



Seeking Support for “Freedom Flotilla Two” Volunteer

Dear Friends,

In May 2010, nine aid workers were killed by Israeli commandos when a humanitarian flotilla destined for Gaza was intercepted in international waters by the Israeli Navy. Israel's naval forces continue to enforce an illegal and inhumane blockade of the Gaza Strip.

This coming June, Freedom Flotilla Two (FF2), a coalition of vessels from Canada, France, USA, UK, Ireland, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, Greece, Turkey and other countries, is to set sail in the hope of breaking the blockade. Palestine Human Rights Campaign Aotearoa/New Zealand (PHRC) is raising money to enable a New Zealander, Harmeet Sooden, to join the upcoming flotilla. Harmeet has been offered a place on the boat *Tahrir* (*Liberation* in Arabic) alongside delegates from Australia, Belgium and Denmark.

In 2004, Harmeet travelled to the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) to undertake human rights assignments with the International Solidarity Movement. The following year, Harmeet and three colleagues were kidnapped in Iraq while participating in an international Christian Peacemaker Teams delegation and held for four months. One member of the group, Tom Fox, was murdered. In 2008, while attempting to enter the OPT via Israel for the second time, he was denied entry, detained, assaulted and removed by Israeli authorities on the pretext of being a ‘threat to the security of the State of Israel’.

The Free Gaza Movement is one of the coordinators of FF2. Free Gaza was formed to raise public awareness and challenge the Israeli-Egyptian blockade directly, by sailing ships carrying human rights defenders and humanitarian aid to Gaza. Since August 2008, Free Gaza has made eight solo voyages; most recently, it took part in the fateful May 2010 flotilla as a member of a six-partner coalition. Free Gaza has several endorsers, including notable individuals such as Desmond Tutu and Noam Chomsky, and groups with which PHRC has had an association such as Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (www.pchrgaza.org), and the Palestine Medical Relief Society (www.pmrps.ps).

We aim to raise \$10,000 (\$5,000 for airfare and basic living expenses, and a further \$5,000 to contribute towards the cost of purchasing the boat and cargo).

Thank you for your support.

Janfrie Wakim on behalf of PHRC
May 2011

Please make donations by direct deposit to PHRC 06 0145 0045138 00 or by sending a cheque to PHRC, Box 56150, Mt Eden, Auckland. All donations will be receipted (advice on internet deposits must be emailed to jwakim@xtra.co.nz so that receipts can be provided).

If you have any questions, please contact Janfrie Wakim at jwakim@xtra.co.nz. For further information, please refer to:

PHRC: www.palestine.org.nz

Canada Boat to Gaza: www.tahrir.ca

Freedom Flotilla Two: www.freedomflotilla.eu