Oficial statement

THE FREEDOM FLOTILLA II WILL SAIL TO GAZA DURING THE LAST TWO WEEKS OF MAY 2011

The city of Madrid (Spain) hosted on 4th, 5th and 6th February 2011 the meeting of delegates from different organizations that comprise the International Coalition of the Freedom Flotilla II. The meeting, organized by the host delegation Rumbo a Gaza, was attended by delegates from Algeria, Canada, Scotland, Spain, France, Greece, Holland, Ireland, Italy, Jordan, Kuwait, Malaysia, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and Turkey. Also, in the course of the meeting, updates were received about the work of organizations in Germany, Australia, Belgium and Denmark.

The organizations gathered in Madrid reiterated our strongest condemnation and rejection of systematic aggression that the State of Israel has inflicted on the Palestinian people for over 60 years and its continued violations of international law. We also denounce the passivity, if not outright complicity of our governments to actions that constitute a crime against humanity.

The Gaza Strip has become a symbol of the systematic and planned aggression against the entire Palestinian people. For almost five years, over a million and half people have been subjected to a criminal and illegal blockade, a medieval siege in which the State of Israel has become the master of life and death for Gazans. This collective punishment combined with devastating military attacks launched by Israel's army on the defenseless population of the Gaza Strip: 500 killed in Operation Summer Rains 2006, more than 1,400 killed in Operation Cast Lead December 2008 and January 2009, more than 80 killed in 2010 during various other assaults.

Gaza is a territory intentionally reduced to misery. 80% of its inhabitants depend on humanitarian aid for food, 70% of households live on less than one euro per day for each of its members, over 40% of the population is unemployed. The State of Israel has kidnapped people physically as well as kidnapping their rights, their dreams and hopes as they have been doing for more than 60 years.

Because of the silence and inaction of our governments to these crimes against humanity, the international civil society campaign has grown since 2008 when the siege was broken for the first time by two small boats and last year the first Freedom Flotilla was launched. A well known fact, the Israeli army attacked this Flotilla in international waters, in what constituted a flagrant violation of international shipping laws, murdering nine activists, injuring 50 others, kidnapping everyone on board, and hijacking the boats.

More determined than ever to break and end the blockade, the Coalition announced today that during the second half of May 2011 Freedom Flotilla II will sail. To this end there will be at least twice as many boats carrying many more volunteers and more aid. The expedition will sail in order to force Israel to respect international law and to mobilize civil societies' support and solidarity with the Palestinian population of Gaza as well as bring attention to the wider issue of the

host of human rights abuses carried out by the Israeli state against the entire population of Palestine.

We are closely following the big change that is being brought in Tunisia, Egypt and the wider Arab world by the emergence of civil societies' demand for true democracy, social justice, freedom and respect of human rights. The long Palestinian struggle against occupation and violence deserves the support of the international community. Freedom Flotilla II integrate its action into that large movement focusing on breaking and ending the siege in Gaza. Palestinian people and historically, Mediterranean Sea people, have the same rights on their territory, territorial waters and air space. Therefore our expedition, Freedom Flotilla II, has become more important and necessary than ever.

We will sail to Gaza until Palestine is free!

International Coalition of the Freedom Flotilla II
Madrid, 7th February 2011