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### **UN human rights chief condemns violent interception of Gaza aid flotilla**

GENEVA (31 May 2010) – The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay on Monday condemned the Israeli military interception, in international waters, of a flotilla of ships carrying aid to the blockaded Gaza Strip, which reportedly led to several deaths and numerous injuries, called for an immediate and credible independent inquiry, and urged the lifting of the blockade.

“We need to establish exactly what happened. However, nothing can justify the appalling outcome of this operation, which reportedly took place in international waters,” Pillay said. “I unequivocally condemn what appears to be disproportionate use of force, resulting in the killing and wounding of so many people attempting to bring much-needed aid to the people of Gaza, who have now been enduring a blockade for more than three years.”

The High Commissioner called for an immediate and fully independent inquiry into today’s operation and killings. “When people are killed there must be serious investigations, and there must be accountability,” she said.

She also urged the Government of Israel to heed the “almost unanimous international view that the continued blockade of Gaza is both inhumane and illegal.”

“The blockade lies at the heart of so many of the problems plaguing the Israel-Palestine situation, as does the impression that the Israeli Government treats international law with perpetual disdain,” she said. “If the blockade had been lifted, there would be no need for flotillas like this.”