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## Women leaders at UN-hosted forum urge peaceful end to Israeli-Palestinian conflict

3 June 2010 – Women leaders attending a United Nations-hosted conference in Madrid today called for a just and peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, including an end to the three-year-old blockade of the Gaza Strip.

The conference, co-hosted by the International Women's Commission for a Just and Sustainable Israeli-Palestinian Peace, was convened in part to mark the 10-year anniversary of the passage of [Security Council resolution 1325](#) on women, peace and security.

The landmark resolution, adopted by the Council in 2000, stresses the importance of giving women equal participation and full involvement in peace and security matters and the need to increase their role in decision-making.

"There are reasons for hope," Inés Alberdi, Executive Director of the UN Development Fund (UNIFEM), told participants at the opening of the two-day meeting yesterday.

"Women in conflict-affected regions worldwide have successfully leveraged support for women's leadership and inclusion at all stages of conflict resolution and peacebuilding as mandated by UN resolution 1325."

Conference participants, including government leaders and nearly 100 experts on women's human and political rights and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening joint action in seeking an end to the occupation and achieve a two-State solution, with Israelis and Palestinians living side by side in peace.

An urgent priority, according to a news release issued at the end of the conference, was the "pressing need to end the siege on Gaza, which motivated the civilian-led humanitarian flotilla."

On Monday Israel raided a six-ship convoy that was carrying humanitarian goods and activists and heading for Gaza. The attack, which left 10 civilians dead and many wounded, drew international criticism, including from UN officials, as well as a call for an immediate investigation into the incident.

Jody Williams, Nobel Peace Laureate and honorary member of the Commission, urged the Israeli and Palestinian participants to see the attack on the flotilla as a tipping point and vastly scale up mobilization for peace, justice and women's leadership in resolving the conflict.

Participants also highlighted, among others, the importance of mobilizing Israeli and Palestinian constituencies and leaders to demand concrete steps towards ending the occupation and achieving a sustainable two-State solution.

The Commission, formed in 2005 in an effort to strengthen implementation of resolution 1325, is comprised of Palestinian, Israeli and international women's leaders and is co-chaired by Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and Finnish President Tarja Halonen.