



PRESS RELEASE

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Global Sumud Flotilla Denounces "Unfathomable Cruelty" as Detained Activist Thiago Ávila's Mother Passes Away During His Continued Imprisonment

May 5, 2026 **Brasilia, Brazil** — It is with profound sorrow and righteous anger that the Global Sumud Flotilla (GSF) announces the passing of Teresa Regina de Ávila e Silva, the 63-year-old mother of our illegally imprisoned comrade and human rights defender, Thiago Ávila. Teresa passed away this morning, Tuesday, May 5, in Brasília, while her son remained shackled in an Israeli prison cell, denied the most basic human right: the chance to say goodbye to his mother.

A Legacy of Strength and a Stolen Goodbye

Teresa leaves behind a legacy of admirable joy and strength, defined by an ability to face life's challenges with dignity and love. While her family provided a moving example of devotion during her final moments, Thiago was forcibly absent, denied even the chance to hear her voice one last time.

The depth of this loss is woven into the very fabric of Thiago's life; his own daughter bears his mother's name, a living tribute to a woman his wife, Lara, describes as, "the most powerful I've ever met." This separation is a hallmark of an occupation that thrives on fracturing families, mirroring the heartbreak of others like Mahmoud Kallil, who was torn away by authorities and forced to miss the birth of his child because of his advocacy against Israel's genocide of the Palestinian people.

Compounding this nightmare is the harrowing reality that Thiago does not even know he has lost his mother. Because he is being held in isolation and denied contact with the outside world, he has been robbed of the chance to begin his mourning in the embrace of his community. Instead, this devastating news will likely be delivered to him by the very IOF soldiers who have subjected him to systematic abuse, using his grief as yet another tool of psychological warfare.

A Universal Pain: The Palestinian Reality

The Global Sumud Flotilla underscores that this agonizing separation is not an isolated incident, but a reflection of a broader, decades-long reality for Palestinian detainees. For nearly 80 years, thousands of Palestinian families have endured this exact form of psychological warfare, parents dying while their children are held in administrative detention without charge, and children growing up behind glass partitions. Thiago's current suffering is a window into a systemic protocol of degradation that has long sought to break the resolve of the Palestinian people. By

standing with Thiago, we stand with every family devastated by this machinery of incarceration and injustice.

A Message of Solidarity and Global Demand for Justice

Thiago remains in isolation, separated from the 179 participants recently released to Greek authorities and countless more comrades on land waiting for his and Saif Abukeshek's release. The Global Sumud Flotilla sends a message of fierce love to Thiago and the Ávila family, reminding him that the walls of his cell cannot block the grief or the solidarity of the world. We turn this sorrow into an amplification of our commitment to justice and accountability, vowing that Teresa's story of strength will continue with this movement.

We echo the condemnation of Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, who has labeled Thiago's imprisonment "unjustifiable." We demand the immediate and unconditional release of Thiago Ávila and Saif Abukeshek, and call for an independent international investigation into the violations of international law and human rights committed during this operation as well as the countless other violations carried out by the Israeli regime against the Palestinian people. The international community must act to ensure Thiago can return home to honor his mother with the dignity she sowed throughout her life.

Rest in power, Teresa Regina de Ávila e Silva. Your story lives on through your son, through your granddaughter and through our fight for justice and collective liberation.

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