

Israel attacks another aid flotilla days after illegal capture of the Global Sumud Flotilla

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In another act of piracy in international waters, Israel's military intercepted and seized a 145-strong crew of the nine vessel Freedom Flotilla Coalition and Thousand Madleens.

The flotilla was on its way to Gaza, attempting to break Israel's siege and deliver desperately needed food and medical supplies to the Palestinians. It left the port of San Giovanni Li Cuti in Catania, Sicily on September 27. Onboard were healthcare workers, doctors, journalists, elected officials from the Belgian, Danish, European Union, Irish, French, Spanish and US legislatures, and others.

Earlier reports indicated that elected officials aboard included Farida Amrani and, Alma Dufour, La France Insoumise deputies in the French National Assembly; Mélissa Camara, a French Greens Member of the European Parliament; Barry Heneghan, an independent MP in the Irish Parliament; Jimena González, a Spanish academic and Más Madrid deputy; Bénédicte Linard, a deputy in the Walloon Parliament in Belgium, Ellen Read, a Democratic Party Representative for Newmarket, New Hampshire; and Victoria Velasquez, a member of the Danish Parliament for the Red-Green Alliance.

The latest assault came just days after Israel intercepted and stopped the Global Sumud Flotilla. After kidnapping hundreds of people onboard—who hailed from 37 countries—the IDF treated them brutally. Among those arrested was Swedish climate activist and genocide opponent Greta Thunberg. Other prominent figures included former South African MP Mandla Mandela, the grandson of Nelson Mandela, and several European politicians from France, Spain and Scandinavian countries. The seizure of the 42-ship convoy sparked global protests.

While the majority of those captured were eventually deported from Israel, six are still be held captive by the fascist Netanyahu government. The Global Sumud

Flotilla stated Wednesday, “Their detention is not just unlawful, it is a punishment for solidarity itself. We call on all governments and people of conscience to act now. Demand their release. Demand accountability. All participants from the Omar Al-Mukhtar flotilla [which set sail to Gaza from the port of Tripoli and carried Libyan, US, Canadian and British nationals] have finally been released. But six of ours are still being held, and we will not stop until every one of them is free.”

On Tuesday afternoon, the Global Sumud Flotilla posted on X that the Freedom Flotilla/Thousand Madleen and Conscience “are now 170 nautical miles away from Gaza. They are expected to enter the Red Zone tomorrow, where the risk of interception by Israeli forces becomes imminent.”

In the early hours of Wednesday morning, with the Freedom Flotilla 120 nautical miles off the coast of Gaza, organisers reported that three of its boats were under attack from the IDF. The interception involved the lead ship *Conscience*, which carried most of the flotilla crew (92) being attacked by a military helicopter. The IDF jammed signals on the three flotilla boats and surrounded the remaining fleet.

The Freedom Flotilla in a statement said “*Gaza Sunbirds*, *Alaa Al-Najajr*, *Anas Al-Sharif*, have been attacked and illegally intercepted by the Israeli military at 04:34 at 120 nautical miles (220km) from Gaza.

“Sources so far indicate that the unarmed crew aboard, including doctors, journalists, and elected officials, have been abducted, as well as the vital aid worth over \$110,000 USD in medicines, respiratory equipment, and nutritional supplies that were destined for Gaza's starving hospitals. Their whereabouts remain unknown.”

The statement noted Israel's seizure and unlawful detention of those on the Global Sumud Flotilla, *Handala*, and *Madleen*, as well as the Israeli drone attack on lead ship *Conscience* “in European waters earlier this year,

which left the vessel disabled and burning. These repeated attacks on unarmed civilians demonstrate Israel's deliberate escalation and the total failure of governments to enforce international law."

As is now standard, crew members on various vessels issued pre-recorded video messages explaining that they had been illegally abducted, that pressure be exerted on Israel for their release and that the Zionist state end its illegal blockade and ongoing genocide in Gaza.

Among the crew of a Freedom Flotilla boat, *Milad*, was Irish writer Naoise Dolan, who penned an opinion piece published in the *Guardian* early Wednesday following her kidnapping. In a previous *Guardian* piece published September 30, Dolan noted, "Israel has intercepted or attacked every flotilla to Gaza since 2010, always in international waters--the flotilla routes never enter Israel." Among these attacks was the murderous operation in 2010, when Israeli commandos carried out a hostile boarding of the Turkish ship Mavi Marmara, killing 10 of those on board.

Of their mission Dolan said in the latest piece, "The medicine and baby formula packed in the stern cabin and cockpit of our boat will save lives if Israel doesn't abduct us.... Yet aid is not the ultimate point of the flotilla, nor the ultimate point of the Palestinian cause. Israel likes to ask why we don't 'just' let them distribute our supplies. Besides there being good reason to distrust that this would actually happen when Israel has been deliberately starving Palestinians for two years, doing so would tacitly concede that Israel has the right to control Palestinian waters."

A statement from the Israeli government following their latest act of piracy stated, "The vessels and the passengers are transferred to an Israeli port. All the passengers are safe and in good health. The passengers are expected to be deported promptly."

None of this can be taken at face value. More details have emerged of the torture—both physical and psychological--that the crew of the Global Sumud Flotilla were subjected to. Speaking at a news conference in Stockholm on her return to Sweden, Greta Thunberg said that she and other detainees were subjected to torture in an Israeli prison. Turkish activist Ersin Celik told *Anadolu* that Israeli forces 'severely tortured Greta before our eyes,' and 'made her crawl and made her kiss the Israeli flag.' Thunberg told media, 'Personally, I don't want to share what I was subjected to because I don't want it to make headlines and 'Greta has been tortured', because that's not the story here'. She added that what they had suffered paled in comparison to what the Palestinians

experienced daily.

On Tuesday, Progressive International co-General Coordinator David Adler, who was another abducted by Israel, revealed more details of the torture the captives endured.

After being released from an internment camp in the Naqab Desert, "where I was held with hundreds of other participants of the Global Sumud Flotilla for five days in horrific conditions," he wrote, "We were intercepted illegally and violently by Israeli naval forces. Many of these interceptions were caught on CCTV. Others were not, such as the case of our Ohwayla, which was targeted by a barge that sought to destroy and sink our boat. Our belongings and our boats were stolen from us. We were kidnapped, stripped, zip-tied, blindfolded and sent to an internment camp, on a police van, without any access to food, water, or legal support. For the next five days, on and off, we were psychologically tortured."

"People were taken individually out of their cells and regularly beaten, handcuffed, ankle cuffed and left in solitary confinement. This happened many times over many days." He noted, "Any requests for medical attention were denied or delayed indefinitely. We had no access to lawyers or legal representation. Consular services were not able to communicate any information about our condition."

Adler revealed, "The humanitarian workers who were part of the Flotilla were not taken to a regular prison. They were driven deep into the Naqab Desert, near the border with Egypt. We heard F-16s and F-35s overhead every night going to bomb Gaza. We heard dogs barking that menaced us daily. Every single day, riot groups would come to our cells with tear gas, riot gear and German shepherds to terrify and terrorise us."



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