

# *Gaza-bound Madleen: French MEP threatened by Israel for defying deportation*

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A placard reads "I am Madleen" as protesters gather during a rally to show their support for activists aboard the Gaza-bound aid vessel, in Lyon, south-eastern France on June 9, 2025.

(AFP)

Paris, June 12 (RHC)-- French-Palestinian Member of the European Parliament, Rima Hassan, who remains in Israeli custody, has been threatened and pressured to sign deportation papers following her arrest aboard the Gaza-bound Madleen aid ship.

Hassan was one of a dozen activists, including climate campaigner Greta Thunberg, aboard the British-flagged vessel that was seized by Israel's naval forces in international waters on Monday. All passengers were detained and transferred to Israeli facilities.



**French-Palestinian Member of the European Parliament Rima Hassan**

Al Jazeera journalist Omar Faiad, who was also on Madleen and deported by Israel, said after he arrived in Paris that Israeli forces attempted to force those who refused to sign documents admitting illegal entry into Israel.

He said Rima Hassan "refuses to sign the papers and was directly threatened by an officer who said: 'I'll smash your head against the wall if you don't sign. We'll handle this our own way,'" Faiad said.

Hassan, a prominent advocate for Palestinian rights, has been vocal in her opposition to Israel's campaign of genocide and ethnic cleansing in Gaza.

Hassan's detention has sparked protests in Paris and drawn sharp criticism from European lawmakers, who described Hassan's detention as "a blatant violation of her parliamentary immunity."

"We strongly affirm that their humanitarian mission to Gaza was legal, necessary, and urgent; the arrest violates international law; the detention is illegal and arbitrary," Hassan's team said in a statement.

After being kidnapped in international waters, the 12 Freedom Flotilla members were presented with documents asking them to acknowledge illegal entry into Israel. Signing meant immediate deportation, while refusal would lead to a court hearing

Four of them, including Thunberg, signed the presented papers and flew out of Tel Aviv early on Tuesday. Upon arrival in Paris, Thunberg told reporters she and her companions had been "kidnapped in international waters."

The climate activist, however, said her brief detention was nothing compared with what Palestinians regularly endure under the Israeli regime's occupation.

[ SOURCE: AFP and NEWS AGENCIES ]

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