

International Civilian Aid Flotilla to Break the Siege of Gaza

Ann Wright and Medea Benjamin Join a Coalition of Human Rights Activists on International Civilian Aid Flotilla

By [CODEPINK](#)

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CODEPINK's Ann Wright, Medea Benjamin and hundreds of other human rights activists with the Freedom Flotilla Coalition are due to set sail on multiple vessels in mid-April to carry 5,500 tons of aid for Gaza. Their mission, aside from delivering the much-needed humanitarian aid, is to challenge Israel's illegal blockade of Gaza amid dire conditions, including widespread hunger and lack of medical attention intentionally caused by Israeli policies. Time is running out for many in Gaza as Israel threatens an all-out attack on Rafah and experts warn hunger and disease could soon surpass casualties from bombings.

"I have been walking the halls of Congress every day since October, going to rallies every weekend, writing letters of outrage to President Biden every night-and nothing has worked to stop Israel from murdering thousands upon thousands of innocent people. What more can I do? I can go on this flotilla to try to break the criminal siege that Israel has imposed on Gaza," said CODEPINK co-founder **Medea Benjamin**.

"President Biden waited six months, waited until 33,000 had been killed, mostly women and children, before picking up the phone and demanding that Netanyahu reduce civilian harm, allow more aid in, and protect aid workers," said CODEPINK Ret. Army Colonel and former U.S. Diplomat **Ann Wright**. "But even if Israel allows more humanitarian aid in, it is still bombing Gaza with U.S. bombs, shooting innocent people and imprisoning the 2.2 million people that live in Gaza. Getting humanitarian aid to Palestinians in Gaza is urgent, but it is not sufficient. We must end Israel's unlawful, deadly blockade as well as Israel's overall control of Gaza. That's why we need this flotilla, filled with unarmed civilians, human rights observers from 30 countries, to

challenge Israel's brutal grip on the Gaza strip."

Israel's longstanding neglect of its responsibility as an occupying power to safeguard the health and wellbeing of Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank has escalated into genocidal actions, including using starvation as a weapon of war. Israeli leaders have openly declared intentions to collectively punish Gaza's population. The Freedom Flotilla opposes Israel's authority over aid and will refuse any inspection of our cargo. For safety and effective aid distribution, the flotilla will deploy numerous international humanitarian observers from diverse backgrounds and countries.

Despite air drops of food and temporary docks, Israel continues to block thousands of aid trucks from entering Gaza through land crossings. The International Court of Justice's rulings on January 26 and March 28 emphasize Israel's obligation to ensure the safety and security of Palestinians in Gaza, including facilitating humanitarian assistance without obstruction.

"The International Court of Justice's preliminary measures ordered against Israel are very clear," comments **Ismail Moola** of South Africa's Palestine Solidarity Alliance, which is part of the Freedom Flotilla Coalition. "The court's ruling requires the whole world to play their part to stop the genocide unfolding in Gaza, including unobstructed access to vital aid. While our governments fail to lead in these urgently required humanitarian responses, people of conscience and our grassroots organizations must act to take leadership. When governments fail, we sail!"

The Freedom Flotilla Coalition is a non-partisan international coalition of campaigns that stand for freedom and human rights in Palestine. They have sailed since 2010 with the goal of breaking the blockade of Gaza, and in solidarity with Palestinians cries for freedom and equality. Their non-violent direct action missions support the dignity and humanity of Palestinians, working with civil society partners, rather than any party, faction or government.

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