

Mamdani Furious After Israel Intercepts Gaza-Bound Flotilla

Amid the issues facing New York City on Thursday, New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani found time to demand the release of activists whose flotilla was intercepted at sea after it set sail to allegedly deliver humanitarian aid to Gaza.

Multiple flotillas of ships have set sail from Europe for Gaza. None has reached their destination. Every time Israel has stopped a group, it has detained the activists and sent them on their way.

However, the incident gave Mamdani a chance to publicly rally around pro-Palestinian activists.

“Last night, Israeli forces intercepted and boarded a humanitarian aid flotilla bound for Gaza in international waters off the coast of Greece – unlawfully detaining more than 175 people, including several New Yorkers,” Mamdani posted on X Thursday evening.

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– Mayor Zohran Kwame Mamdani (@NYCMayor) April 30, 2026

“My team has been in direct contact with State and Federal partners as we work to confirm the whereabouts and conditions

of these New Yorkers,” he posted.

“This is a brazen violation of international law. Those detained must be released,” he fulminated.

All but two pro-Palestinian activists were released in Greece Friday, according to the BBC.

Israel’s foreign ministry said that one man, Saif Abu Keshek, was “suspected of affiliation with a terrorist organization” while the other, Thiago Ávila, was “suspected of illegal activity.”

The 22 boats carrying about 175 people were detained near Crete.

The Global Sumud Flotilla said that Israel “intercepted, boarded, and systematically disabled and destroyed various boats” in the flotilla during a “violent raid in international waters.”



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The Israeli Foreign Ministry said it acted far sooner than it had on past flotillas after this one “actively attempted to block an Israeli merchant vessel,” according to the Times of Israel.

“This is why Israel acted early, peacefully, in accordance with international law, and with the aim of ensuring the safety and security of all those on board – and it will continue to do so,” the ministry said.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Thursday praised the Israeli Navy for “completely successfully” stopping the flotilla.

“Not one ship or Hamas supporter arrived in our territory, not even in our maritime territory,” he said. “They have been

turned back and will return to their countries of origin. They will continue to watch Gaza on YouTube.”

As noted by the Jerusalem Post, a State Department statement had called the flotilla a “pro-Hamas initiative and a baseless, counterproductive effort to undermine President Trump’s Peace Plan” in a Thursday statement from the State Department.

The State Department said the Popular Conference for Palestinians Abroad, which has been designated as a terrorist organization, sponsored the voyage.

“The United States will explore using available tools to impose consequences on those who provide support to this pro-Hamas flotilla and support our allies’ legal actions against it,” the statement said. “The flotilla has nothing to do with humanitarian aid or the welfare of Gazans.”

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