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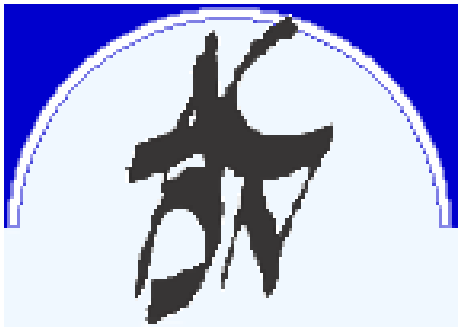

Israelis Attack Humanitarian Aid to Gaza

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Demand the Release of the SPIRIT OF HUMANITY, all aid workers and supplies NOW!

During the night of 29 to 30 June, Israeli Forces attacked and boarded the Free Gaza Movement boat, the SPIRIT OF HUMANITY, abducting 21 human rights workers from 11 countries, including Noble laureate Mairead Maguire and former U.S. Congresswoman Cynthia McKinney. The passengers and crew are being forcibly dragged toward Israel.

The seizure of humanitarian supplies and abduction of human rights workers is an act of piracy, a crime under international law. When the boat was attacked, it was not in Israeli waters and was on a human rights mission to Gaza. Israel's deliberate and premeditated attack on an unarmed boat in international waters is a clear violation of international law.

The U.S. government and corporate media has largely ignored or buried this story due to racism against Cynthia McKinney and the people of Palestine. It is up to us to get the word out.

According to an International Committee of the Red Cross report released yesterday, the Palestinians living in Gaza are "trapped in despair." Thousands of Gazans whose homes were destroyed earlier during Israel's December/January massacre are still without shelter despite pledges of almost $4.5 billion in aid, because Israel refuses to allow cement and other building material into the Gaza Strip. The report also notes that hospitals are struggling to meet the needs of their patients due to Israel's disruption of medical supplies.

This act of terrorism by the Israeli Occupation Forces against an unarmed vessel is a clear attempt to scare people away from showing solidarity with the people of Gaza. We must take action now! Here's how you can help:

1) Sign the Online Petition

2) Get the word out - forward this message to your email lists, post in on Facebook & Myspace, etc.

3) Take to the streets! Organize local emergency protests in solidarity with the people of Gaza and demanding the release of all those who were kidnapped by the Israeli Occupation Forces.

In New York City, join us Wednesday July 1, from 4 - 6 pm at the Israeli Mission (43rd St. & 2nd Ave.)

3) Support Aid Caravans to Gaza! In addition to the current project of Free Gaza, another aid caravan, Viva Palestina, will be leaving the U.S. on July 4th headed by British MP George Galloway and Vietnam War veteran Ron Kovic and including hundreds of people from the United States.

4) Call the media. The U.S. corporate media has largely ignored or buried this story due to racism against Cynthia McKinney and the people of Palestine. Please call the media - demand that they cover this criminal act by the Israeli Occupation Forces. Start with these numbers:

The New York Times 212-556-5272; Los Angeles Times 800-252-9141; Boston Herald 617-426-3000; Chicago

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Tribune 800-874-2863; and please call your local newspaper, radio station, or television news program.

Petition

To: President President Barack Obama, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Vice President Joe Biden, Congressional leaders, U.N. General Assembly President d'Escoto-Brockmann, U.N. Secretary General Ban, members of the U.N. Security Council, U.N. member states, and the President, Prime Minister, Cabinet and Opposition leader of Israel

cc: Major media representatives, International Red Cross

RELEASE THE SPIRIT OF HUMANITY AND ALL ITS PASSENGERS IMMEDIATELY AND ALLOW ITS HUMANITARIAN MISSION TO GAZA TO PROCEED! END THE SIEGE OF GAZA NOW!

I am outraged at the actions of the Israeli military in attacking and boarding the Free Gaza Movement boat, the SPIRIT OF HUMANITY, abducting 21 human rights workers from 11 countries, including Nobel laureate Mairead Maguire and former U.S. Congreswoman Cynthia McKinney, dragging passengers and crew forcibly toward Israel. I am further outraged that Israel has confiscated tons of medicine from the ship as well as toys and olive trees.

I demand that the boat, passengers and crew be released immediately and allowed to proceed with its mission of bring humanitarian aid to Gaza.

As former U.S. Congressperson and 2008 Presidential Candidate Cynthia McKinney said, "This is an outrageous violation of international law. Our boat was not in Israeli waters, and we were on a human rights mission to the Gaza Strip. President Obama just told Israel to let in humanitarian and reconstruction supplies, and that's exactly what we tried to do. We're asking the international community to demand our release so we can resume our journey."

According to an International Committee of the Red Cross report released on June 29, the Palestinians living in Gaza are "trapped in despair." Thousands of Gazans whose homes were destroyed earlier during Israel's December/January massacre are still without shelter despite pledges of almost $4.5 billion in aid, because Israel refuses to allow cement and other building material into the Gaza Strip. The report also notes that hospitals are struggling to meet the needs of their patients due to Israel's disruption of medical supplies.

"The aid we were carrying is a symbol of hope for the people of Gaza, hope that the sea route would open for them, and they would be able to transport their own materials to begin to reconstruct the schools, hospitals and thousands of homes destroyed during the onslaught of "Cast Lead". Our mission is a gesture to the people of Gaza that we stand by them and that they are not alone" said fellow passenger Mairead Maguire, winner of a Noble Peace Prize for her work in Northern Ireland.

Just before being kidnapped by Israel, Huwaida Arraf, Free Gaza Movement chairperson and delegation co-coordinator on this voyage, stated that: "No one could possibly believe that our small boat constitutes any sort of threat to Israel. We carry medical and reconstruction supplies, and children's toys. Our passengers include a Nobel peace prize laureate and a former U.S. congressperson. Our boat was searched and received a security clearance by Cypriot Port Authorities before we departed, and at no time did we ever approach Israeli waters."

Arraf continued, "Israel's deliberate and premeditated attack on our unarmed boat is a clear violation of international law and we demand our immediate and unconditional release."

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I demand that the Obama Administration take immediate action to protest the violation of international law and obtain the release of the ship and those abducted, listed below, assure the access to Gaza of humanitarian aid and missions like that of the Spirit of Humanity and the upcoming humanitarian aid mission Viva Palestina headed by British MP George Galloway and Vietnam War veteran Ron Kovic and including hundreds of people from the United States. The Viva Palestina mission is scheduled to leave New York City on July 4, bound for Gaza.

I further demand the Obama Adminsitration take action to end immediately the brutal siege, blockade and occupation of Gaza.

Release the SPIRIT OF HUMANITY and all of the following human rights workers and crew NOW:

Khalad Abdelkader, Bahrain
Khalad is an engineer representing the Islamic Charitable Association of Bahrain.

Othman Abufalah, Jordan
Othman is a world-renowned journalist with al-Jazeera TV.

Khaled Al-Shenoo, Bahrain
Khaled is a lecturer with the University of Bahrain.

Mansour Al-Abi, Yemen
Mansour is a cameraman with Al-Jazeera TV.

Fatima Al-Attawi, Bahrain
Fatima is a relief worker and community activist from Bahrain.

Juhaina Alqaed, Bahrain
Juhaina is a journalist & human rights activist.

Huwaida Arraf, US
Huwaida is the Chair of the Free Gaza Movement and delegation co-coordinator for this voyage.

Ishmahil Blagrove, UK
Ishmahil is a Jamaican-born journalist, documentary film maker and founder of the Rice & Peas film production company. His documentaries focus on international struggles for social justice.

Kaltham Ghloom, Bahrain
Kaltham is a community activist.

Derek Graham, Ireland
Derek Graham is an electrician, Free Gaza organizer, and first mate aboard the Spirit of Humanity.

Alex Harrison, UK
Alex is a solidarity worker from Britain. She is traveling to Gaza to do long-term human rights monitoring.

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Denis Healey, UK
Denis is Captain of the Spirit of Humanity. This will be his fifth voyage to Gaza.

Fathi Jaouadi, UK
Fathi is a British journalist, Free Gaza organizer, and delegation co-coordinator for this voyage.

Mairead Maguire, Ireland
Mairead is a Nobel laureate and renowned peace activist.

Lubna Masarwa, Palestine/Israel
Lubna is a Palestinian human rights activist and Free Gaza organizer.

Theresa McDermott, Scotland
Theresa is a solidarity worker from Scotland. She is traveling to Gaza to do long-term human rights monitoring.

Cynthia McKinney, US
Cynthia McKinney is an outspoken advocate for human rights and social justice issues, as well as a=2 0former U.S. congressperson and presidential candidate.

Adnan Mormesh, UK
Adnan is a solidarity worker from Britain. He is traveling to Gaza to do long-term human rights monitoring.

Adam Qvist, Denmark
Adam is a solidarity worker from Denmark. He is traveling to Gaza to do human rights monitoring.

Adam Shapiro, US
Adam is an American documentary film maker and human rights activist.

Kathy Sheetz, US
Kathy is a nurse and film maker, traveling to Gaza to do human rights monitoring.

Sincerely,

Sign the petition online

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