

May 31, 2010

Prime Minister Stephen Harper

Office of the Prime Minister  
80 Wellington Street  
Ottawa ON K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister Harper,

I am writing to you on behalf of the 54,000 members of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers. You will be aware that the Israeli navy, in an act of piracy in international waters, has hijacked the international flotilla of ships which was attempting to deliver essential humanitarian aid to Gaza. The aid includes construction materials which would enable the people of Gaza to rebuild the homes destroyed by Israel in Operation Cast Lead in 2009.

There are nearly 700 people on board the boats, all of whom are civilians from around the world, including Members of Parliament from a number of nations, eminent writers and a Nobel Peace Prize winner. They have undertaken this mission out of concern for the people of Gaza, who are now entering their fourth year under siege, without access to basic necessities. They pose no threat to Israel, and are completely unarmed.

Despite this, the Israeli navy has attacked the flotilla outside of international waters this morning resulting in fatalities estimated by the Israeli military itself as 10 and by news sources at possibly in excess of 20 with another large number injured. Israeli news sources say that hospitals around Ashdod have been told to prepare for many injured people arriving.

I urge you to act swiftly to condemn this attack on the peace flotilla, which was breaking no international laws, and, that you demand to know the fate of those on board the vessels and to ensure that Israel releases the vessels immediately to allow this vital aid to reach its destination. Since Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is in Canada and has profusely praised you for maintaining strong relations with Israel, the Canadian Union of Postal Workers believes that you have an obligation to condemn this brutal attack.

Israel's occupation of Gaza is illegal under international law, and it has been accused in a UN report of committing war crimes in Gaza.

Your obligation must be towards a group of citizens peacefully attempting to deliver humanitarian aid, than to a country which repeatedly violates international treaties. CUPW calls on you to end the government's silence over Israel's aggressive actions

against the flotilla, and intervene now to demand its safe passage to Gaza.

CUPW is calling on you to condemn this wanton act of piracy against the peaceful flotilla taking aid to the people of Gaza. Finally, CUPW is calling upon you to take every step possible to bring about an end to the inhuman treatment of the people of Gaza by acting to end the siege and blockade that is taking place against them by the Israeli Government.

Yours sincerely

Denis Lemelin  
National President  
Canadian Union of Postal Workers

Cc: National Executive Board  
Regional Executive Cttee  
Israeli Embassy to Canada

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