

Israel Hijacks Humanitarian Ship to Gaza in International Waters

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Global Research, June 30, 2015

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

Theme: [Crimes against Humanity](#)

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Gaza has been lawlessly blockaded for nine years - entirely for political, not security reasons. Israel wants its 1.8 million people slowly suffocated.

Flotilla III is the latest humanitarian mission bringing vital aid - symbolic of how much more is needed and a call for world leaders to intervene responsibly for suffering Gazans, victimized by Israeli viciousness.

The latest news from Ship to Gaza Sweden reads as follows:

“Marianne and the #FreedomFlotilla right now

Boarded by Israeli navy in international waters

Distance to Gaza: 97 nautical miles

Last known position: 31.716667 latitude, 32.550000 longitude

Position received at: 29 June 00:57 (CET)

Speed: Unknown”

Hours earlier, Ship to Gaza’s site reported Marianne’s interdiction in international waters, then taken to Israel’s Ashdod seaport. Activists and international politicians on board include:

Dror Feiler, Sweden: musician and composer

Bassel Ghattas, Israel: Palestinian MK

Dr. Moncef Marzuki, Tunisia: former Tunisian president

Ana Miranda, Spain: European Parliament member

Nadya Kevorkova, Russia: RT International correspondent

Kajsa Ekis Ekman, Sweden: journalist and author

Robert Lovelace, Canada: Queen’s University professor

Ammar Al-Hamdan, Norway: Al Jazeera Arabic correspondent

Mohammed El Bakkail, Morocco: Al Jazeera Arabic correspondent

Ohad Herno, Israel: Israeli TV Channel 2 journalist

Ruwani Perera, New Zealand: MaoriTV journalist

Jacob Bryant, New Zealand: Maori TV journalist

Crew members include: Joel Opperdoes (Sweden) Gustave Bergstrom (Sweden), Herman Reksten (Norway), Kevin Neish (Canada), Jonas Karlin (Sweden), Charlie Andreasson (Sweden)

Three other Flotilla III vessels heading for Gaza changed course and returned to their ports of origin – Rachel, Vittorio and Juliano II.

In total, 47 participants from 17 countries are involved. Their mission is “break(ing) the illegal and inhumane blockade of Gaza,” as well as opening the territory to the world. A statement issued said:

“We once again call on the government of Israel to finally lift the blockade on Gaza. Our destination remains the conscience of humanity.”

The Marianne of Gothenburg carried medical equipment and solar panels. Flotilla spokesman Petros Stergiou reported contact with the vessel lost around 2AM local time Monday as three Israeli naval ships approached it.

“What we learned is that the Israeli navy attacked the Marianne about 100 nautical miles from the shore of Gaza,” he said.

Activists on board “said they could see three military boats approaching them that had identified themselves as being military.”

“Once again, the Israeli government and its military acted like state pirates and attacked our boat in international waters,” Stergiou explained. IDF spokesman Peter Lerner called the seizure “uneventful.”

Netanyahu commented as expected, saying “(t)his flotilla is nothing but a demonstration of hypocrisy and lies that is only assisting the Hamas terrorist organization and ignores all of the horrors in our region.”

He congratulated Israeli naval commandos for their high-seas piracy. He lied saying he acted according to international law and support from a “UN Secretary-General committee.”

Defense Secretary Moshe Ya’alon issued a similar statement irresponsibly claiming the mission has “no humanitarian intentions...which instead of caring for Gaza residents, tries to smuggle in weapons (to be) use(d) against Israel and its civilians.”

Fact: Hamas is no “terrorist organization.” It’s Palestine’s democratically elected government.

Fact: Israel and America bear full responsibility for regional “horrors.”

Fact: Palestinians are longstanding victims – along with Iraqis, Libyans, Syrians, Yemenis and others living under monarchal or military dictatorships.

Fact: No flotilla or other humanitarian missions carried weapons for anyone. The whole world knows it. So does Israel.

Its blockade breaches international law. It's an act of war against 1.8 million largely defenseless Gazans – denied their fundamental human rights.

Poverty and unemployment are extreme. Most Gazans need international aid to survive. The Strip's most arable land is off limits. Israeli buffer zone diktats prohibit cultivation. Fishing in 85% of Gazan waters is banned.

A nutritional crisis continues along with inaccessibility to clean water for 90% of Gazans. An acute shortage of medicines, medical supplies, building materials and other essentials exists.

Ship to Gaza activists say the international community fails to help a trapped population desperately in need. "As human beings, we cannot stand by silently while witnessing what the blockade is doing to" people deserving much better. (T)herefore we will act," they said.

We'll continue "send(ing) more ships with many more people (in) solidarity with the people of Gaza."

"New groups are being formed all over the world...(O)ur coalition is growing...Our (mission) is a natural, brotherly action; our objective is humanitarian; our basis lies in international law; and our method is non-violent."

Israel's blockade severely restricts movement of people and goods into and from Gaza. It constitutes lawless collective punishment – strictly prohibited under international law.

It deprives Gazans of their livelihoods, security, accessibility to proper nutrition, clean water, medicines, medical care, education, and ability to move freely.

Israeli aggression denies many of their right to life and well-being. Israeli media reported IDF commandos seizing the vessel overnight without incident or injuries to activists on board.

We'll know more when they're able to speak for themselves, explain exactly what happened and how they were mistreated.

Israel's interdiction was high-seas piracy – a lawless bandit act. An IDF statement lied claiming it acted "(i)n accordance with international law." It blatantly violated it.

Pre-recorded SOS messages called for international help before seizure by Israeli commandos occurred.

Based on how other interdicted activists were treated, Marianne participants can expect short-term detention under harsh conditions, abusive interrogations, confiscation of their possessions, and perhaps denial of food, water and outside contacts, followed by deportations.

Gazans remain trapped and isolated under brutalizing siege. The Al Haq human rights organization reported continued Israeli use of “excessive force” across the West Bank and Gaza – using live fire and other forms of brutality against defenseless civilians, “disregarding Palestinians’ right to life.”

Al Haq director Shawan Jabarin said Palestinian officials delivered documents to the International Criminal Court charging Israel with the crime of apartheid and 22 other criminal offenses, including seven war crimes – pertaining to Operation Protective Edge, illegal settlements, denial of due process and judicial fairness, as well as mistreatment of Palestinian prisoners, mostly held for political reasons.

Throughout nearly half a century of brutalizing military occupation (lawless under international law), punctuated by intermittent acts of aggression, no Israeli government or military official ever was held accountable. Expect justice again denied this time.

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His new book as editor and contributor is titled “Flashpoint in Ukraine: US Drive for Hegemony Risks WW III.”

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