Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
Ligue Internationale de Femmes pour la Paix et la Liberté
Liga Internacional de Mujeres por la Paz y la Libertad
Consultative Status with UN ECOSOC, UNCTAD and UNESCO; Special Consultative Relations with FAO, ILO, and UNICEF.

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International Secretariat:
1, rue de Varembé, C.P.28,
1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland
Tel: (+41 22) 919-7080,
Fax: (+41 22) 919-7081
Email: inforequest@wilpf.ch

United Nations Office:
777 UN Plaza,
New York, NY 10017, USA
Tel: (+1 212) 682-1265,
Fax: (+1 212) 286-8211,
Email: wilpfun@igc.org

www.wilpf.ch
www.ReachingCriticalWill.org
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Statement by WILPF
On the assault by the Israeli military on the Free Gaza Flotilla

The unprovoked attack on the flotilla taking aid to Gaza is a seminal moment in the history of the United Nations. A failure by member States to respond using all appropriate mechanism to address violations of international law by Israel will bring the organization into disrepute and cause greater instability and insecurity in an already insecure region.

Many States and the High Commissioner for human rights have already called for an investigation. The Women's international League for Peace and Freedom endorses that call, but would go further. An Human Rights Council mandated enquiry under the leadership of Richard Goldstone lead to a strong and accurate report. Instead of implementing its recommendations certain States chose to vilify its authors and detract from its findings. There has been no accountability resulting. This must not be repeated. The system cannot again be seen to fail. WILPF believes that a broader investigation is needed which incorporates, not just the killings on the 31st May but looks at a system wide failure in the mechanism for protection.

Israeli forces have prevented humanitarian aid from entering Gaza before. The first ship organized by Free Gaza set sail in December 2008. It was rammed at sea by the Israeli navy, crippling the vessel and threatening lives. The Israeli forces were trained how to stop the flotilla. Israel's foreign minister Avignor Liberman publicly stated;
"We really have all determination and political will to prevent this provocation against us….. we're ready at any cost… to prevent this provocation".
A special detention centre had been set up in Ashdod, south of Tel Aviv where the flotilla passengers were going to be detained.

With this in the public domain, WILPF would ask what did the friends of Israel advise? Did they assert the absolute necessity of compliance with international humanitarian law and human rights? Or did they promise to veto any subsequent Resolution condemning the action and, for example, referring to the ICC?

What of the States who arm and provide weapons systems for Israel? Some of which may well have been used in the crimes committed on the flotilla against people of various nationalities. WILPF will argue that States are and have been on notice since Goldstone reported, that it is reasonably foreseeable that Israel will use these weapons in violation of international humanitarian and human rights law. The complicity of States selling arms to Israel must also come under scrutiny. Due diligence is required of the selling States and they must also be held to account. WILPF calls on the members of the Human Rights Council, to ensure that this is done. Any resolution emanating from that body should reflect this. States must re examine their polices in light of the Israeli conduct.

A WILPF section member from Israel stated: her truth must be that of the international community. We must stand ashamed at what has happened and we must hold Israel to account.