

Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF) Violently Board and Attack the Freedom Flotilla Al Awda and Participants

By [Freedom Flotilla Coalition](#)

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[Freedom Flotilla Coalition](#)

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The statement made by the Israeli authorities that the Freedom Flotilla Coalition's Al Awda boat was intercepted, boarded and redirected from Gaza, Palestine to Ashdod, Israel on 29 July without incident is false. According to first hand evidence that we have been given, the Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF) violently attacked our Norwegian flagged boat 'Al Awda' (The Return) as she was in international waters.

Prior to all of our electronic communications being cut to and from our boat, at least four warships had appeared. Following some unlawful radio directives to our captain and our insistence that we had a right of innocent passage in international waters, armed, masked soldiers boarded 'Al Awda' without permission. They assaulted several unarmed participants by hitting them and using tasers as some of our participants lawfully endeavoured to resist this attempted hijacking, drawing upon two days of non-violence training in Palermo. Other participants were also hit by soldiers in this anything but peaceful exercise by the IOF, for what may have been a range of 'reasons'.

Three of the many people that Israeli soldiers assaulted were: Captain Herman Reksten, Mike Treen and Dr Swee Ang. All of these assaults, including the hitting of an unarmed slightly built, 69 year old female surgeon crosses a line which must be investigated and the criminals must be held accountable. We continue to try and gain evidence and will seek to ensure that justice prevails.

Two Israeli citizens (Yonatan Shapira and Zohar Chamberlain Regev) and two international Al Jazeera journalists have been released, but 18 of the participants have now spent their second night unlawfully detained in Givon Prison, Israel. To protest Israel's illegal actions and their ongoing treatment, two participants have commenced a hunger strike.

We urge the Norwegian Government, along with the national governments of all of those who were subjected to these multiple breaches of international law to intervene and to demand the immediate, unconditional release of Al Awda and everything that was on board, including all of the participants and the medical aid that we were carrying to MyCare in Gaza for distribution.

We demand that the IOF does not engage in any similarly unlawful and violent acts towards the yacht 'Freedom', the next of the Flotilla boats as she commences [her approach to Gaza, Palestine via international waters](#).

#SOSjustfuture4Palestine

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