

# Freedom Flotilla III Sets Sail Toward Gaza, Carrying Medical Supplies And Solar Panels

By [Global Research News](#)

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In-depth Report: [FLOTILLA TO GAZA](#)

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*Marianne, a trawler owned by Swedish and Norwegian activists, is the first ship in the newest Freedom Flotilla. Carrying supplies, activists and important international dignitaries, the activists hope to end Israel's deadly blockade on the Port of Gaza.*

The blockade of the Port of Gaza, maintained by the Israeli navy with assistance from Egypt, is part of an overall stranglehold that Israel maintains over Palestine which keeps strict, inhumane limits on the flow of food, medical supplies and equipment necessary to repair Gaza's ruined infrastructure. Journalists and human rights monitors are routinely denied access to the region, as well.

[Marianne departed Wednesday from Gothenburg, Sweden](#). The ship stopped in Copenhagen Saturday, where [Dutch dignitaries and journalists joined the Swedish team after a celebratory concert](#). The passengers now include Trine Pertou Mach, a member of the Danish parliament, and Jonas Rolsted, an author. The ship's cargo includes medical supplies and solar panels.

A joint effort of Ship to Gaza Sweden and Ship to Gaza Norway, Marianne will be joined en route by vessels from other nations, all intent on reaching the Port of Gaza. Activists from Canada, Italy, Spain, Greece and South Africa are expected to be involved. Dr. Moncef Marzouki, the former president of Tunisia, [intends to join the flotilla](#) aboard another vessel.

Writing in April for Palestinian news and advocacy site the Electronic Intifada, Jamal Khoudary reported on [the devastating effects of the Israeli blockade](#) on an occupied nation struggling to recover from last summer's ruthless attacks, which left 300,000 homeless. "As a result [of the blockade], a million of Gaza's population of 1.8 million is dependent on aid," he wrote.

Exports have dropped to just 4.5 percent of what they were before the blockade began in 2007. The restricted flow of goods into and out of Gaza has caused widespread job losses and damage to the manufacturing sector and prevented effective medical care.

"[Unemployment](#) rates have hit an unprecedented level at around 50 percent. Hundreds of factories and workshops have either been [destroyed](#) or stopped functioning as essential materials are not allowed into Gaza," reported Khoudary. "Many patients have died due to limitations on movement of individuals."

The naval blockade is also enforced with deadly force. Palestinians and their supporters report that Israel frequently fires on fishing boats. Fishermen have been killed before, including as recently as March when [the Israeli navy fired on Tawfiq Abu Reyala's boat](#).

Israel's history of attacking humanitarian aid

Israel also responded to the first Freedom Flotilla with shocking violence when it was launched five years ago by the Free Gaza Movement and Turkey's Foundation for Human Rights and Freedoms and Humanitarian Relief. In May 2010, after military speedboats intercepted the ships, Israeli commandos boarded the lead vessel and killed nine activists.

Against the objections of the Turkish government, an International Criminal Court investigation found [no grounds to bring war crimes charges over the flotilla raid](#), claiming it was not an incident of "sufficient gravity" to fall under their jurisdiction. But Ali Abunimah, co-founder of Electronic Intifada, [accused the investigatory panel of Zionist bias](#) and criticized the United Nations for putting a known human rights abuser, former Colombian President Álvaro Uribe Vélez, in charge.

A second Freedom Flotilla, attempted in 2011, failed due to numerous factors, including low turnout, [Greek naval interference](#) and damage to two vessels, leading [activists to accuse Israel of sabotage](#).

With groups from more nations now signed onto the coalition, activists hope for success on this third outing. According to a [Freedom Flotilla Coalition press release](#), Marianne's cargo is symbolic of the goals of the entire movement: to free Palestine from Israeli control.

"In the blockaded Gaza Strip, where the infrastructure has been demolished, solar cells will thus provide an opportunity to independent local production of clean energy," they wrote. "The sun can not be blockaded."

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