



The international aid agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia.

MEDIA RELEASE

01 June 2010

Aid Flotilla Attacks Show Gaza Blockade Must be Lifted

Act for Peace is calling for a full investigation and a decisive response from the United Nations Security Council after Israel's disproportionate attack on a flotilla of humanitarian aid bound for Gaza, killing at least nine peace activists and injuring dozens more.

Mr Alistair Gee Executive Director of Act for Peace said, "We condemn the actions leading to the deaths and injuries of the peace activists and the assault on their human rights."

"The attack in international waters on the humanitarian convoy constitutes a breach of *International Law* and *Law of the Sea*. This peaceful, symbolic mission was carrying food and medicines for the Gazan population, 80% of which is totally reliant on humanitarian assistance due to the illegal enforcement of the Israeli blockade."

"The Australian government must denounce the United States (US) and European Union (EU)-supported blockade of Gaza and take up the issue with their US and EU counterparts. As a policy designed to restrict Hamas' capacity to function after its election win three years ago, it has utterly failed and caused a humanitarian crisis in which Palestinian civilians bear the brunt," Mr Gee said.

"Act for Peace is calling for the formation of an independent international investigation into this most disturbing incident, which highlights the pertinent need for a comprehensive change in policy toward Gaza," said Mr Gee.

The 3 year blockade of Gaza has left 70% of Gazans living on less than \$1 a day with many urgent humanitarian items either delayed or banned altogether.

May 29 – June 4 marks *The World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel*. In the wake of the tragic events of May 31, Act for Peace is calling on the Australian Government, Non-Government Organisations, churches, schools and individuals to take a stand in their own communities.

Rev. Olave Fyske Tevit, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches said, "This year again we need even more than before to point to how settlements and occupation are real obstacles to a just peace. All parties must stop violence and find the way forward."

Pointing to the very strong message of the [Kairos document](#), written by Christians in the Middle East and supported by Act for Peace, Rev. Tevit reiterated its call to churches and Christians throughout the world to respond to the conflict.

-Ends-

Media Enquiries: Edwyn Shiell 0458 303 515

About Act for Peace: Act for Peace is the international aid agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia. We empower war-torn communities to protect refugees, reduce poverty, prevent conflicts and manage disasters. Our project partners are currently assisting over one million people in the world's worst conflict areas, including Sudan, Somalia, Zimbabwe, the Middle East, Burma and Sri Lanka.

www.actforpeace.org.au