



PRESS RELEASE

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Global Sumud Flotilla to Convene International Assembly in Türkiye

As Israeli Court Illegally Extends Detention of Activists—GSF Participants, Organizers and Global Allies Will Convene to Discuss Ongoing Strategic Plan for the Mission; Press Conference to Follow

May 5, 2026 Marmaris, Türkiye — In its ongoing effort to break Israel's illegal siege of Gaza, the Global Sumud Flotilla (GSF) announces it will convene an International Assembly in Marmaris, Türkiye on May 9th and 10th, followed by a press conference on May 11th. This assembly marks a decisive moment for the movement as GSF participants, organizers, partners, and international experts will be gathering to reassess, deepen political strategy, and sharpen the mission's trajectory.

Today the "Ashkelon Magistrates' Court" granted the state's request to extend the detention of humanitarian activists Thiago Ávila and Saif Abukeshek for an additional six days, until May 10, 2026.

Judicial Validation of Lawlessness

Despite the defense's clear evidence that the allegations are baseless, Judge Yaniv Ben-Haroush approved the extension based on "secret evidence" that neither the activists nor their legal counsel were permitted to have sight of. Adalah attorneys Hadeel Abu Salih and Lubna Tuma have criticized the decision as, "judicial validation of the state's lawlessness," noting that formal charges have not been filed against them and that the activists were abducted over 1,000 kilometers away from Gaza, well outside Israeli jurisdiction. Adalah will immediately appeal to the District Court's decision.

Ongoing Torture and Hunger Strike

As their hunger strike enters its sixth day, Ávila and Abukeshek remain defiant; despite being subjected to systematic psychological and physical torture:

- **Sensory Deprivation:** Both men are held in total isolation under high-intensity lighting 24 hours a day to induce sleep deprivation and disorientation.
- **Blindfolding:** In a gross violation of international medical ethics, the activists are kept blindfolded during all movement, including medical examinations.
- **Death Threats:** Interrogators have explicitly threatened Thiago Ávila's life and issued threats against the families of the detained.

A Movement Unbowed

The Global Sumud Flotilla stands firm in its conviction that these abductions, designed to intimidate and paralyze, have only served to strengthen the global resolve to end the genocide and occupation against the Palestinian people. The mission remains anchored in its duty of care to every participant and its unwavering commitment to stand with the Palestinian people in their pursuit of liberation. This assembly in Marmaris is where that resolve hardens into action.

GSF calls upon its global network of political and civil society allies to submit concrete recommendations and commitments prior to the assembly, focusing on the diplomatic, legal, and political mechanisms required to secure the immediate and unconditional release of all detained participants, including Palestinian hostages and political prisoners illegally held, hold the Israeli regime accountable for its acts of piracy under international law as well as for the ongoing genocide and ethnic cleansing in Gaza and the West Bank.

On May 11th, GSF will hold a press conference to present the next phase of the mission and movement, along with global commitments to accountability for the illegal abductions at sea and concrete pledges from governments and civil society to safeguard nonviolent maritime missions and Palestine solidarity worldwide.

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