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## Zaytouna-Oliva departs for Gaza - Amal-Hope II scheduled to follow

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[1]

Messina, Italy: This morning, women representing 13 countries spanning five continents began their journey on Zaytouna-Oliva to the shores of Gaza, which has been under blockade since 2007. On board are a Nobel Peace Laureate, three parliamentarians, a decorated US diplomat, journalists, an Olympic athlete, and a physician. A list of the women with their background can be [found here](#) [2].

When asked why they are going, the women gave a variety of responses. Mairead Maguire, Nobel Peace Laureate from Ireland, notes that *they say that 'silence is golden', but regarding the plight of Palestinians in Gaza the silence of the world, especially concerning their little children, shows a lack of moral and ethical leadership from the international community. Why has it lasted so long??*

For two of the women, their countries' own historical struggles for human rights played an important role in their decision to join the Women's Boat to Gaza. Leigh-Ann Naidoo, an Olympic volleyball player from South Africa, feels that 'South Africans understand the importance of international solidarity in fighting regimes that practice segregation.' Marama Davidson, a Maori Member of Parliament from New Zealand, carries with her a strong personal connection to Palestinian women in Gaza. *'As an indigenous woman myself, I want to stand alongside the women of Gaza and to draw attention to the ongoing humanitarian crisis there.'*

*Yudit Ilany, who is a consultant with the Israeli Knesset, feels a burden greater than her sister travelers. 'As an Israeli woman I am an integral part of the occupation machine in spite of totally opposing it and trying to struggle against.'*

The Amal-Hope II has been making final preparations to sail and is scheduled to depart from Messina soon. Both ships are expected to arrive in Gaza in early October.

[3] [4]

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### **Links**

[1] [https://shiptogaza.se/sites/default/files/pressreleaseImages/farval\\_messina.jpg](https://shiptogaza.se/sites/default/files/pressreleaseImages/farval_messina.jpg)

[2] <https://wbg.freedomflotilla.org/participants-on-board-messina-to-gaza>

[3] <https://shiptogaza.se/print/2259>

[4] <https://shiptogaza.se/printpdf/2259>