

SPIRIT OF RACHEL CORRIE BLOCKED BY EGYPT: Leader of Gaza aid mission goes on hunger strike

By [Global Research](#)

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

In-depth Report: [PALESTINE](#)

Global Research Editor's Note

Global Research is a partner in this mission. A member of Global Research, Julie Levesque is aboard the ship.

We are in permanent liason with the ship and will keep our readers informed as events unfold.

Michel Chossudovsky, May 21, 2011

Matthias Chang refuses to eat in protest against the refusal of Egyptian authorities to allow the Malaysian ship to enter El-Arish Port.



EL-ARISH (Egypt): Matthias Chang, 61, leader of the Malaysian humanitarian aid mission to Gaza has gone on a hunger strike since yesterday evening onboard the cargo ship, MV Finch, in protest against the refusal of the authorities here to allow the ship to enter El-Arish Port.

The action was taken immediately after the Egyptian army turned away the vessel from the port area, according to Bernama reporter Mohd Faizal Hassan, who is among 12 passengers, including humanitarian activists, and crew members onboard the MV Finch via SMS today.

He said the port authorities had earlier given permission for the ship to berth there and to supply food but changed their mind at the last minute without any clear reason.

However, food supply came from the agent appointed by Perdana Global Peace Foundation (PGPF) last night (local time).

Until morning here, Chang refused to eat although persuaded to do so and his hunger strike is expected to continue until the humanitarian mission team's request to berth in the port is granted.

The port authorities have been informed about this and have been asked to prepare for any possible medical assistance required.

Mohd Faizal said it was understood that permission to berth in El-Arish Port would be given tomorrow but there had been no confirmation on this from any of the relevant authorities here.

MV Finch is skippered by Malaysian Captain Abdul Jalil Mansor who is assisted by four crew members – Zainuddin Mohamad and Mohd Jaffery Ariffin from Malaysia, and Indian nationals Sharma Chandan Shimla and Pal Satya Prakash.

Besides the Bernama reporter, also onboard are New Straits Times reporter Iskandar Alang Bendahara, a volunteer from Felda, Mohd Radzillah Abdullah, and humanitarian activists Derek Graham and Jenny Graham from Ireland, and Julie Levesque from Canada.

In KUALA LUMPUR, Dr Zulaiha Ismail from PGPF said all the passengers and crew members onboard the MV Finch were in good health while the food supply sent to the vessel last night could last a few days.

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