

ENGLISH only

Statement by Egypt
Israeli 31 May aggression against the Freedom Flotilla
Joint FSC/PC Meeting – 2 June, 2010

1. At yesterday's Joint FSC/PC meeting, the distinguished Ambassador of Turkey appropriately raised the issue of Israel's 31 May aggression, in international waters, against a civilian aid and freedom flotilla destined for Gaza. This aggression constitutes yet another case of reprehensible use of military force by the State of Israel against civilians, and testifies to Israel's repeated and blatant disregard for the norms of international law and of respectable behaviour.
2. The Government and people of Egypt have condemned this aggression in the clearest of terms, as have the governments and people of the States of the region and beyond. Regrettably, reactions by a number of other governments around the world have been muted and have fallen short of unambiguously condemning an act that would have drawn severe outrage and the strongest possible condemnation had it been perpetrated anywhere else in the world.
3. A few days ago, aid workers and peace activists, and media representatives from Turkey and dozens of other countries, including Egypt, joined a flotilla with the explicit aim of alleviating the daily suffering and humiliation imposed by Israel on more than 1.5 million fellow human beings it continues to subject to an illegitimate, inhuman and unjust siege in Gaza. Within the space of a few traumatizing hours, and under a preposterous Israeli claim of self-defence, the participants in the flotilla, men, women and children, were subjected to extrajudicial killings, to collective punishment and to arbitrary detention.
4. Such behaviour is inconsistent with Israel's oft-repeated claim that it is seeking to co-exist peacefully with its neighbors in the region. They also clearly negate Israel's assertion that it is the only real democracy in the Middle East.
5. Egypt once again calls on Israel to immediately lift the siege it has imposed on the Gaza strip as well as all other restrictive and arbitrary measures and barriers applied in the occupied Palestinian territories at

large, and to desist from its continued violation of international law and norms.

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6. The OSCE is committed to promoting security, stability and constructive relations, and to replacing confrontation with cooperation. The OSCE has also long recognized that security in Europe is closely linked to security in the Mediterranean as a whole, and that the road to stability and peaceful co-existence is a road paved with confidence-building and dialogue. A few days ago, in international waters off the shores of Gaza, and under the cover of darkness, Israel once again chose to let its weapons do the talking. That does not tally with its status as an OSCE partner for cooperation.
7. Egypt therefore calls on the OSCE to condemn, in the clearest of terms, the aggression perpetrated by its Mediterranean Partner Israel, in a flagrant violation of every principle that the OSCE stands for.
