

Wednesday, 2 June 2010

Australian unions condemn aid convoy deaths and call for lifting of blockade of Gaza

Australian unions have condemned the killing of nine people and wounding of an Australian citizen aboard an aid convoy bound for Gaza this week.

ACTU President Sharan Burrow said the incident was an outrage and the blockade of Gaza should be lifted.

“A full, open and independent inquiry is needed to establish the precise details of what took place when armed Israeli soldiers boarded vessels in the convoy, which was organised to bring supplies to Gaza,” Ms Burrow said.

“Those responsible for violations of international law must be brought to justice.”

Ms Burrow said Australian unions expressed their deepest condolences to the families of those who lost their lives, and hoped that the wounded, including an Australian who was shot in the leg, would have a full recovery.

She said it was also unacceptable that an Australian journalist and photographer along with other Australian citizens had been detained and threatened with deportation.

Ms Burrow welcomed the strong condemnation of the attack by the Australian Government.

“This appalling development underlines once again that violence and confrontation will not bring peace and justice to Palestinians and Israelis,” Ms Burrow said.

“The only acceptable way forward is through negotiation based on a commitment on all sides to renounce violence.

“Meeting a humanitarian convoy with military force is unacceptable.”

Ms Burrow said the ACTU supported a call by the international union movement for an end to the blockade of Gaza to bring an end to the ongoing humanitarian crisis there.

Media contact:

Mark Phillips ph (03) 8676 7266 or 0422 009 011; mphillips@actu.org.au