

3 June 2010

**DEADLY ATTACK ON THE FREEDOM FLOTILLA.
ONCE AGAIN INTERNATIONAL LAW HAS BEEN VIOLATED**

We, concerned academics from 3 European countries, express our dismay and disgust at Israel's commando assault in the Mediterranean. Firing live ammunition at activists on the boats en route to Gaza, constitutes an act of piracy in international waters. Israeli allegations notwithstanding, the boats, whose contents had been verified by the Turkish authorities before departure, were not carrying weapons; they were transporting humanitarian aid, including medicine, medical supplies, and construction materials which are being denied to the Gaza population by the Israeli blockade of Gaza .

Many people have been killed and wounded in the assault – as we write there is no way of knowing the accurate figures. A news blackout has been imposed on the Israeli and international press. It is impossible to obtain access to the survivors of the assault. As was the case during the operation Cast Lead, Israel fears the media and has sidelined journalists. This deadly aggression, aimed at hundreds of non-violent activists who came from around the world to condemn and defeat the three-year-old blockade of Gaza, makes even more apparent the Israeli leadership's total disdain for the rules of international law.

We write as organisations representing academics in our countries opposed to Israel's violations of both international law and human rights. The latest massacre by the Israeli armed forces only underlines the need for academics of conscience everywhere to show solidarity with their besieged colleagues in the Occupied Palestinian Territories by boycotting Israeli academic institutions - whose complicity with occupation, settlement, and siege has been well documented. This is part of the world-wide policy of Boycott-Divestment-Sanctions called for by Palestinian civil society.

The international community must now recognise that its consistent acquiescence in, if not open or implicit support for, Israeli policy, without consideration for the rules of law is a key factor in producing this ongoing tragedy.

The undersigned demand an independent international investigation of the events that took place on May 31st. We call on the European Union, our governments and international agencies to

- recall their ambassadors from Israel as an indication of the gravity of Israel's outrageous act;

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- impose sanctions against Israel;
 - immediately suspend the EU-Israel cooperative agreements
- and to continue these pressures for as long as Israel continues to violate international law, specifically by its continued occupation and illegal settlement building programme, and by transforming the Gaza Strip into an open-air prison through a blockade that places its population in grave danger

Professor Jonathan Rosenhead

on behalf of

Association des Universitaires pour le Respect du Droit International en Palestine

British Committee for the Universities of Palestine

Comissió Universitària Catalana per Palestina