

BREAKING NEWS: Vessel bound for Gaza. Act of Piracy by Israel in International Waters

By [Prof Michel Chossudovsky](#)

Global Research, July 19, 2011

19 July 2011

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

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Press reports confirm that the Dignite/Al Karama, the French flagged vessel bound for Gaza was attacked by the Israeli Navy in international waters in a blatant act of piracy.

“Earlier today, the Israeli navy took control of the one boat from Freedom Flotilla II that had made it into international waters on their way to Gaza. The French-flagged boat – Dignite/Al Karama – carried 16 people from France, Canada, Greece, Sweden and Tunisia. They were stopped about 40 miles away from Gaza and after several hours the Israelis took control of the boat, bringing it to the Israeli port of Ashdod.

The crew and passengers were “arrested” and taken to the Israeli port of Ashod, where they are slated to be “deported” from Israel.

But they never entered Israel. They were kidnapped in international waters and taken by force to Israel. So how can they possibly be deported from a country they never entered?

“At that point there were three Israeli navy boats surrounding the Dignity and the Dignity was in international waters, north of Al-Arish, Egypt.”

Mr. Lotayef said the vessel was “at least 50 kilometres away from any Israeli organized territorial waters.” The military had warned it would stop any attempt to break the sea blockade of Gaza, which Israel imposed four years ago in what it says is a measure to prevent arms smuggling to Gaza’s ruling Hamas militant group. The white boat was taken to the port in Ashdod, where foreign activists were to be questioned and then deported “to their countries of origin as soon as possible,” said Foreign Ministry spokesman Yigal Palmor. ([Israeli military takes over Gaza-bound French ship – The Globe and Mail](#), July 19, 2011)

Acts of Piracy in the high seas are clearly defined under in article 101 of UNCLOS (International Law of the Sea). There is absolutely no question that Israel has committed a blatant act of Piracy. Article 101 of UNCLOS is very explicit in this regard:

“Piracy consists of any of the following acts:

a) **any illegal acts of violence or detention, or any act of depredation**, committed for private ends by the crew or the passengers of a private ship or a private aircraft, and directed:

(i) on the high seas, against another ship or aircraft, or against persons or property on board such ship or aircraft;

(ii) against a ship, aircraft, persons or property in a place outside the jurisdiction of any State;

emphasis added

It should be noted that Art. 101 of UNCLOS pertains to the actions of a private ship for private ends. In the case the Dignité, the illegal acts of violence and detention were undertaken by the military of the State of Israel.

The actions directed by the Israeli Navy against a French flagged private vessel in international waters goes beyond the definition of "piracy". It is an act of State terrorism ordered by the Tel Aviv government rather than "an act of piracy".

The illegal enforcement of a blockade on Palestine in international waters is tantamount to an act of war.

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About the author:

Michel Chossudovsky is an award-winning author, Professor of Economics (emeritus) at the University of Ottawa, Founder and Director of the Centre for Research on Globalization (CRG), Montreal, Editor of Global Research. He has taught as visiting professor in Western Europe, Southeast Asia, the Pacific and Latin America. He has served as economic adviser to governments of developing countries and has acted as a consultant for several international organizations. He is the author of 13 books. He is a contributor to the Encyclopaedia Britannica. His writings have been published in more than twenty languages. In 2014, he was awarded the Gold Medal for Merit of the Republic of Serbia for his writings on NATO's war of aggression against Yugoslavia. He can be reached at crgeditor@yahoo.com

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