

Activists Leave Egypt After Gaza Entry Denied

By [Global Research](#)

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CAIRO: More than 1,000 international activists have headed home after Egypt denied them passage to Gaza for a solidarity march with the besieged enclave's Palestinians, organizers said Monday. "Most participants of the Gaza Freedom March have gone home. Around 250 are still in Cairo, some will try to get into the Gaza Strip and some will go home," one of the organizers, Ann Wright, told AFP.

Egyptian authorities had banned the activists who had come to Cairo from 42 countries from entering the Gaza Strip through the Rafah border crossing, the only entry that bypasses Israel.

They had hoped to join Palestinians for a march on New Year's Eve to mark the first anniversary of Israel's devastating war on Gaza that killed 1,400 Palestinians.

The activists had staged demonstrations and hunger strikes around Cairo to protest at Egypt's refusal to let them leave the city.

After intervention by First Lady Suzanne Mubarak, Egypt last week allowed 86 protesters to enter the Gaza Strip.

Dozens of protesters who had camped out outside the French embassy in Cairo for days have also left, embassy staff said.

Egypt had said it barred them because of the "sensitive situation" in the Gaza Strip, accusing them of trying to embarrass Cairo with their demonstrations.

The participants of the Gaza Freedom March included Irish Nobel Laureate Mairead Corrigan-Maguire, Filipino senator and activist Walden Bello, writer Alice Walker, 85-year-old Holocaust survivor Hedy Epstein and hundreds of politicians, writers, artists and activists from over 40 countries.

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