
UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL PANEL TO INVESTIGATE ISRAELI RAID ON GAZA FLOTILLA ESTABLISHED

23 July 2010

The President of the United Nations Human Rights Council, Ambassador Sihasak Phuangketkeow, has appointed three preeminent experts to an independent international fact-finding mission to "investigate violations of international law, including international humanitarian and human rights law, resulting from the Israeli attacks on the flotilla of ships carrying humanitarian assistance" which took place on 31 May. The experts are: Judge Karl T. Hudson-Phillips, Sir Desmond de Silva, and Mary Shanthi Dairiam*.

In announcing their appointment, Ambassador Sihasak Phuangketkeow said: "The expertise, independence and impartiality of the members of the mission will be devoted to clarifying the events which took place that day and their legality. We call upon all parties to fully cooperate with the mission and hope that this mission will contribute to peace in the region and justice for the victims".

The establishment of this independent international fact-finding mission was decided on 2 June 2010 by the Council with its resolution 14/1. The Council had previously held an urgent debate on the raid on the Flotilla by Israeli Defense Forces. This United Nations body deplored "the loss of life of innocent civilians" during that debate.

The experts will now define their plan of action and make contact with all relevant parties prior to travelling to the region. They are expected to report on their findings to the United Nations Human Rights Council at its fifteenth session in September 2010.

(*) Judge Karl T. Hudson-Phillips, QC (Trinidad and Tobago), served as a Judge of the International Criminal Court from 2003 to 2007. He was Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs of Trinidad and Tobago between 1969 and 1973. He was appointed Queen's Counsel (QC) in 1971. He has now returned to private practice with Chambers in Trinidad and Tobago and Grenada, West Indies.

Sir Desmond de Silva, QC (United Kingdom), is a lawyer with extensive experience in human rights, war crimes, terrorism, business crime, espionage trials and sports law. He served as Chief Prosecutor of the UN backed Special Court for Sierra Leone in 2005 at the level of an Under-Secretary General of the United Nations. He has been Queen's Counsel (QC) since 1984.

Mary Shanthi Dairiam (Malaysia) was a member of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women from 2005 to 2008. Since 2007, she has been serving on the Gender Equality Task Force of the United Nations Development Programme. She is a founding member of the Board of Directors of the International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific.

Learn more about the Human Rights Council: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/>

For the text of resolution 14/1: http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/14session/RES.14.1_AEV.pdf

OHCHR Country Page – Israel: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Countries/MENARegion/Pages/ILIIndex.aspx>

OHCHR Country Page – Occupied Palestinian Territories: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Countries/MENARegion/Pages/PSIIndex.aspx>

For more information and **media inquiries**: Claire Kaplun, Public Information Officer: + 41 22 917 9657 / +41 79 477 2576 ckaplun@ohchr.org