

The Rt. Hon. (William) David Trimble, Lord Trimble

Brigadier-General (Ret.) Kenneth Watkin, Q.C.

It is an honour for us to serve as Observers to the Public Commission appointed to inquire into the maritime incident of 31 May 2010. We understood and accepted the sensitivities that led to our appointment as observers to the Commission and not, strictly speaking, members of it. Nonetheless we are satisfied that we had access to all the material before the Commission and we were fully involved by the Commission in all its work.

All testimonies, both in open and private session and all formal meetings of the Commission were, of course, conducted in Hebrew. However they were simultaneously translated for us into English. In the early days there were some difficulties with the translation of documents into English; these were quickly overcome as our work proceeded.

We are glad that the Commission made repeated efforts to hear both sides, extending to making arrangement for evidence to be given by video conferencing and offering to take evidence in a neutral location. We regret that these offers were not taken up. But we would like to express our appreciation of the Israeli Arabs, who were on the Mavi Marmara and who gave evidence to us. We would also like to thank the representatives of the Israeli Human Rights Non-Governmental Organizations who testified and provided significant material to the Commission.

The Commission made enormous efforts, to get as much information as possible. This involved going back to the IDF for additional information, obtaining further staff to examine all the video material (hundreds of hours) including the CCTV downloaded from the Mavi Marmara and to collate the material so that it has been able to examine each use of force by the IDF. We have also been impressed with the efforts of the small but very dedicated team of lawyers supporting the work of the Commission.

We have no doubt that the Commission is independent. This part of the report is evidence of its rigour.

On a personal note we want to thank all the members of the Commission who each have gone out of their way to welcome and assist us. It is a pleasure to work with them. Special mention must be made of the chairman, Judge Turkel, for his consideration of us personally and the clarity with which he directed the work of the commission.

We would also like to extend our sincere appreciation to the tireless efforts of Commission Coordinator, Hoshea Gottlieb, who has been instrumental in ensuring our successful participation in this Commission.

We would also like to place on record our enormous regard for those who have assisted us as Observers from outside of Israel including the staff who provided the simultaneous translations of all the oral proceedings, punctuated only by reminders to us to speak into the microphones; the translators who ensured voluminous texts were available to us in English; and the ever helpful and diligent administrative staff who have looked after our every logistical need.

Finally we regret that our acquaintance with Shabtai Rosenne was cut short by his death. He impressed us with his knowledge, experience, insight and, above all, with his character and courtesy. He was a true gentleman.



Lord David Trimble



**Kenneth Watkin
Brigadier-General (Ret.)**