

Galloway Deported From Egypt After Exiting Gaza

By [Global Research](#)

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Bethlehem – Ma'an – Leader of the Viva Palestina convoy and British MP George Galloway was deported from Egyptian soil moments after he set foot on it, crossing the border at Rafah from Gaza, organizers of the convoy said.

A statement from the group said Galloway and a colleague “were forcibly pushed into a van, refused exit and told that they were leaving the country,” as they entered Egypt.

Egyptian security sources confirmed the decision to deport Galloway, saying officials had decided to bar the British MP from entering Egypt in the future and added the country would “also put all the convoy members on the black list after they leave.” Officials were upset over the protests launched by the convoy, which spurred riots at the Rafah border, which led to the death of an Egyptian police officer.

Tensions were high in Egypt even before Viva Palestina landed in the country. The convoy arrived shortly after a series of protests organized by an earlier group of Gaza supporters, the Gaza Freedom March. The march saw 1,300 internationals gather in Cairo in an attempt to enter Gaza for a solidarity march on New Year’s Eve. Egyptian authorities permitted just over 80 delegates with Codepink into the Gaza Strip, and clamped down on protests organized by the hundreds of other supporters across Cairo.

At the same time, the Egyptian government had battled the Viva Palestina convoy several times over the route of the group and how many supporters would be allowed into Gaza. Egypt first refused entry to the group traveling from Jordan into Egypt via the Red Sea. Government officials said the convoy had to access the country via the Al-Arish port, on the Mediterranean.

Viva Palestina organizers and Egyptian officials both insist that they notified the other side of their intentions around travel arrangements/restrictions well in advance of the group’s travel to Gaza.

When convoy members made alternative arrangements for supporters and aid to arrive in Egypt via Al-Arish, Egyptian officials announced they would only let the first 100 activists who arrived to the country into Gaza.

Viva Palestina organized a protest at the Rafah border demanding all of the supporters be allowed into Gaza. At the same time Hamas leaders in the southern Strip called for a simultaneous protest on the Gaza side of Rafah calling for Egypt to let the convoy into the besieged area.

A riot broke out, some activists were injured and an Egyptian officer was shot and killed.

That evening Egypt allowed the convoy into Gaza for 48-hours.

Upon leaving, Viva Palestina organizers said Egyptian riot police and plain clothes intelligence officers attacked a group of 55 Gaza supporters, detaining seven. The group was leaving early, on Wednesday morning.

Galloway himself was ushered into a police van, taken to the airport and deported to the UK. While at the airport Galloway reportedly learned about the detention of seven convoy members.

According to a statement from the group, "Galloway and Turkish MP's struck a deal with Egyptian authorities, part of this deal was that the 7 detainees were released without charge."

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