



# PRESS RELEASE

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Global Sumud Flotilla Announces Release of the 10 Kidnapped Volunteers After 30 Days of Illegal Detention: Coalition Vows No Impunity for the Global Architecture of the Gaza Siege**

**June 24,  
2026**

**BENGAZI, LIBYA** — The Global Sumud Flotilla (GSF) confirms that the ten humanitarian volunteers from the Global Sumud Land Convoy, unlawfully kidnapped and held as political hostages by the Haftar-affiliated Libyan Arab Armed Forces (LAAF) for over a month, have finally been released. While we welcome their safety, let this be absolutely clear: there will be no quiet exit, no amnesia, and no normalization of the lawless brutality inflicted upon these peaceful human rights defenders.

The volunteers, including medical doctors, educators, and journalists, were intercepted in a calculated act of state-sponsored kidnapping. On May 24, 2026, acting as an official negotiation delegation near Sirte, they were forced into unmarked vans and disappeared for days. In a cynical escalation of state deception, they were subsequently forced onto an aircraft under the false pretenses of deportation, only to be transferred to an isolated secret site controlled by the Internal Security Agency (ISA), a brutal force under the de facto authority of Khalifa Haftar's LAAF.

Days prior to the kidnapping of the ten volunteers near Sirte, another volunteer from Tunisia was kidnapped by Libyan intelligence while on his way to return home to Tunisia on May 19, and was forcibly disappeared for 19 days, before he was released on June 7. During his illegal enforced disappearance he endured degrading and inhumane treatment amounting to torture – including being held incommunicado, repeatedly blindfolded and beaten – and underwent intense psychological pressure and interrogations over his solidarity with Palestine and participation in the Land Convoy.

#### **A Global Architecture of Containment: From Crete to Sirte**

The arbitrary detention of our volunteers was never a dispute over immigration or permit status. It was the extraterritorial enforcement of the genocidal siege on Gaza.

This obstruction directly follows the violent interception of the Global Sumud Flotilla by Israeli occupation forces off the coasts of Crete and Cyprus. The consecutive targeting of both our sea and land missions makes clear that the illegal siege has expanded into a global architecture of containment, a projection of the "Greater

israel" doctrine across sovereign borders, facilitated and executed by European Union and North African Arab states.

GSF received credible reports that Egyptian authorities applied direct political pressure on Libyan governing authorities to prevent the convoy's passage, extending the blockade on Gaza into neighboring states. From covert interference exposed by the "Hondurasgate" scandal to the suppression of civil society across three continents, the Netanyahu regime consistently deploys political pressure and proxy influence—like Haftar's LAAF, a family-led power structure whose senior figures, including Saddam Haftar, have pursued contacts with Israel, and has recently taken a tour to meet Europe's top leaders.

### **Beyond Borders: Weaponizing the Machinery of Migrant Abuse**

The weaponization of Libya's penal and immigration systems against humanitarian aid workers exposes a deeper, ongoing atrocity: the systemic torture, extortion, and industrial-scale abuse of tens of thousands of migrants inside Libya's network of detention centers, funded and supported by the European Union who has outsourced control of its borders to Libya.

By charging our non-violent volunteers under the pretext of "illegal entry and stay" and detaining them in an unofficial detention facility, Haftar's forces weaponised the same system that dehumanises vulnerable migrants every day.

GSF completely rejects the fragmentation of human rights. The geopolitical system that enables and funds the containment, violence, and systematic abuse of migrants in North Africa stems from the very same global architecture of border militarization, supremacy, and exclusion that enforces the genocidal siege on Gaza. We refuse to normalize human rights abuses anywhere. Our struggle against the enforcement of apartheid and containment spans from the checkpoints of occupied Palestine to the clandestine detention sites of Libya.

### **UN Special Procedures Mobilized: The Fight for Accountability Only Begins**

Libyan forces stripped our volunteers of their fundamental human rights. Our volunteers were disappeared and held incommunicado, barred contact with lawyers and families, and forced to be blindfolded every time they left their cells. They were also forced to sign documents without legal counsel and without being allowed to read their contents; and subjected to physical violence and intensive interrogation that focused on their humanitarian activities and political background. In response to this cruelty, the Sirte 10 endured a brutal, life-threatening "dry" hunger strike that pushed their bodies to the brink of organ failure.

The Libyan regime will not escape the legal consequences of these actions. The Global Sumud Legal Team has submitted formal communications to the UN Special Procedures on Freedom of Opinion and Expression, the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders, and the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders and Focal Point on Reprisals in

Africa of the African Union, and Office of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission.

These filings detail egregious violations of international law, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, the Nelson Mandela Rules, and the UN Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment.

Their prolonged captivity completely lacked any legal basis; they were targeted and abused explicitly to punish their legitimate, lawful, and peaceful humanitarian activity.

### **The Convoy May Be Halted, But the Movement is Unstoppable**

Though the Libyan regime deployed snipers and heavy armed vehicles to halt our mission, and military force was used to violently evict our broader encampment of 230 volunteers, the global front against normalization has only grown stronger.

We extend our deepest gratitude to the activists across five continents who joined the Global Solidarity Hunger Strike to demand our volunteers' freedom. The Sirte 10 are returning home, and our focus returns immediately to the thousands of Palestinian political prisoners and hostages facing systematic torture and administrative detention as well as all Palestinians continuing to suffer the genocide, ethnic cleansing and apartheid being carried out by the Israeli regime. The Global Sumud movement will continue to mobilize millions across the globe until the siege is broken, the occupation is dismantled, and Palestine is free.

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