



AUSTRALIANS FOR PALESTINE WOMEN FOR PALESTINE
MELBOURNE – AUSTRALIA



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THERE WILL BE HOPE IN GAZA

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(LARNACA, 23 September 2008) - The Free Gaza Movement announced today that an international delegation of doctors, parliamentarians, and human rights workers will sail to Gaza aboard the "Hope" on Thursday, September 25th at about 10 a.m. (ETA Gaza Friday 10 am). A press conference will be held on Thursday at Larnaca Port prior to departure.

The passengers on board include:

- Five physicians from 4 countries
- Human rights lawyers and monitors
- Jamal Zahalka, a member of the Israeli Knesset
- Dr. Mustafa Barghouti, General Secretary of the Palestinian National Initiative, and member of the Palestinian Legislative Council
- Mairead Maguire, winner of 1976 Nobel Peace Prize for work in Belfast

According to Maguire, a world-renowned human rights campaigner, "This mission carries with it the hopes and wishes of many people around the world."

On August 23, two of the Free Gaza Movement's boats, the Free Gaza and the Liberty arrived in Gaza Port to the jubilation of tens of thousands of Palestinians gathered there. It was the first time in over forty years that international ships had docked in Gaza Port.

Since Israel tightened its blockade two years ago, malnutrition and unemployment rates in Gaza have soared. In May 2008, several international aid organizations, including CARE International UK, CAFOD, Christian Aid, Oxfam, and Medecins du Monde UK, stated that, "the stranglehold on Gaza's borders has made ... the work of the UN and other humanitarian agencies ... virtually impossible. Only a trickle of medicine, food, fuel and other goods is being allowed in...making people highly dependent on food aid, and [it has] brought the health system and basic services, such as water and sanitation near to collapse."

Huwaida Arraf, delegation spokesperson and a law lecturer at Al-Quds University in Jerusalem, said, "The world cannot stay silent as the Palestinian people are deliberately starved and humiliated; Palestinians have a right to life with dignity. Last month, on August 23rd, our two, small, wooden boats, the Free Gaza and Liberty, sailed to Gaza and did what our governments would not do - we defied Israel's illegal collective punishment of 1.5 million men, women and children living in the Gaza Strip. On September 25th, we're sailing back to Gaza to challenge it again. Our boats are very humble, but what they represent is hope, and hope is what mobilizes change the world around."

The "Hope" was named in recognition of St. Augustine, who wrote that "Hope is the greatest of all virtues, even greater than Love. For Love only teaches us what should be, while Hope teaches us what will be."

PASSENGER LIST

Name	Country of Origin	Languages spoken	Affiliations
AL JABAR, Ali	Qatar	English/Arabic	Al Jazeera
ALSHUBASHI, Mohammed	Germany/Palestine	English/German/Arabic	Physician, neurosurgeon
ABOURASHED, Amin	Holland	English/Dutch/Arabic	Human Rights
ARRAF, Huwaida	Palestine/US	English/Arabic	NVDA International, Human Rights, International Law Spokesperson for FGM
BARGHOUTI, Mustafa	Palestine	Russian/English/Arabic	President, Mubadara Party, MP
BOULOS, Nicolas	Greece	Greek/English	Chemist, Boat engineer
BUTTERLY, Caiomhe	Ireland	Spanish/English/Arabic	Voice in Wilderness, PSC
COX, Rod	UK	English	Pal Solidarity, Chester, UK
AL HAMS, Walid	Palestine/Sweden	English/Swedish/Arabic/Slovak	Physician, Internal Medicine
ERNSHIRE Eliza	Australia/UK	English	Human rights activist
FALLILI, Joe	Italy	English/Italian/French/Spanish	Opera singer, composer
GRAHAM, Derek	Ireland	English	Sailor, electrician, first mate
HAMAMI, Ibrahim	Palestine/UK	Arabic/English	Physician, family medicine
KLONTZAS, George	Greece	Greek/English	Boat captain
KYSIA, Ramzi	US/Lebanon	English	Writer, organiser
MAGUIRE, Mairead	Ireland	English	Peace People, Nobel Peace Prize
MASARWA, Lubna	Palestine '48/Israel	English/Arabic/Hebrew	Jerusalem Alternative Information Center, Al Quds University
McDERMOTT, Theresa	Scotland	English	Human Rights Activist on first trip
MOHAMMED, Amir	Sudan	Arabic, English	Al Jazeera
ZAHALKA, Jamal	Israel	Arabic/English/Hebrew	Member of Knesset