

# TIMELINE OF THE FREEDOM FILOTILLA

(2008-2025)



DİJİTAL HAFİZA  
DERNEĞİ

2025

# TIMELINE OF THE FREEDOM FILOTILLA (2008-2025)



This report was prepared by the Digital Memory Association and made available to the public.

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## First Mission

On 22 August 2008, two boats named Free Gaza and Liberty departed from Cyprus towards Gaza, carrying 44 passengers from 17 different countries.

After more than 30 hours at sea, the two ships safely reached Gaza on 23 August, where they were welcomed by tens of thousands of Palestinians gathered along the coastline. The passengers remained in Gaza for six days, during which they visited hospitals and schools, and delivered donated hearing aids and medicines.

On 29 August, the boats left Gaza and returned to Cyprus with seven Palestinians on board. These individuals became the first in recent history to leave their homeland freely. For the first time in over forty years, international ships docked at Gaza Port; and for the first time in more than sixty years, Palestinians were able to both enter and exit their country without restriction.





## Second Mission

On 28 October 2008, the Dignity set sail from Larnaca Port in Cyprus towards Gaza, carrying 27 passengers from 12 countries.

Although Israeli naval ships shadowed the small ship as it approached Gaza, they did not resort to the use of force, and the blockade was breached for the second time.





## Third Mission

On 8 November 2008, the Dignity departed once again from Larnaca with 24 passengers—many of them officials and parliamentarians—together with nearly one ton of medical supplies bound for Gaza. During this third mission, the blockade was again overcome and the assistance successfully delivered.

In addition to distributing medicines, the parliamentarians visited hospitals, schools, agricultural centers, and Gaza's power plant, and met with their counterparts in the Palestinian Legislative Council. On November 10th, the Dignity departed Gaza, taking eight more Palestinians on its return journey.



## Fourth Mission

One month after the third voyage, on 8 December 2008, a student delegation led by Mike Cushman and Jonathon Rosenhead traveled to Gaza aboard the Dignity. The group visited schools and universities in Gaza to assess the impact of the blockade on education, and successfully enabled 11 Palestinian students - who had been accepted into universities abroad but were unable to leave Gaza due to the blockade - to depart.

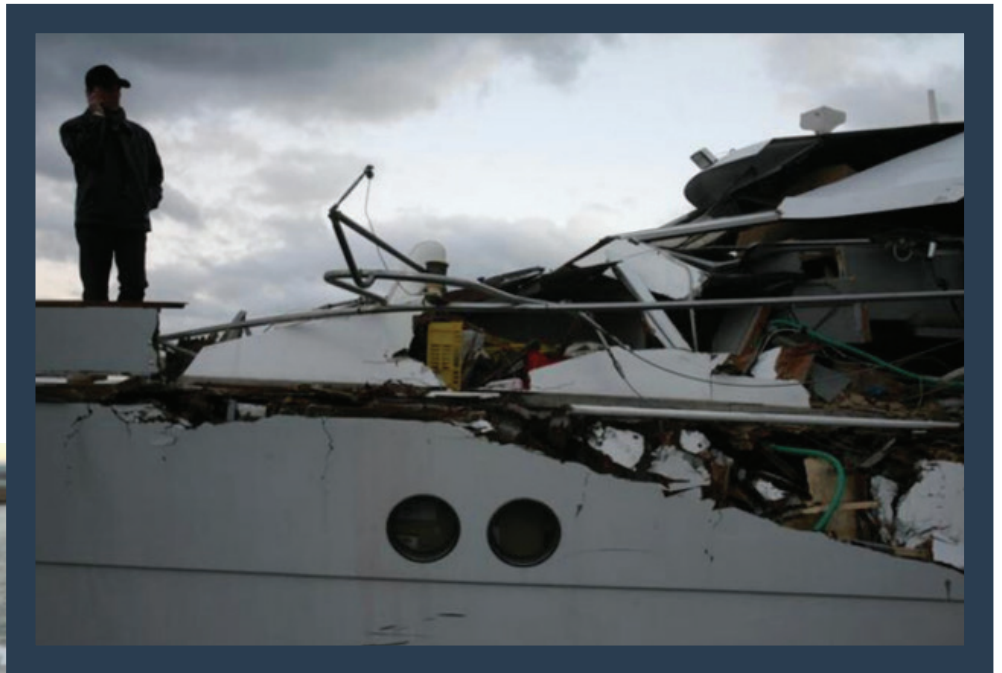


## Fifth Mission

On 19 December 2008, the Free Gaza Movement, in cooperation with the Qatar Eid Charity team, reached Gaza once again aboard the Dignity with 14 passengers on board. This historic journey marked Qatar as the first Arab country to break through the Gaza blockade.

# Sixth Mission

On 28 December 2008, the Dignity, carrying 16 passengers, embarked on its fifth journey towards Gaza. However, on 30 December at around 06:00, while in international waters and approximately 90 miles from Gaza, the ship was rammed by an Israeli naval ship in an apparent attempt to sink it. Despite the attack, the Dignity managed to reach a Lebanese port.







## 2009 Free Gaza Movement

### Seventh Mission

On 12 January 2009, the Spirit of Humanity set out from Cyprus towards Gaza with 36 passengers representing 17 countries. While en route, the ship was intercepted by the Israeli navy and forced to turn back, returning to Cyprus.

Additionally, in February 2009, the Lebanese cargo ship Tali, which was not affiliated with the Free Gaza Movement, was attacked by Israeli Defense Forces and subsequently towed to Israel.

### Eighth Mission

On 29 June 2009, the Spirit of Humanity set out once again from Cyprus towards Gaza with 21 passengers on board. While en route, the ship was forcibly intercepted by the Israeli military and towed to Haifa Port. The passengers were taken to Israeli prisons and later deported.



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## 2010 Gaza Freedom Flotilla



On 22 May 2010, the Mavi Marmara departed from Istanbul and proceeded to Antalya Port. After the necessary loading was completed, the ship set sail on 29 May to join the other ships of the flotilla.

### The flotilla consisted of the following ships:

- Defne Y (Turkey / IHH)
- Challenger 1, Challenger 2 (United States / Free Gaza Movement)
- Gazze 1 (Turkey / IHH)
- Sfendoni (Greece / Greek Ship to Gaza)
- Rachel Corrie (Ireland / Free Gaza Movement)
- Sofia (Greece / Greek Ship to Gaza)





The flotilla convened in the Mediterranean on 30 May, carrying 6,000 tons of humanitarian aid and 750 activists from 36 countries, and then set course for Gaza. On the same evening, the ships were harassed over radio communications by the Israeli navy, and shortly after midnight on 31 May, they were surrounded.



Within a few hours, Israeli commandos launched an assault on the ships using live ammunition. As a result, ten Turkish citizens were killed and more than fifty people were injured. All ships were forcibly towed to Ashdod Port, and the activists were taken into custody.







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## 2010 Jewish Boat to Gaza

On 28 September 2010, under the initiative named Jewish Boat to Gaza, the sailing ship Irene set out for Gaza carrying nine Jewish activists. The small yacht was intercepted by the Israeli Defense Forces, and the passengers were subjected to violence during the operation.

The passengers and crew were subsequently taken to Israel and detained, while the ship was seized by the Israeli authorities.

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## 2011 Gaza Freedom Flotilla 2

In June 2011, the flotilla consisted of nine ships sponsored by 11 civil society organizations. The Israeli government made payments to the Greek authorities to prevent the ships from departing from Greek ports.

The ships from the United States and Canada attempted to leave Greek waters but were intercepted by Greek naval commandos.

### **The flotilla included the following ships:**

- Audacity of Hope, Louise Michel, Gernika
- Tahrir, Juliano, Saoirse
- Eleftheri Mesogeios, Stefano Chiarini
- Mavi Marmara (announced it would not participate in this flotilla due to technical reasons)



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## 2011 Dignite Al Karama

In July 2011, the Freedom Flotilla Coalition planned a new mission, with the ships scheduled to depart for Gaza on 5 July. However, most shipss were unable to leave port, as many were blocked by the Greek authorities. Only the French ship Dignité Al Karama managed to set sail.

On the morning of 19 July 2011, while 65 km off the coast of Gaza with 16 passengers and crew on board, the ship was intercepted and seized by the Israeli navy. The passengers and crew were detained and interrogated.

In November 2011, two ships—the Tahrir (Canadian) and the MV Saoirse (Irish) - departed from Fethiye Port in Turkey as part of the initiative called Freedom Waves to Gaza.

Approximately 80 kilometers off the coast of Gaza, while in international waters, the ships were intercepted by the Israeli navy. The passengers and crew were forcibly taken with the ships to Ashdod Port and subsequently deported.

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## 2011 Freedom Waves to Gaza





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**2012**  
**Estelle**

In October 2012, the ship Estelle departed from the port of Naples, Italy, and proceeded towards Greece. On 16 October 2012, it set sail for Gaza carrying 30 passengers and humanitarian supplies.

On 19 October 2012, approximately 50 kilometers off the coast of Gaza, the ship was intercepted and seized by the Israeli navy and towed to Ashdod Port. The activists on board were detained.



# ” 2013 2014 Gaza's Ark Project in Gaza

In 2013 and 2014, with financial and logistical support from people around the world, Palestinian workers transformed a 25-meter fishing ship into a cargo ship capable of transporting Palestinian products and passengers, despite the Israeli blockade.

The project faced numerous obstacles and delays that postponed the planned voyage. On 29 April 2014, an explosion caused by sabotage carried out by Israel inflicted significant damage on the ship.

Despite this attack, the organizers of the Gaza ship remained determined and continued working on the project, repairing the damage. However, during the Israeli attacks that began in July 2014, the ship was struck by a missile on 10 July 2014 and completely destroyed by fire.

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## 2015 Gaza Freedom Flotilla 3

The flagship Marianne av Göteborg departed from Sweden on 10 May 2015 and reached the waters off Crete. Three other sailing ships - the Juliano II, Vittorio, and Rachel - departed from Athens, Greece, on 25 June 2015 to join the Marianne.

Carrying a total of 47 passengers from 17 countries along with medical supplies, the flotilla set sail for Gaza on the same day. On 29 June 2015, in international waters, the Israeli navy surrounded the flotilla and seized the ships. The Marianne was towed to Ashdod Port, while the other three ships returned.





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## 2016 Women's Boats to Gaza



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On 8 March, International Women's Day, the Freedom Flotilla Coalition (FFC) announced the launch of its final initiative, the Women's Boats to Gaza (WBG), in Messina and Palermo, Sicily, Italy.

On 14 September 2016, two ships, Zaytouna and Amal, set out as part of the Women's Boats to Gaza initiative, covering a distance of 1,715 miles to challenge the Israeli naval blockade of Gaza. Amal suffered a serious engine failure in Barcelona, Spain, and was unable to accompany Zaytouna.

Zaytouna, carrying 13 female passengers, departed from Barcelona on 15 September 2016. On the morning of 5 October 2016, approximately 34 miles off the coast of Gaza in international waters, the ship was intercepted and seized by the Israeli navy. The 13 passengers and crew, representing 13 different countries, were taken, interrogated, detained, and subsequently deported.





# “ 2018 Just Future for Palestine Flotilla

On 22 July 2018, two ships, Al Awda and Freedom, departed from Palermo as part of the The Right to a Just Future for Palestine mission, heading towards Gaza. Two smaller boats, Falestina and Mairead, were forced to end their journey in the Mediterranean due to mechanical failures and crew issues.

On 29 July 2018, Al Awda, and on 3 August 2018, Freedom, were intercepted in international waters by the Israeli navy. The passengers were subjected to attacks, resulting in injuries.

They were subsequently taken to Israel, questioned, and deported.



In April 2024, three ships - the Anadolu, Vicdan, and Akdeniz - were preparing to set sail for Gaza with hundreds of participants from 40 countries as part of the Break The Siege mission, organized by the Freedom Flotilla Coalition (FFC), the IHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation, and the Mavi Marmara Association, aiming to break the Israeli blockade that had lasted approximately 200 days and deliver humanitarian aid.

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**2024  
Break  
the  
Siege**

On the scheduled departure day, 26 April 2024, the flag states, including the Government of Guinea-Bissau, withdrew the ships' flags under pressure from Israel. As a result, the ships were unable to sail officially. In response, the FFC issued a statement clarifying that unflagged ships cannot enter international waters and that the departure had therefore been postponed to a later date.





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## 2025 Vicdan Ship

Following the blocked mission in April 2024, the Vicdan ship was prevented from leaving Haydarpasa Port for several months. Activists established a protest camp near the port under the name Freedom Vigil to demand the release of the ship. As a result of these protests and pressures, the Vicdan was finally ready to sail in the spring of 2025.

At the end of April 2025, the Vicdan departed from Bizerte Port, Tunisia, planning to pick up European activists near Malta and proceed to Gaza. However, on the night of 2 May 2025, the ship was targeted by a UAV/kamikaze drone attack just outside Maltese territorial waters (approximately 13–14 nautical miles / 24–26 km). After several days of search and rescue operations and port negotiations, the activists were evacuated from the ship by boats on 5 May, and the Vicdan was towed to Izmir Port for repairs.





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## 2025 Madleen Ship

On Sunday, 1 June 2025, the Madleen ship, carrying 12 civilian crew members and humanitarian aid, departed from Catania Port on the island of Sicily, Southern Italy, heading towards the Gaza Strip. From the outset of its voyage, the ship was threatened several times by Israel but continued on its course, emphasizing that it was conducting a lawful mission.

On 8 June, the ship encountered an internet blackout; despite all obstacles, it continued its voyage towards Gaza. In the early hours of 9 June, around 03:00, the Israeli navy intervened, took control of the ship, towed it to Ashdod Port, and detained the crew. On 10 June, Israel deported four individuals while continuing to hold the remaining eight in custody.



Following international pressure and statements by civil society organizations highlighting violations of international law, all remaining detainees were released and deported on 16 June.



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## 2025 Hanzala Ship

Departing from Syracuse Port, Italy, on 13 July, the Hanzala ship reached Gallipoli Port, Italy, on 15 July for technical preparations. Following five days of technical arrangements, the Hanzala set sail towards Gaza on 20 July 2025 with 21 activists on board.

On the same day, sabotage attempts were carried out on the ship, including a rope entangling the propeller and the placement of a container carrying sulfuric acid instead of a freshwater tank. On 24 July, communication with the ship was briefly lost, and drones were observed overhead.

On 26 July at approximately 23:43, about 40 nautical miles from Gaza, the ship's cameras were disabled, and the Israeli navy intervened in international waters, boarding the ship. The Hanzala was towed to Ashdod Port on 27 July, and all 21 activists were detained.

During the initial days, some volunteers were deported, and hearings were conducted for the remaining individuals. By 31 July, the last two activists were deported, completing the release of all passengers from Israeli custody.





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## 2025 Global Sumud Flotilla

At a press conference held in Tunisia on 4 August 2025, it was announced that on 31 August dozens of civilian boats would set sail for Gaza from Spain, followed by additional boats departing on 4 September from Tunisia and other countries (Greece, Cyprus, Italy, and South Africa).

On 31 August, the boats departed from Barcelona towards Tunisia. However, due to unsafe weather conditions, they were forced to return to port. On 1 September, once weather conditions normalized, the boats set out again to rendezvous with other vessels in Tunisia.



## DUMS

On 4 September, while the boats were en route to Tunisia, Israel's National Security Minister Ben-Gvir declared that the activists in the flotilla should be designated as terrorists and that the boats should be seized.

On 8 September, the boats that had departed from Barcelona reached Tunisia and were greeted enthusiastically by the Tunisian public. Shortly after the boats approached the Port of Tunis, at 00:29 a.m. on 9 September, a drone attack targeted the flotilla's flagship, the Family. While no casualties or injuries were reported, the vessel sustained damage to its bow due to a fire that broke out.

Despite all attacks and obstructions, the flotilla, announced to set sail for Gaza on 10 September with hundreds of participants from 44 countries, was again subjected to a drone strike at 00:17 a.m. on 10 September.





2025