

# *Israel attacks Gaza-bound aid flotilla in international waters*

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Geneva, May 2 (RHC)-- Israel has carried out a drone attack on a Gaza-bound ship carrying humanitarian aid and activists off the coast of Malta in international waters, the Freedom Flotilla Coalition (FFC) says.

"At 00:23 Maltese time, the Conscience, a Freedom Flotilla Coalition ship came under direct attack in international waters," the international NGO said in a statement on Friday.

"Armed drones attacked the front of an unarmed civilian vessel twice, causing a fire and a substantial breach in the hull," it added, blaming Israel.

The coalition called for the summoning of Israeli ambassadors, saying they must "answer to violations of international law, including the ongoing blockade and the bombing of our civilian vessel in international waters."

According to the statement, 21 activists, including prominent figures, from different countries were on board "on a nonviolent humanitarian mission to challenge Israel's illegal and deadly siege of Gaza, and to deliver desperately needed, life-saving aid."

The attack came while the group had been organizing the action "under a media black out to avoid any potential sabotage." The group noted that the ship's generator was deliberately targeted in the drone attack, adding that the boat was left without power and at risk of sinking.

The FFC urged the international community to "condemn this aggression against an unarmed humanitarian aid vessel" and called on all states providing aid for Israel to "end political, financial and military support for Israel's illegal siege, blockade, occupation, and apartheid."

The Maltese government said everyone aboard the aid flotilla were "safe", adding that a nearby tug had been directed to aid the vessel.

Israel launched the war of genocide in Gaza and imposed a complete siege on the strip on October 7, 2023, after Hamas carried out Operation Al-Aqsa Flood in retaliation for Israel's intensified atrocities against the Palestinian people.

Last January, the Israeli regime was forced to agree to a ceasefire deal with Hamas given the regime's failure to achieve any of its objectives, including the "elimination" of the Palestinian resistance movement or the release of captives. However, Israel cut off food and medical supplies and other aid to the 2.3 million residents of the Gaza Strip on March 2, just two weeks before breaking the two-month ceasefire and prisoner-captive exchange agreement.

In total, 52,418 Palestinians have been killed and 118,091 others injured since October 7, 2023, according to the Palestinian health ministry.

In 2010, Israel stormed a similar vessel, "Mavi Marmara", which was launched from southern Turkey, killing 10 and injuring 28 others.

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