



FOUNDERS:

Betty Williams, Ireland - 1976
Máiread Maguire, Ireland - 1976
Rigoberta Menchú Tum, Guatemala - 1992
Prof. Jody Williams, USA - 1997
Dr. Shirin Ebadi, Iran - 2003
Prof. Wangari Maathai, Kenya - 2004

united for peace with justice and equality

June 10, 2011

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon
United Nations
New York, NY 10017 USA

RE: Inspection and sealing of Freedom Flotilla II cargo

Dear Mr. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon,

We are writing to urge you to use your good offices in support of the humanitarian needs of the people of Gaza.

In our view, you can support the people of Gaza with two key actions. First, by appointing a representative to inspect and seal the cargo of the boats of the Freedom Flotilla II—thus assuring the Israeli government that the boats are carrying humanitarian supplies such as toys, medical supplies, cement and educational materials. Equally important, we strongly urge you to use your authority to call on all governments to support the safe passage of the Freedom Flotilla II. We are disappointed to learn of your recent efforts to persuade member governments from stopping the delivery of humanitarian aid to Gaza on the Freedom Flotilla II. We urge you to reconsider and instead encourage member states to lend support and ask Israel not to use force against legitimate humanitarian initiatives undertaken by civil society to help ease the suffering of the people of Gaza who are facing a humanitarian crisis of devastating scale.

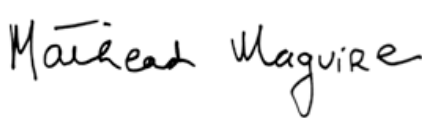
The Freedom Flotilla II, organized by 14 national groups and international coalitions and carrying approximately 1500 ‘freedom riders,’ is set to sail to Gaza this month. Sailing in the spirit of promoting human rights, prosperity, and social responsibility, the aim of the Flotilla is to alleviate the humanitarian crisis faced by the citizens of Gaza.

The blockade in Gaza is clearly having a harmful impact on the people of Gaza, and indeed UNDP and other agencies report high levels of malnutrition and other disturbing health problems. According to a report by the World Food Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organization, the level of “abject poverty” among the Palestinians of Gaza has tripled since the imposition of the blockade, with 61 % of households not having enough food. The blockade has crippled the Gaza economy and destroyed Palestinians’ livelihoods and homes.

We believe our requests to you are in keeping with UN Security Council Resolution 1860 of January 2009 as well as the 2010 UN Human Rights Council fact-finding mission on the attack on Freedom Flotilla I, which are calling for a lift of the blockade to allow humanitarian assistance. We urge you to do all you can to support this nonviolent international humanitarian effort, to provide UN representatives to inspect and seal the cargo, and to appeal to all governments to allow safe passage of the Freedom Flotilla II.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. We look forward to your positive response.

Sincerely,



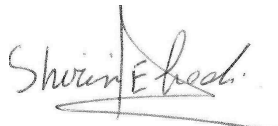
Mairead Corrigan Maguire



Rigoberta Menchu Tum



Jody Williams



Shirin Ebadi