

Freedom Flotilla en Route to Gaza to Deliver Aid

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

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Montreal - On May 18, 2010, the MV Rachel Corrie, a 1200-ton cargo ship, part of the eight-vessel Freedom Flotilla, set sail from Ireland on its way to the Mediterranean Sea. The ship will be joined there by ships from Turkey and Greece, where they will make their way to Gaza. The ships are carrying construction materials, as well as medical and educational supplies. Many in Canada and around the world are anxious to see if Israel will carry through on threats to sabotage the humanitarian mission.

The people onboard these ships include members of various world Parliaments, UN staff, human rights and trade union activists, as well as journalists. The Flotilla is the largest contingent of ships that has attempted to deliver humanitarian aid to Gaza, since Israel began its crippling siege of the occupied Palestinian territory in 2007. Israel's war on Gaza in December, 2008-January, 2009 exacerbated the already harsh conditions of the occupied Palestinian territory and its inhabitants, as it destroyed much of Gaza's infrastructure, killed an estimated 1,400 Palestinians, and injured thousands.

Prior humanitarian efforts to deliver aid to Gaza by ship have been met with resistance by the Israeli Navy. Boats have been rammed and shot at. Israel has made it clear that this time will be no different. Reports in the Israeli media suggest that the current Freedom Flotilla will face the same resistance, and will be prevented from reaching Gaza.

Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME) believes that all legal efforts should be made to break Israel's illegal siege of Gaza, and encourages all media to follow this latest effort closely. "The flotilla is acting in line with universal principals of human rights and justice in defying a blockade identified as illegal by the UN and other humanitarian organizations", says Tom Woodley, President of CJPME. "The inhabitants of Gaza, like any people, have a right to basic supplies like cement, medicine and schoolbooks, all of which are largely banned from entry by Israel. Canadians and the world should keep a watchful eye on the Flotilla's progress, and on Israel's attempts to block its noble efforts."

CJPME continues to encourage the Canadian government to pressure Israel to end the devastating siege of Gaza, so that the people may begin to re-build their homes and industry. CJPME also advocates for an end to Israel's brutal occupation of the Palestinian territories.

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Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME) is a non-profit and secular organization bringing together men and women of all backgrounds who labour to see justice and peace take root again in the Middle East. Its mission is to empower decision-makers to view all sides with fairness and to promote the equitable and sustainable development of the region.

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