



GLOBAL ARTICLE NINE CONFERENCE TO ABOLISH WAR

「9条世界会議」日本実行委員会

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Call for the release of Mairead Maguire and human rights activists on humanitarian mission to Gaza detained by Israel

Peace Boat is deeply concerned by the detention by Israeli forces of Nobel Peace Laureate Mairead Maguire and approximately 20 human rights activists participating in the eighth mission of the Free Gaza Movement aimed at delivering critically needed humanitarian aid to the people of Gaza and bringing attention to the Israeli blockade. Also on board the two detained ships were former United States Congresswoman Cynthia McKinney, as well as human rights activists, journalists and academics from 11 countries.

Reports describe that late on the afternoon of June 30, the Israeli military forcibly boarded the Free Gaza fishing boat on which the activists were travelling, and detained them. The ship, accompanied by another boat - the Spirit of Humanity - was carrying vital medical supplies, construction materials, children's toys and olive trees to deliver to Gaza.

According to a new International Committee of the Red Cross report, 1.5 million people are “trapped in despair” and poverty, with insufficient access to health care, clean water and other basic necessities, unable to rebuild their homes and their lives, due to the closure imposed on the territory. It is against “this cruel siege of Gaza by the Israeli Government, and to show the people of Gaza that the world does care what is happening to them” that Mairead Maguire embarked on the Free Gaza Movement’s mission.

The fact that Nobel Peace Laureate Ms Maguire, renowned for her pacifism and nonviolent actions, could be detained on such a humanitarian mission is something that we, working towards a peaceful, sustainable society with respect for human rights, cannot accept. Ms Maguire's determined participation in this humanitarian mission to Gaza demonstrates her lifelong dedication to peace, non-violence and human rights.

Mairead Maguire is a strong advocate of the Global Article 9 Campaign to Abolish War (of which Peace Boat serves as Secretariat), a campaign that strives to protect the war-renouncing clause of the Japanese Constitution and build an international movement to call for a global peace that does not rely on force. Her commitment to the Article 9 Campaign only emphasises the peaceful, humanitarian nature of the activities that Ms Maguire and the other activists on the Free Gaza Movement mission had undertaken.

As an organisation that also carries out peace missions and delivery of humanitarian aid supplies by ship, Peace Boat has over many years maintained grassroots exchange with the citizens of Palestine and Israel during our voyages at sea and visits to the region, and we have been dedicated to humanitarian support for the Palestinians suffering through the inhumane Israeli blockade of Gaza. We are thus deeply concerned by Ms. Maguire's and the other activists' detention and by the obstruction of their humanitarian mission. We join our voice to the international call for the immediate and unconditional release of the group and the confiscated aid items, as well as for the unhindered continuation of the peace mission.

For more information, see:

Free Gaza Movement: <http://www.freegaza.org>

Nobel Women's Initiative: <http://www.nobelwomensinitiative.org/>

ICRC's June 2009 Gaza Report:

<http://icrc.org/web/eng/siteeng0.nsf/htmlall/palestine-report-260609>

Peace Boat: <http://www.peaceboat.org/english>

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