



To: *Doctor Romano Prodi, President of the European Commission*

Cc: *Mr. Javier Solana, Secretary General of the Council*
Commissioner Chris Patten
Commissioner Poul Nielson
Ms. Costanza Adinolfi, Director ECHO
Mr. Pat Cox, President of the European Parliament
Mr. Elmar Brok, Chairman Foreign Affairs Committee EP (AFET)
Mr. Joaquim Miranda, Chairman Development Committee EP (DEVE)

Brussels, April 15, 2002

Dear President Prodi,

As ECHO NGO partners in EU Humanitarian Aid, we strongly support the fundamental right of the Palestinian People to receive all necessary Humanitarian Assistance required in the current humanitarian crisis.

We welcome the Madrid statement by the heads of State and Governments concerning the necessity of immediate emergency relief for Palestinian people. Moreover, we agree with the Commission's position urging the Israeli occupying authorities to give relief agencies full access to the victims of the escalating conflict in the Palestinian territories.

We therefore urge the EU to take all and any appropriate measures in its power, in order to avoid a further and unacceptable humanitarian crisis. Above all, EU humanitarian NGOs wish to avoid the development of a tragedy similar to that of the Balkans some years ago.

We therefore ask:

- For the immediate establishment of humanitarian corridors under the supervision of international observers in order to provide for the basic needs of the Palestinian population;
- For the full respect of international Humanitarian law, including the Geneva Conventions;
- For full access by humanitarian NGOs to the affected population and especially to the most vulnerable groups;
- For guaranteed security conditions which permit aid workers to operate freely and to the best of their abilities, in accordance with the generally agreed humanitarian principles of impartiality, neutrality and independence of action.

We trust that the European Institutions share the concerns outlined above and anticipate your support for life-saving activities.



David CHURCH
VOICE President

On behalf of:

VOICE (*Voluntary Organisations in Cooperation in Emergencies*), Save the Children UK,
International Federation Terre des Hommes

Voluntary Organisations in Cooperation in Emergencies
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Annex to Letter

- **VOICE** is the acronym for *Voluntary Organisations In Cooperation In Emergencies*. VOICE is an independent network of about 100 NGOs throughout Europe that are active in the field of humanitarian aid, including emergency aid, rehabilitation, disaster preparedness and conflict prevention. VOICE's essential overriding mission is to foster links among Humanitarian Aid NGOs and to make an effective contribution to the framing and monitoring of humanitarian policy, primarily at the European Union.
- **The International Federation Terre des Hommes (IFTDH)** is a network of 10 Terre des Hommes organisations whose main mission is to promote equitable development through work for the rights of the child, without racial, religious, political, cultural or gender-based discrimination. Terre des Hommes organisations also support humanitarian aid projects. At international level, the IFTDH works to promote and implement the right of the child and a people-centred development. The Convention of the Rights of the Child constitutes the conceptual framework which guides the Terre des Hommes activities.

The following VOICE member organisations are active in Palestine:

- **Action Contre la Faim** (*ACH Spain*)
- **Care International**
- **Caritas Europe**
 - o **CAFOD** (*UK*)

- o **CORDAID** (*The Netherlands*)
- o **Secours Catholique** (*France*)
- **Church of Sweden Aid** (*Sweden*)
- **CISP** (*Italy*)
- **Comité Internacional de Rescate** (*Spain*)
- **Diakonie Emergency Aid** (*Germany*)
- **GVC** (*Italy*)
- **Johanniter Unfall Hilfe** (*Germany*)
- **Handicap International** (*Belgium & France*)
- **ICCO** (*The Netherlands*)
- **Médecins du Monde** (*France*)
- **Medico International** (*Germany*)
- **Movimondo** (*Italy*)
- **Norwegian People's Aid** (*Norway*)
- **PMU Interlife** (*Sweden*)
- **Save the Children** (*UK*)
- **World Vision** (*Germany*)