

## **Irish ship sails for Gaza in defiance of Criminal Blockade**

by Stephen C. Webster via ryall - Raw Story Tuesday, Jun 1 2010, 9:59pm

international / injustice/law / other press

### **'Serious consequences' promised if passengers harmed**

*In DEFIANCE of U.S. supported Israeli crimes on land and sea, the IRISH ship MV Rachel Corrie continues to sail for Gaza with relief aid. The WORLD, now intolerant of the appalling crimes committed against humanity by ISRAEL/AMERICA, two ROGUE nations that mistakenly believe they are somehow 'special' and above the law, watches with keen interest! We offer, from Australia, our whole hearted support for the brave crew and passengers of this 'little' IRISH vessel, which continues to fly the 'flag' of FREEDOM, JUSTICE AND HUMANITY for us ALL. You little bewdy!*

We are ONE

Irish humanitarian aid ship the MV Rachel Corrie is still sailing for Gaza, in spite of Israel's recent, devastating attack on other vessels in the Gaza aid flotilla, resulting in at least nine dead activists and hundreds of prisoners.

The ship, named after 23-year-old U.S. peace activist Rachel Corrie -- who was crushed to death in 2003 by an American-built bulldozer operated by the Israeli army -- has been pleading with the international community to pressure Israel into leaving them alone.

The Irish government, for its part, has threatened Israel with "the most serious consequences" if any Irish national, captured or currently aboard an aid vessel, is harmed.

"If any harm comes to any of our citizens, it will have the most serious consequences," Taoiseach Brian Cowen said, according to The Irish Times.

"Taoiseach" is the position bestowed upon the individual who leads Ireland's government.

The MV Rachel Corrie is reportedly due to arrive in Gaza tomorrow, according to the Irish Palestine Solidarity Campaign. Irish officials have demanded Israel let the boat pass unimpeded. Ireland has long opposed Israel's military blockade of Palestine.

"The government has formally requested the Israeli government to allow the Irish-owned ship to be allowed to complete its journey unimpeded and discharge its humanitarian cargo in Gaza," Cowen said.

"The Rachel Corrie is carrying medical equipment, wheelchairs, school supplies and cement, a material Israel has banned in Hamas-ruled Gaza, organizers said," the Seattle Post-Globe reported.

Five Irish activists and five Malaysian activists were said to be aboard.

"In the names of our friends, we are more determined than ever to continue into Gaza with our humanitarian cargo and our support for the blockaded and suffering people of Gaza," read a message sent on behalf of the activists, published by Global Research. "We expect Israel to respond

to the international condemnation of its violence by not impeding by any means the safe passage of the Rachel Corrie. We appeal to the international community and United Nations to continue to demand Israel our safe passage into Gaza."

Activist group Jewish Voice for Peace declared in an e-mail to supporters, "We still don't know the names of those who were killed or injured, or where they are from. And we don't know the whereabouts or well-being of more than 400 activists still being held by Israel." The group demanded Israel release the activists without condition or charge.

The activists' call echoed another from NATO, which demanded the prisoners' freedom and pressed the need for a "prompt, impartial, credible and transparent investigation" into the events.

In response to the activist killings, Egypt announced it would open a portion of border crossing into Palestine to allow in future shipments of humanitarian supplies. Turkey, reportedly the country of origin for some of the May 31st raid's victims, pledged it would send a military escort with future Gaza aid boats.

Israel claims the killings were the result of a "provocation" by activists who attacked the soldiers as they landed. However, journalists who were on board the vessel during the raid reported civilian casualties first, before they confirmed soldiers had landed, indicating that Israeli forces began their bombardment before boarding the ship.

By Tuesday, the United States had not condemned Israel for taking action against a ship in international waters, instead calling for an investigation to learn the facts of what happened. Instead, White House Press Secretary Robert Gibbs stuck to the language of a UN Security Council statement issued late Sunday on the Israeli assault on a convoy headed to Gaza.

The statement condemns "those acts which resulted in the loss of at least ten civilians and many wounded," but did not specifically say whether the Israeli raid or actions of pro-Palestinians supporters caused the violence.

"Let me simply restate what the international community and the United States supported early this morning at the UN Security Council through a presidential statement," Gibbs said.

"The Security Council statement that I read calls for an investigation that is prompt, impartial, credible and transparent, conforming to international standards, of exactly what happened," Gibbs said. "And we're obviously supportive of that."

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