

To: senator.wong, foreign.minister, media, consular.canberra

To the Australian Government,

We, members of Jewish Voices of Inner Sydney, write to you with a profound sense of alarm and urgency regarding the interception and detention of the passengers on board the Global Sumud Flotilla (also referred to as the Gaza Solidarity Flotilla) by Israeli forces. This is a peaceful humanitarian mission, carrying essential aid and unarmed civilians from around the world, including our fellow Australian citizens, was stopped in international waters while attempting to deliver vital assistance to the besieged people of Gaza.

Israel's illegal interception of the aid flotilla occurred on Yom Kippur – the Day of Atonement, one of Judaism's most important religious days, during which, as individuals and communities, we must be repentant and seek forgiveness from those we have wronged. That Israel would choose to block humanitarian aid on this day is anathema to our traditions.

This interception is a flagrant violation of international law, clearer still in that it occurred in international waters, and represents an unacceptable assault on the fundamental principles of humanitarian work. The forced seizure and detention of unarmed volunteers delivering aid must be condemned unequivocally.

It is our history as a people, dependent on the protection of international law, that demands we stand in solidarity with all humanitarian efforts and oppose the arbitrary detention of civilians.

We cannot, and will not, stand by while our fellow Australians and humanitarian volunteers from across the globe are kidnapped. To witness the suffering of the Palestinian people in Gaza, including children dying of starvation due to an ongoing siege, and to see humanitarian efforts blocked by force, is a moral outrage that contradicts the very essence of Australian and Jewish values.

Our demands for immediate and decisive action are:

- Ensure the safe conduct and protection of Australian citizens and demand their immediate unconditional release from imprisonment.
- Publicly condemn Israel's aggression and take a clear, firm stance against the interception of humanitarian missions.
- Demand the immediate lifting of Israel's siege on Gaza, where Israel's genocide and destruction has reached a catastrophic level.
- Take concrete diplomatic and political measures against Israel including sanctions and expulsion of the ambassador.
- Provide all necessary support to the affected Australian citizens and their families to ensure their immediate safe release from unlawful imprisonment.

Humanitarian aid must not be weaponized or obstructed. We expect a swift and forceful response from the Australian Government.

Sincerely,

Jewish Voices of Inner Sydney