÉSEAU EURO-MÉDITERRANÉEN DES DROITS DE L'HOMME
الشبكة الأوروبية - المتوسطية لحقوق الإنسان

PRESS RELEASE
31 May 2010

**The Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network condemns
the Israeli naval attack against "Gaza Freedom Flotilla"**

The Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN) strongly condemns the Israeli military attack on the flotilla of ships that was carrying humanitarian aid and supplies to Gaza and resulted in the killings of at least fifteen civilians and the injury of dozens of others.

The flotilla was met with unprecedented violence. This international aid convoy included MPs from Israel and Germany, human rights activists, writers, scientists, and journalists from Norway, Sweden, Bulgaria and France. The Israeli military intercepted it in international waters; it acted illegally by violently and unjustifiably targeting civilians.

Israel strictly controls the entry of humanitarian aid to Gaza as part of its policy of isolation. It is especially evident that the blockade of the Gaza Strip, in place since 2007, constitutes the collective punishment of 1.5 million Palestinians, in violation of Article 33 of the Fourth Geneva Convention and therefore must be lifted immediately.

The EMHRN firmly condemns the attack on the ships which resulted in death and injury of the civilian activists, and calls for an immediate, independent and impartial investigation, which should be monitored by the international community. The EMHRN also expresses its concern for all the civilians who have been arrested following the attack on the flotilla, and urges the European Union (EU) to closely follow their situation to ensure that all of their rights under international and domestic law are scrupulously respected.

Finally, the EMHRN calls on the EU High Representative, Baroness Catherine Ashton, and the EU institutions to immediately take all measures at their disposal to halt the intolerable human rights violations committed by Israel in and around the Gaza strip, to ensure accountability for the victims of violations of international law, and to urge Israel to immediately lift the blockade.

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The **EMHRN** (Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network) gathers more than 80 human rights organizations, institutions and individuals based in 30 countries around the Mediterranean. It works to promote and protect human rights within the framework of the Barcelona Process and the co-operation between the European Union and the Arab world.