

Israeli Military Attacks Humanitarian Aid Boat

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International news outlets report that the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) have carried out a military attack on an aid boat headed to the embattled Gaza region. At least 20 are reported dead, dozens more injured and more than 20 are currently being detained by the IDF. The boat was sponsored by the Free Gaza Movement and [Viva Palestina](#), was carrying unarmed civilians and was named the Spirit of Humanity. Ship passengers included Noble Laureate Mairead Maguire and former U.S. Congresswoman Cynthia McKinney.

McKinney called the attack “an outrageous violation of international law” and called on supporters in the West to demand the release of those detained so that they might continue their mission. “This is one of the most dastardly attacks on humanitarian aid workers in recent times,” said George Galloway, British politician and outspoken supporter of the Palestinian freedom struggle. Galloway issued this statement from Houston, Texas where he is completing a twelve city US tour.

Gaza has been blockaded since the Israeli military invaded in December 2008. More than 400 Palestinians were killed and 2,800 wounded during 22 days of one-sided fighting. The Israeli military then set up a blockage of the region that cut it off from humanitarian relief efforts. The Red Cross referred to this as a direct “strangulation” of the Palestinian economy and reports dangerous shortages of essential medical supplies. The blockade has been condemned by multiple times by the Human Rights Commission of the United Nations.

The flotilla was organized by the international activist group Viva Palestina, which was formed in January 2009 in order to break the blockade. The group has sponsored a series of caravans to Gaza in order to bring necessary supplies and international attention. Activists report that The Spirit of Humanity was carrying, “medical and reconstruction supplies, and children’s toys.”

Activists have also complained that mainstream media sources in the US have refused to cover the story. MSNBC did issue a report but entitled it, “Two Dead After Israel and Activists Clash,” giving readers the false impression that two equal sides were engaged in a military conflict. Conversely, most international news agencies reported that a well armed group of IDF commandos attacked the ship.

New York City based activists are calling for a demonstration to condemn the attack today at 3pm in Times Square.

Billy Wharton is a writer, activist and editor of the [Socialist WebZine](#).

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