

Jewish Boat to Gaza sets sail from Cyprus

A boat carrying aid for Gaza's population and organized by Jewish groups worldwide has set sail from Cyprus today at 13.32 local time.

The boat, **Irene**, is sailing under a British flag and is carrying ten passengers and crew, including Jews from the US, the UK, Germany and Israel as well as two British journalists.

At crisis point in peace talks, Jews, Israelis, call to lift the siege on Gaza, and to end the occupation!

The boat's cargo includes symbolic aid in the form of children's toys, textbooks, fishing nets for Gaza's fishing communities and prosthetic limbs for orthopaedic medical care in Gaza's hospitals.

The receiving organization in Gaza is the Gaza Community Mental Health Programme, directed by Gaza psychiatrist Dr. Eyad Sarraj.

The boat will attempt to reach the coast of Gaza and unload its aid cargo in a nonviolent, symbolic act of solidarity and protest - and call for the siege to be lifted to enable free passage of goods and people to and from the Gaza Strip.

The boat will fly multicolored peace flags carrying the names of dozens of Jews who have expressed their support for this action, as a symbol of the widespread support for the boat by Jews worldwide.

Speaking from London, a member of the organizing group, Richard Kuper of Jews for Justice for Palestinians, said today that the Jewish Boat to Gaza is a symbolic act of protest against the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories and the siege of Gaza, and a message of solidarity to Palestinians and Israelis who seek peace and justice.

'Israeli government policies are not supported by all Jews,' said Kuper. 'We call on all governments and people around the world to speak and act against the occupation and the siege.'

Regarding the threat of interception by the Israeli navy, Kuper said 'This is a nonviolent action. We aim to reach Gaza, but our activists will not engage in any physical confrontation and will therefore not present the Israelis with any reason or excuse to use physical force or assault them.'

The Passenger Reuven Moskovitz, 82, said that his life's mission has been to turn foes into friends. "We are two peoples, but we have one future", he said.

Satellite phone on board for contact to the passengers: 00 8821668610337

Media Contact in London for interviewing the Boat's organizers: Yosh, 0044 7816 448307
media@jewishboattogaza.org

Jnews contact in Israel: Miri 00972 549270796

Passengers and crew for interview:

Reuven Moskovitz, from Israel, is a founding member of the Jewish-Arab village Neve Shalom (Oasis of Peace) and a holocaust survivor. Speaks German, Hebrew and English.

Rami Elhanan, from Israel, who lost his daughter Smadar to a suicide bombing in 1997 and is a founding member of the Bereaved Families Circle of Israelis and Palestinians who lost their loved ones to the conflict.

Lilian Rosengarten, from the US, is a peace activist and psychotherapist. She was a refugee from Nazi Germany. Speaks English.

Yonatan Shapira, from Israel, is an ex-IDF pilot and now an activist for Combatants for Peace. Speaks Hebrew and English.

Caron Angier, from the UK, is the biographer of the renowned author, Auschwitz survivor Primo Levi. Speaks English, French, Italian and German.

Glyn Secker, from the UK, is the boat's captain and a member of Jews for Justice for Palestinians. Speaks English.

Dr. Edith Lutz, from Germany, is a peace activist and a nurse. She was on the first boat to Gaza in 2008. Speaks German and English.

Alison Prager, from the UK, is a teacher and peace activist. She is media coordinator for the boat. Speaks English.

Itamar Shapira, from Israel, is Yonatan's brother, and a member of the boat's crew. Speaks Hebrew, Spanish and English.

Eli Osherov, Israeli reporter from Israel Channel 10 News

Supporters: Jewish organizations and individuals from UK, Holland, Germany, US, Switzerland, Denmark, Sweden, Belgium, France, Austria, Australia and Israel.

Organizers and sponsors: European Jews for a Just Peace, Jews for Justice for Palestinians (UK), Juedische Stimme fuer einen gerechten Frieden in Nahost (Germany), American Jews for a Just Peace (USA), Jewish Voice for Peace (USA), Jews Against the Occupation Sydney.