

International Catalan Institute for Peace

Communiqué of the International Catalan Institute for Peace concerning the attack by Israel on ships bringing humanitarian aid to Gaza.

The news of an unspecified number of victims as a result of the Israeli army's attack on ships and people bringing humanitarian aid in international waters (including food and medicine) to Gaza has profoundly shocked millions of people all over the world. As well as our condolences and solidarity with the victims, the ICIP wishes to state that:

1. It condemns the Israeli action, which is unjustified, disproportionate and against international law on various grounds, as it was an attack on unarmed civilians in international waters.
2. An event like this should never have taken place: the unarmed activists, parliamentarians and ships were only carrying out a non-violent civil action, aimed at attracting attention to the blockade of Gaza. The response to an action of this type can never be to board the ship by means of the use of physical violence. The State of Israel could, if it thought it was necessary, have used many methods to prevent the arrival of this ship in Gaza, but an attack with firearms is neither valid nor acceptable.
3. These events must be analysed and responsibilities sought from a radical and pedagogical perspective. Radical, going to the roots: this phase of the conflict originates in the illegal occupation of Gaza and the only solution is therefore to end the occupation. Pedagogical, because it is necessary to avoid the already widespread perception that the international community has a double standard depending on who violates its rules, thereby sometimes facilitating impunity. This entails demanding and imposing the sanctions established and codified for actions like this one, including the use of the EU conditionality clause stipulated in the partnership agreement.
4. It is necessary to work towards new peaceful solutions, based on dialogue and with the participation of all those involved, in order to resolve the conflict.

Finally, we once again insist, now that the Parliament of Catalonia is hosting an international meeting to enshrine the human right to peace, that research for peace is an urgent need, in general and in the Middle East in particular, and to achieve it, it is necessary to prevent a worsening of the situation, impunity and despondency. Peace is possible, but it requires commitment and a fight against silence.

Barcelona, 31 May 2010