



PRESS RELEASE

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11 Nations, Global Legal Bodies and Amnesty International Demand Release of Flotilla Activists as Israeli Interrogators Issue Death Threats

Criminal Complaints Filed in Italy and ECHR as Brazil and Spain Condemn Illegal Abductions; Detained Activists Enter 5th Day of Hunger Strike Under Psychological and Physical Torture

May 4, 2026 **Askalan, Occupied Palestine** — An unprecedented wave of international diplomatic and legal pressure is mounting against the Israeli occupation government. This follows reports of torture and death threats directed at Global Sumud Flotilla activists Thiago Ávila and Saif Abukeshek.

While the activists enter their fifth day of a hunger strike (consuming only water) in total isolation at the Shikma detention facility, Adalah attorneys Hadeel Abu Salih and Lubna Tuma report that the activists are being subjected to systemic psychological torture and explicit threats to the lives of their families..

Urgent Legal Update: Psychological & Physical Abuse

Following a visit concluded today, Adalah has sounded a global alarm regarding the conditions of detention for the two activists:

- **Death Threats:** Interrogators have explicitly threatened Thiago Ávila, stating he would be “killed” or forced to “spend 100 years in jail”.
- **Sensory Torture:** Both activists are held in cells with high-intensity lighting 24 hours a day to induce sleep deprivation and disorientation.
- **Environmental Abuse:** Thiago Ávila reported being held in extremely cold temperatures.
- **Violation of Medical Ethics:** The activists are kept blindfolded at all times when moved outside their cells, including during medical examinations, a gross violation of international medical standards.
- **Targeting Attempts to Break Israel's Illegal Siege:** Interrogations have focused heavily on the Global Sumud Flotilla, confirming that the detention is a retaliatory attempt to criminalize solidarity.

Amnesty International: “Great Risk of Torture”

In a forceful intervention today, Amnesty International expressed deep concern for the safety of Abukeshek and Ávila, noting they are at “great risk of human rights

abuses, including torture and other ill-treatment." Amnesty highlighted the specific targeting of Saif Abukeshk, a Spanish and Swedish national of Palestinian origin, stating that his detention is consistent with Israel's "discriminatory laws and persistent record of harassment and oppression of Palestinians under Israel's system of apartheid." The organization emphasized that states must act now to hold Israel accountable for its "defiance of international law."

Global Legal and Parliamentary Uprising

The international community has responded with an escalating series of legal and political actions aimed at their release:

- **Italian Criminal Proceedings:** Italian lawyers have formally filed two "esposti" criminal complaints (formal requests for investigation to determine if illegal acts have been committed) with the Italian prosecutor and an urgent request for interim measures with the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR). The prosecutor in Rome is pursuing the case.
- **Turkish Parliamentary Motion:** The Turkish Parliament unanimously adopted a motion defining the interception of the humanitarian fleet as "piracy and a war crime," pledging to pursue full accountability.
- **11-Nation Joint Condemnation:** Foreign Ministers from Spain, Türkiye, Bangladesh, Brazil, Colombia, Jordan, Libya, Malaysia, Maldives, Pakistan, and South Africa issued a unified statement describing the seizure in international waters as a "flagrant violation of international humanitarian law".
- **EU Political Pressure:** The European Left Party and the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) have demanded immediate EU sanctions on Israel, joining major human rights federations (FIDH and OMCT) in denouncing the raid as an act of piracy.

These abductions of international flotilla participants are a direct extension of the state violence, administrative detention and torture used against Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank, with no due process or legitimate justice system, for decades. The "legal" proceedings, relying on secret evidence and lack of jurisdiction, are the same mechanisms used to maintain the illegal siege and ongoing genocide in Gaza.

Urgent Escalation

With major mobilizations and encampments beginning today across Europe, the GSF calls on all states to take immediate legal action, including by supporting the proceedings initiated in Italy, filing interstate applications or requests for interim measures before the European Court of Human Rights where jurisdiction allows, and pursuing domestic investigations under applicable national and international law; and to demand the immediate, unconditional release of Saif Abukeshk and Thiago Ávila.

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