

**Statement by Ambassador Eileen Chamberlain Donahoe
General Debate of the Human Rights Council
on the Recent Incident in the Eastern Mediterranean
June 1, 2010**

Thank you, Mr. President.

As we made clear yesterday at the Security Council, the United States government is deeply disturbed by the recent violence and regrets the tragic loss of life and injuries suffered among those involved in the May 31 incident aboard the Gaza-bound ships. We are working to ascertain the facts. We expect a credible and transparent investigation and strongly urge the Israeli government to investigate the incident fully.

The United States remains deeply concerned by the suffering of civilians in Gaza, and the deterioration of the situation there, including the humanitarian and human rights situation. We urge all parties to behave responsibly and uphold their international obligations. We continue to believe the situation in Gaza is unsustainable and is not in the interest of any of those concerned. As we have pointed out in the past, mechanisms are in place for the transfer of humanitarian assistance to Gaza. These non-provocative and non-confrontational mechanisms should be the ones used for the benefit of all those in Gaza. We will continue to engage the Israelis on a daily basis to expand the scope and type of goods allowed into Gaza to address the full range of the population's humanitarian and recovery needs.

We will continue to work closely with the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority, along with international NGOs and the UN, to provide adequate access for humanitarian goods, including reconstruction materials, through the border crossings, while bearing in mind the Government of Israel's legitimate security concerns.

Hamas' interference with international assistance shipments and the work of nongovernmental organizations complicates efforts in Gaza. Its continued arms smuggling and commitment to terrorism undermines security and prosperity for Palestinians and Israelis alike.

Ultimately, this incident underscores the need to move ahead quickly with negotiations that can lead to a comprehensive peace in the region. The only viable solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is an agreement, negotiated between the parties, that ends the occupation that began in 1967 and fulfills the aspirations of both parties for independent homelands through two states for two peoples – Israel and an independent, contiguous, and viable state of Palestine, living side by side in peace and security. We call again on our international partners – both inside and outside this Council – to promote an atmosphere of cooperation between the parties and throughout the entire region.

Thank you, Mr. President.