

# *Israel Forcibly Deports Women Activists Bound for Gaza*

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Tel Aviv, October 8 (RHC)-- The Israeli navy has intercepted the all women's solidarity boat Zaytouna in international waters before it reached Gaza. The boat was diverted to the Israeli port of Ashdod and thirteen female activists, including Nobel Peace Prize winner Mairead Maguire of Northern Ireland, were arrested and deported.

Zaytouna set off from the Spanish port of Barcelona to take humanitarian aid to Gaza in mid-September under the banner: "The Women's Boat to Gaza." The "Women's Boat" is part of the larger Freedom Flotilla Coalition.

Gaza, with a population of more than 1.8 million, has been under siege by the Israeli regime since June 2007. The blockade has caused a decline in the standards of living as well as unprecedented levels of unemployment and unrelenting poverty.

In 2015, when the "Women's Boat" attempted to deliver humanitarian aid to Gaza, the Israeli regime's naval forces boarded the vessel and forced it to change route. A similar attempt by a Turkish flotilla resulted in the death of 10 activists in 2010, when Israeli commandos attacked the Freedom Flotilla in international waters in the Mediterranean Sea. They also injured another 50 activists on board the ship.

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