

Pro-Palestinian activists aboard ship sail to Gaza to break Israel's blockade

By [Global Research](#)

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Montreal man lone Canadian on ship to Gaza Strip

Vessel expected to reach destination Gaza Tuesday

A Montreal man is one of about 10 pro-Palestinian activists aboard a ship that is trying to break Israel's blockade of the Gaza Strip.

Stephan Corriveau is aboard the Dignity al-Karama, which left Greek waters on Saturday and was headed toward the territory on Sunday.

The French ship was originally part of a larger protest flotilla – which included a Canadian vessel – that had hoped to break the naval blockade several weeks ago, but was thwarted by Greece.

Ehab Lotayef, a Montreal-based organizer of the flotilla, said he wasn't sure when the French ship would reach the blockade.

"I don't want to jump to any conclusion at this point," Lotayef said in an interview with The Canadian Press.

"They absolutely are doing well and they are evaluating their options by the hour."

Thomas Sommer, a spokesman for the 16 activists and journalists on the ship, said the vessel is travelling slowly and they expect to reach the territory on Tuesday.

In addition to Corriveau, there are also Swedish, Greek, and French activists on board, along with three journalists.

Activists opposed to sea blockade Lotayef said the latest attempt to sail to Gaza sends a political message to Israel and the international community that the activists haven't given up.

Israel imposed the naval blockade on Gaza in 2007 after Hamas militants took over the coastal territory. Hamas is classified as a terror organization in Canada and the United States.

Israel says the blockade is a security measure crucial to preventing weapons smuggling, but critics say it limits the flow of goods and people, amounting to collective punishment.

An Israeli raid on a flotilla last year killed nine and injured 45 aboard a Turkish ship.

The Israeli military has declined comment on the Dignity's current voyage, but has said it will stop any attempt to break the sea blockade of Gaza.

Lotayef said the French ship currently en route to Gaza originally set sail from the island of Corsica late last month and passed through Greek waters.

"This boat was the only boat that didn't originate in Greece," Lotayef said in an interview.

"It's legal position was even much clearer than the other boats."

Earlier this month, Canadian activists trying to deliver aid to Gaza put off their mission after their ship, known as the Tahrir, had been prevented from leaving a Greek port for several weeks.

Corriveau was among the original crew members on that ship.

Organizers had attributed Greece's hardline stance against the flotilla to Israeli pressure. The country is mired in an economic crisis and has grown closer to Israel as it seeks more foreign investment.

The Harper government was critical of the flotilla with Foreign Affairs minister John Baird calling the mission "provocative" and unhelpful."

He had urged those wishing to deliver aid to do so through established channels like the Red Cross/Red Crescent.

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