

CENTRAL

U.S. BOAT TO GAZA

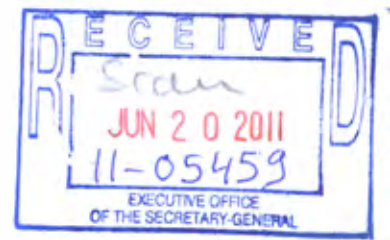
THE AUDACITY OF HOPE



14 June 2011

CC: SG

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500



Dear Mr. Obama:

We are writing to inform you that 50 unarmed Americans will soon be sailing in a U.S. flagged ship called *The Audacity of Hope* as part of an international flotilla to Gaza.

Our peaceful demonstration will challenge Israel's blockade of Gaza, which has effectively imprisoned 1.6 million civilians, almost half of whom are under the age of 16. The blockade has impoverished the people of Gaza, deprived them of needed materials and supplies to rebuild their lives after the Israeli attack of late 2008 – early 2009, impeded those who are ill or infirm from seeking outside medical aid, and prevented students from seeking education outside of Gaza. 45% of the working age population is unemployed.

In addition to 36 passengers, 4 crew, and 10 members of the press, our boat will carry thousands of letters of support and friendship from people throughout the U.S. to the women, children and men of Gaza. There will be no weapons of any sort on board. We will carry no goods of any kind for delivery in Gaza. Our mission is from American civil society to the civil society of Gaza. We do not serve the agenda of any political leadership, government or group. We are engaged solely in non-violent action in support of the Palestinian people and their human rights.

In our country's great tradition of citizen activists taking nonviolent action to stand up to

U.S. Boat to Gaza, Box 158, 119 West 72nd Street., New York, New York 10023

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injustice, we sail in the hope that our voyage will show the people in Gaza that they are not alone, and that it will call attention to the morally and legally indefensible collective punishment of a population of civilians.

Mr. President, you have noted the unsustainability of the Gaza blockade. And your administration has spoken boldly in support of peaceful demonstrations throughout this “Arab Spring.”

As U.S. citizens we expect our country and its leaders to help ensure the Flotilla’s safe passage to Gaza - as our country should support our humanitarian demand that the Gaza blockade be lifted. This should begin by notifying the Israeli government in clear and certain terms that it may not physically interfere with the upcoming Flotilla of which the U.S. boat —*The Audacity of Hope* -- is part. We—authors, builders, firefighters, lawyers, social workers, retirees, Holocaust survivors, former government employees and more—expect no less from our President and your administration.

Our boat will sail from the eastern Mediterranean in the last week of June. We shall be grateful to you for acting promptly and decisively to uphold the rights of civilians to safe passage on the seas.

Sincerely,

The passengers of *The Audacity of Hope*

Nic Abramson	Johnny Barber	Medea Benjamin	Greta Berlin
Hagit Borer	Regina Carey	Gale Courey Toensing	Erin DeRamus
Linda Durham	Debra Ellis	Hedy Epstein	Steve Fake
Ridgely Fuller	Megan Horan	Kathy Kelly	Kit Kittredge
Libor Koznar	Melissa Lane	G. Kaleo Larson	Richard Levy
Richard Lopez	Ken Mayers	Ray McGovern	Gail Miller
Carol Murry	Robert Naiman	Henry Norr	Ann Petter
Gabe Schivone	Kathy Sheetz	Max Suchan	Brad Taylor
Len Tsou	Alice Walker	Paki Wieland	Ann Wright

cc:

- ✓ The Honorable Ban Ki-moon, U.N. Secretary General
- The Honorable Hillary Clinton, Secretary of State

The Honorable Jeffrey Feltman, Assistant Secretary of State
The Honorable Susan E. Rice, Permanent U.S. Representative to the United Nations
The Honorable James B. Cunningham, U.S. Ambassador to Israel
The Honorable John F. Kerry, Chairman U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee
The Honorable Richard G. Lugar, Ranking Member U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee
The Honorable Robert P. Casey, Chairman Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South and Central Asian Affairs
The Honorable James E. Rish, Ranking Member Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South and Central Asian Affairs
The Honorable Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Chairman U.S. House Committee on Foreign Affairs
The Honorable Howard L. Berman, Ranking Member U.S. House Committee on Foreign Affairs
The Honorable Steve Chabot, Chairman Subcommittee on Middle East and South Asia
The Honorable Gary L. Ackerman, Ranking Member Subcommittee on Middle East and South Asia