

BREAKING NEWS; Spirit of Rachel Corrie Mission: Break the Gaza Blockade

Press Statement. Refusal to Divert Delivery of Cargo via Israel

By [Global Research](#)

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Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

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Egypt has broken its promise. It has not allowed the Spirit of Rachel Corrie to berth and unload its cargo in the Port of Al-Arish. The Spirit of Rachel Corrie remains stranded in Egyptian territorial waters. It has become a "floating Prison".

Egypt's Foreign Minister Nabil Al Arabi made a firm commitment to open the Rafah border and allow the ship to berth and unload its cargo.

The opening up of the Rafah border has been announced for May 28 in a statement by the Egyptian government.

While opening up the Rafah border, the Cairo government is not allowing the humanitarian cargo of the Spirit of Rachel Corrie to proceed by land to Rafah.

Is Cairo really committed to ending the blockade? In an agreement with the Malaysian government, the Egyptian authorities insist that the cargo be diverted and delivered via Israel.

What this decision suggests is that the opening of the border at Rafah remains restricted and is still subject to conditions set by Israel.

Will the cargo of the Spirit of Rachel Corrie be allowed to proceed to Gaza via the Rafah crossing on May 28th? That is the crucial issue as well as the ultimate "test" of Egypt's commitment to repealing the 2007 agreement with Israel.

What happens to the Spirit of Rachel Corrie in the next few days will play a decisive role in the process of breaking the blockade.

Spread the word far and wide. Support the Spirit of Rachel Corrie.

Michel Chossudovsky, Global Research, May 26, 2011

PRESS STATEMENT

The Spirit of Rachel Corrie Mission hereby objects to the use of an Israeli land port to deliver its humanitarian aid to the Palestinian people.

The team is thankful to the Malaysian Government for their negotiations with the Egyptian Government in securing the docking of MV Finch into the El-Arish Port since May 16th.

We have been informed that the Egyptian Government has imposed on the Malaysian Government as a condition precedent for the cargo to be discharged, that the same be transported via Karem Shalom, at the Israeli border in Gaza.

The team was never consulted in the negotiations nor was its opinion taken into consideration by the Egyptian Government.

This decision is against the principle of the team's mission, which is to break the illegal siege of Gaza by the Israelis.

Have we agreed to the cargo being unloaded via Israel, we would have agreed on the 16th of May, when the Israeli navy demanded that we proceed to Ashdod.

However, we insisted in proceeding to Gaza Port and were then attacked brutally by the Israeli navy.

On 28th April 2011, the Foreign Ministry of Egypt issued a statement that the Rafah Crossing would be permanently opened to enable humanitarian aid to pass through Gaza.

It is therefore in contradiction and inconsistent with our intent that our cargo should now be diverted via Israel and with the expressed permission of Israel which we did not and will not seek in any circumstances.

To comply with this unreasonable demand would abrogate the fundamental principle by which we embarked on this mission - to break the illegal siege of Gaza.

In addition, we are not assured that this cargo would in fact be delivered to Gaza, as in the past, all assurances given to previous missions were not implemented and most of the humanitarian aid were laid to waste, only 40% was allowed to enter Gaza.

For the past 10 days, we were given repeated assurances by the Egyptian Government that the cargo of PVC pipes to restore the destroyed sewerage system would in fact be transported via Rafah.

This turn of events demonstrates the insincerity of the Egyptian Government and their implicit endorsement of the illegal siege when they explicitly stated they would permanently open the Rafah Crossing to humanitarian aid, and as this aid will prevent the spread of infectious diseases must be considered humanitarian aid.

We are therefore compelled to take drastic action to uphold the dignity of the Palestinian people and the justice of the cause. Any compromise of this fundamental principle would undermine the heroic struggle of the Palestinians in the last few years to resist the cruel and inhumane blockade of Gaza, the largest open prison in the world and a collective punishment of the 1.5 million Palestinians in Gaza.

This is a unanimous decision of the team which consists of a crew of 5 comprising 3 Malaysians and 2 Indians, and 7 activists made up of 4 Malaysians, 2 Irish and 1 Canadian, expressing and representing the aspirations of all people who support the just struggle of

the Palestinians to break the inhumane and illegal siege.

This illegal siege by Israel is a contravention of the Geneva Conventions which inter alia provides that a nation under occupation is entitled to have access to clean drinking water and sanitary conditions.

As a result of the barbaric invasion codenamed "Operation Cast Lead" in 2008, 7.5km of sewage pipes were destroyed. Yet, our cargo of 7.5km PVC pipes, a humanitarian aid to restore the existing sewerage system, has been denied entry to Gaza.

We appeal to all just and peace loving people to support our stand on this issue and the struggle of the Palestinians to live in peace and dignity.

ON BEHALF OF THE TEAM,

MATTHIAS CHANG,

MISSION LEADER,

THE SPIRIT OF RACHEL CORRIE MISSION,

MAY 2011,

EL-ARISH, EGYPT

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