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BREAKING: israeli Naval Warships Encircle and Intercepting Civilians on the Global Sumud Flotilla—250 Nautical Miles from Gaza in Another Illegal High-Seas Interception in International Waters

May 18, 2026 **MEDITERRANEAN SEA** — The Global Sumud Flotilla is currently surrounded and under active interception by israeli naval warships in international waters, approximately 250 nautical miles from the coast of Gaza. This military encirclement marks the commencement of another illegal, high-seas aggression four days after 54 civilian vessels lifted anchor from Marmaris to establish a humanitarian corridor and break israel's illegal siege of Gaza.

A Pattern of Extrajudicial High-Seas Piracy

This active naval confrontation is a direct continuation of the lawless israeli military assault launched just two weeks ago, off the coast of Crete. During the previous interception, located over 650 nautical miles from Gaza, within the Greek Search and Rescue (SAR) zone, israeli military forces illegally boarded, sabotaged, and abducted 181 peaceful human rights defenders across 21 civilian vessels, subjecting participants to documented detention as well as physical and sexual violence.

By intercepting the flotilla at a perimeter of 250 nautical miles today and in Cyprus' SAR zone, the israeli regime continues to demonstrate a systematic disregard for international maritime law, freedom of navigation on the high seas, and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

Dismantling the Manufactured Propaganda Pretext

This military interception follows a coordinated week-long propaganda campaign broadcast by state-controlled israeli regime media outlets, including N12 and amplified by their own self-proclaimed 'propaganda yacht' filled with influencers spreading the israeli regime's lies. This established playbook seeks to manufacture consent to carry out war crimes and crimes against humanity against an unarmed, non-violent civil society mission composed of doctors, journalists, and humanitarians.

The Global Sumud Flotilla legal team has placed the international community on formal notice that the participants are entirely unarmed, and any violence executed on these vessels remains the sole legal responsibility of the israeli regime and the country's leaders allowing it to happen. Active criminal investigations are moving forward across twenty countries, and individual liability will also be pursued in international courts for all forces enforcing this genocidal siege.

Connecting the Siege: From Crete to Sirte

The naval interception of the flotilla occurs in tandem with an aggressive containment strategy on land, where the Global Sumud Land Convoy—comprising more than 30 vehicles including 7 specialized ambulances and 20 mobile homes—has halted near Sirte, Libya. Eastern Libyan authorities, acting under direct political pressure from Egypt, have positioned military forces to block the overland humanitarian route toward Rafah.

The consecutive targeting of both the sea and land components of the mission makes clear that the illegal siege on Gaza has expanded into a global architecture of violence, occupation and expanded impunity. This represents an extraterritorial projection of the 'Greater Israel' doctrine, deploying proxy political influence and military force across sovereign international borders to crush civil society support for Palestine.

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