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Prepared by SK/AFP

### Will Jewish aid ship to Gaza be hijacked by Israel's navy?

## Providing a Voice

#### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Press Release No 25 – 27 September 2010

Eight Jewish activists set sail on Sunday from Turkish held Northern Cyprus in a bid to break Israel's blockade of Gaza. They follow in the wake of the ill-fated aid flotilla which sailed in May ending with the massacre of nine passengers by Israeli commandos storming the deck of the *Mavi Marmara*. Countless others were injured.

The passengers of the *Irene* see their boat as a symbolic protest against Israel's occupation of the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the siege of Gaza. Furthermore, they want to show that not all Jews support Israeli government policies.

Among the passengers are German, American and English Jews, a former Israeli Air Force pilot and Rami Elhanan, whose daughter Smadar was killed by a Palestinian suicide bomber in 1997.

Reuven Moskowitz, an 82-year-old passenger who survived the Nazi Holocaust said "It is a sacred duty for me, as a survivor, to protest against the persecution, the oppression and the imprisonment of so many people in Gaza, including more than 800,000 children."

It remains to be seen whether Israel will make allowances for this aid ship bringing toys, textbooks, fishing nets and prosthetic limbs. Ehud Barak, Israel's defence minister has warned that Israel will stop any ship trying to run the blockade, but with the passengers all being Jewish, Israel is likely to be faced with a public relations dilemma whatever action it takes.

Last week's UN Human Rights Council reported that there was clear evidence for prosecuting Israel over the killing and torture perpetrated on the *Mavi Marmara* and rejected Israel's argument that the aid activists were violent thereby justifying the decision to open fire.

*Australians for Palestine's* public advocate Alex Whisson said that "a growing number of activists and people of conscience are determined to break Israel's blockade, despite Israel's record of violence, and that the Jewish activists should be commended. It is time for the world community to sit up and take notice of the immense suffering in Gaza and to unequivocally condemn Israel's barbaric policies against the Palestinian people."

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