



5th June 2010

People's Health Movement statement on Israel's attack on the civilian ships carrying humanitarian aid to Gaza

The [People's Health Movement](#) (PHM)¹, strongly condemns the Israeli government's violent and premeditated attack on the civilian flotilla's carrying peaceful activists and humanitarian aid to Gaza on 31st May 2010.

The Israeli army's attack using live ammunition, which resulted in death of civilians and took place in international waters, was a direct violation of international maritime law. The activists were protesting the Israeli blockade on Gaza. It appears that at least 9 civilians were killed (according to the Israeli sources), with dozens of others injured.

We note that the flotilla, among other forms of humanitarian aid, was carrying vital supplies required to address the rapidly deteriorating situation in Gaza as regards health and health care. It included essential medicines, wheelchairs and building materials – vital supplies needed to rebuild health facilities, address the acute shortage of medicines and help in the rehabilitation of people maimed as a result of military action by Israel.

The United States backed Israeli government has for many years violated the human rights of Palestinian people, through the occupation of Palestinian territories; the economic blockade against Gaza; and ongoing military action against civilian population under occupation. The impact on the physical and mental wellbeing of people, especially women and children is severe (please see [People's Charter for Health](#)).

Many eyewitness reports and independent studies have documented the health effects of the brutal Israeli blockade of Gaza. Construction supplies desperately needed to repair or rebuild water or sewage treatment facilities, health clinics, and schools have led to crises of public health in Gaza. The interruption of pharmaceutical provision has harmed people with chronic health issues (such as diabetes and hypertension) as well as those requiring acute care. The refusal to allow more than a minimal amount of food into Gaza has led to unconscionable rates of malnutrition, especially among children (45% of children under 5 are underweight, 63% are anemic). [data from April 09 report of

¹ PHM is a global network bringing together grassroots activists, civil society organizations and academics from around the world, particularly from low income countries. PHM works towards the revitalisation of primary health care and works to address the social determinants of health, including in particular, the growing inequity within and between nations, mostly due to unfair economic structures which lock so many people into poverty and poor health. We have a presence in more than 70 countries around the globe.

People's Health Movement

Global Secretariat

Health for ALL NOW!!



Physicians for Human Rights-Israel and Palestinian Medical Relief Society] These are the conditions that the Gaza flotilla was attempting to redress because our governments refuse to.

In their recent Human Rights Report, Amnesty International highlights the impact of the collective punishment of people living in Gaza as having “deepened the ongoing humanitarian crisis. Mass unemployment, extreme poverty, food insecurity and food price rises caused by shortages”. Clearly, the people in Gaza face a health emergency, contributed to by the decimation of health care facilities, as well as by the impact of the blockade and military actions on social determinants of health.

The People's Health Movement demands:

- A credible and independent investigation into this barbaric attack on peaceful civilians and aid volunteers;
- Israel to allow for the free flow of humanitarian aid to Gaza. According to the UN, only a fraction of aid required is entering Gaza.
- That Israel immediately suspends the economic blockade on Gaza and ends the occupation of Palestinian territories;
- That governments around the world sever diplomatic, trade and military ties with Israel and support the international campaign of Boycotts, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) against the Apartheid Israeli state.

We call on civil organizations and citizens around the world to pressurize their governments to take action against Israel, to put pressure on Israel to allow humanitarian aid and food into Gaza; to end the occupation of Palestinian territories; and to end the blockade on Gaza which is negatively impacting on large numbers of women and children, elderly and the sick. We recognize and appreciate the growth of social forces within Israel who are actively opposing the continued siege of Gaza, and we call upon the Israeli government to end the increasing harassment and repression inflicted upon them.

Bridget Lloyd (Global Co-ordinator on behalf of the secretariat)

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On behalf of the People's Health Movement