

Canadian Boat to Gaza intercepted by Israeli army

By [Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East](#)

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Montreal, November 4, 2011 — Earlier today, Israeli Navy commanders boarded both the Canadian (Tahrir) and the Irish (Saoirse) boats taking part in the Freedom Waves to Gaza initiative. The boats attempted to break the illegal Israeli blockade of Gaza by bringing a symbolic cargo of \$30, 000 worth of medicine to the Gaza Strip. The raid occurred about 35 nautical miles from the coast and the boats were redirected to the Israeli port of Ashdod. No injuries have been reported.

On Wednesday, the two civilian boats set sail from Fethiye, Turkey with 27 passengers on board – including five journalists- from nine different countries. Upon their arrival at Ashdod, which is expected in the coming hours, passengers will likely be taken to the local police and immigration authorities for interrogation and then deported back to their respective countries. At the time of the raid by Israeli soldiers, militants waved signs saying: “To board an unarmed boat in international waters is an act of piracy.”

CJPME also denounces the illegal measure taken by Israel to stop the ships whose aims were peaceful. “We would like to remind Canadian officials that it is the blockade of Gaza which violates international law and not the peaceful attempt by Canadian and Irish boats to challenge it”, says Thomas Woodley, President of Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME). CJPME urges the Canadian government to clearly condemn the brutal siege of Gaza and to seek fair and equitable solutions that will end the terrible humanitarian conditions in Gaza.

The organizers of Freedom Waves to Gaza said that they kept the voyage a secret until now due to accusations in July that Israel tried to sabotage a previous effort, known as Freedom Flotilla II. At that time, the Greek government prohibited any ships, Greek or foreign going to Gaza to depart from Greek ports. The Greek port authorities boarded the Tahrir and seized its license. There are strong indications that Greece’s actions may be the result of international pressure, notably from Israel.

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