

14th session
United Nations Human Rights Council
Statement on behalf of
International Islamic Federation of Student Organizations.
By
Altaf Hussain Wani.

This organisation shares the deep regret at the loss of life and injuries resulting from the use of force during the Israeli military operation in international waters against the convoy sailing to Gaza; as expressed in the recent security council resolution.

We would also like to extend our condolences to the families of those civilians who were killed yesterday, and extend our sympathy to all involved.

At this time it is believed that around 600 people are being held at the Israeli port of Ashdod and we request that the government of Israel lifts the information blackout and allows access for international NGOs to these prisoners. To further the trauma inflicted on these civilians by keeping them under arrest is unacceptable. It must be ensured that the injured are being treated appropriately.

The limited information available at this time indicates that armed Israeli commandoes boarded the lead ship of the flotilla and at between ten and twenty people were killed. The force was neither proportional nor warranted and represents a grave violation of international law by the Government of Israel. The doctrine of self-defence does not in any way justify the extreme violence that was used and is illegal under international maritime law.

The actions of the government of Israel were to treat a humanitarian convoy as legitimate military targets and this policy has played out with a large loss of life. This state of mind has been displayed by the government of Israel time and again, particularly with the incursions into Gaza in December 2008 that resulted in the deaths of over one thousand civilians.

The blockade that has been in place since 2007 allows only one quarter of the aid into Gaza that the United Nations has deemed necessary. This flotilla aimed to bring some of that necessary aid into Gaza and relieve the suffering of the civilians therein. The ongoing blockade is collective punishment of an entire civilian population, a measure which is explicitly prohibited under international law. This results in the violation of the human rights of the entire population of Gaza.