

## Boat Carrying Cynthia McKinney 14 Other Civilians to Gaza Attacked

Written by Robert ID4585

Tuesday, 30 December 2008 03:13 -

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The Israeli Navy attacks and wounds Dignity in International Waters: On Tuesday, December 30, at 5 a.m., several Israeli gunboats intercepted the Dignity as she was heading on a mission of mercy to Gaza. One gunboat rammed into the boat on the port bow side, heavily damaging her. The reports from the passengers and journalists on board is that she is taking on water and appears to have engine problems. When attacked, the Dignity was clearly in international waters, 90 miles off the coast of Gaza.

The gunboats also fired their machine guns into the water in an attempt to stop the mercy ship from getting to Gaza.

As the boat limps toward Lebanon, passengers have been in contact with the Lebanese government who have said the captain has permission to dock and are willing lend assistance if needed. Cyprus sea rescue has also been in touch, and has offered assistance as well. The Dignity clearly flies the flag of Gibraltar, is piloted by an English captain and has a passenger manifest that includes Representative Cynthia McKinney from the U.S. The attack was filmed by the journalists, and the crew and passengers will report on Israel's crime at sea once they arrive in Lebanon.

On board the boat are doctors traveling to this impoverished slice of the Mediterranean to provide badly-needed relief at the hospitals there. The crew and passengers were also hoping to take wounded out for treatment, since the hospitals are not coping. In addition, the Dignity was carrying 3 tons of medical supplies at the request of the doctors in Gaza.

The three physicians on board who were sailing to Gaza are: Dr. Halpin (UK), an experienced orthopaedic surgeon, medical professor, and ship's captain. He has organized humanitarian relief efforts in Gaza on several occasions with the Dove and Dolphin. He is traveling to Gaza to volunteer in hospitals and clinics. Dr. Mohamed Issa (Germany), a pediatric surgeon from Germany is traveling to Gaza to volunteer in hospitals and clinics. Dr. Elena Theoharous (Cyprus), MP Dr. Theoharous is a surgeon and a Member of the Cypriot Parliament. She is traveling to Gaza to assess the ongoing conflict, assist with humanitarian relief efforts, and volunteer in hospitals.

Yet Israel thumbs its nose in the face of maritime law by attacking a human rights boat in international waters and has put all of these human rights observers at risk. At no time was the

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Dignity ever close to Israeli waters. They clearly identified themselves and the Israeli attack was willful and criminal.

The Dignity is still in international waters, 40 miles off Haifa. Everybody on board is safe at the moment as the boat slowly makes its way to safety in Lebanon.

There are 15 civilian passengers representing 11 different countries aboard the ship. See below for a complete list of civilian passengers.

**It is urgent that you TAKE IMMEDIATE ACTION!**

**CALL: the Israeli Government and demand that it immediately STOP attacking the Dignity and endangering the lives of its passengers!**

**CALL: Mark Regev in the Prime Minister's office at:**

**+972 2670 5354 or +972 5062 3264**

**[mark.regev@it.pmo.gov.il](mailto:mark.regev@it.pmo.gov.il)**

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**CALL: Shlomo Dror in the Ministry of Defence at:**

**+972 33697 5339 or +972 50629 8148**

[mediasar@mod.gov.il](mailto:mediasar@mod.gov.il)

Information on The Dignity:

The Dignity departed from Larnaca Port in Cyprus at 7pm (UST) on Monday 29 December, bound for war-devastated Gaza with a cargo of over 3 tons of desperately needed medical supplies donated by the people of Cyprus. At our request, the ship was searched by Cypriot Port authorities prior to departure, to certify that there was nothing "threatening" aboard - only emergency medical supplies.

**TAKE ACTION IMMEDIATELY TO STOP THE ISRAELI NAVY FROM ENDANGERING THE DIGNITY AND ITS PASSENGERS!**

**Civilians aboard the Dignity being threatened by the Israeli military:**

**(UK) Denis Healey, Captain:** Captain of the Dignity, Denis has been involved with boats for 45 years, beginning with small fishing boats in Portsmouth. He learned to sail while at school and has been part of the sea ever since. He's a certified yachtmaster and has also worked on heavy marine equipment from yachts to large dredgers. This is his fourth trip to Gaza.

**(Greece) Nikolas Bolos, First Mate:** Nikolas is a chemical engineer and human rights activist. He has served as a crewmember on several Free Gaza voyages, including the first one in August.

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**(Jordan) Othman Abu Falah:** Othman is a senior producer with Al-Jazeera Television. He will remain in Gaza to report on the ongoing military onslaught.

**(Australia) Renee Bowyer:** Renee is a schoolteacher and human rights activist. She will remain in Gaza to do human rights monitoring and reporting.

**(Ireland) Caoimhe Butterly:** Caoimhe is a renowned human rights activist and Gaza Coordinator for the Free Gaza Movement. She will be remaining in Gaza to do human rights monitoring, assist with relief efforts, and work on project development with Free Gaza.

**(Cyprus) Ekaterini Christodoulou:** Ekaterini is a well-known and respected freelance journalist in Cyprus. She is traveling to Gaza to report on the conflict.

**(Sudan) Sami El-Haj:** Sami is a former detainee at Guantanamo Bay, and head of the human rights section at Al-Jazeera Television. He will remain in Gaza to report on the ongoing military onslaught.

**(UK) Dr. David Halpin:** Dr. Halpin is an experienced orthopaedic surgeon, medical professor, and ship's captain. He has organized humanitarian relief efforts in Gaza on several occasions with the Dove and Dolphin. He is traveling to Gaza to volunteer in hospitals and clinics.

**(Germany) Dr. Mohamed Issa:** Dr. Issa is a pediatric surgeon from Germany. He is traveling to Gaza to volunteer in hospitals and clinics.

**(UK/Tunisia) Fathi Jaouadi:** Fathi is a television producer and human rights activist. He will remain in Gaza to do human rights monitoring and reporting.

**(USA) Cynthia McKinney:** Cynthia is a former U.S. Congresswoman from Georgia, and the 2008 Green Party presidential candidate. She is traveling to Gaza to assess the ongoing conflict.

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**(Cyprus) Martha Paisi:** Martha is a senior research fellow and experienced human rights activist. She is traveling to Gaza to do human rights work and to assist with humanitarian relief efforts.

**(UK) Karl Penhaul:** Karl Penhaul is a video correspondent for CNN, based out of Bogotá, Colombia. Appointed to this position in February 2004, he covers breaking news around the world utilizing CNN's new laptop-based "Digital Newsgathering" system. He is traveling to Gaza to report on the ongoing conflict.

**(Iraq) Thaer Shaker:** Thaer is a cameraman with Al-Jazeera television. He will remain in Gaza to report on the ongoing military onslaught.

**(Cyprus) Dr. Elena Theoharous, MP:** Dr. Theoharous is a surgeon and a Member of the Cypriot Parliament. She is traveling to Gaza to assess the ongoing conflict, assist with humanitarian relief efforts, and volunteer in hospitals.