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Palestine solidarity

Sailing for Palestine

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The genocide of the Palestinian people has entered another grim phase with Israel's assault on Gaza City, and the governments of the world are doing nothing meaningful to stop the slaughter. The genocide is the greatest crime of our generation, and it has fallen to the people of the world to take to the streets and do whatever they can to support the Palestinian struggle, to spread the news that the media keeps quiet, to pressure governments into doing something, and to disrupt Israel's colonial war-machine. The Global Sumud Flotilla (GSF) is one such popular movement in solidarity with Palestine, the largest fleet of civilian aid ships ever to set sail, attempting to break the Israeli blockade of Gaza and bring supplies to starving Gazans. The Flotilla has already been targeted by Israel, so far suffering two firebomb attacks by drones against its ships as they docked in a Tunisian harbour. Sadly, these are unlikely to be the only dangers the Flotilla will face as it approaches Gaza.

In order to find out more about the GSF and to bring more news of it to a Scottish audience, Jennifer Debs spoke with Nico Calabrese, an Argentinian-Brazilian activist who came to Europe specifically to join the flotilla.

Who are you and what made you join the Global Sumud Flotilla?

"Well, I am Nico. In Brazil I am a physical education teacher, a Spanish teacher and a militant of a social movement for popular education called "Emancipa" that helps working class people enter university. Brazilian universities are very elitist, and we help youth to enter the public universities, and the private ones too. I am also a militant of the left socialist movement, Movimento Esquerda Socialista (MES). It's a revolutionary socialist organisation, part of the Fourth International.

What made me join the Global Sumud Flotilla is that, everyday I wake up with indignation taking over my whole body, my whole mind and thoughts, and I couldn't accept living in the same world in which a genocide is happening- The hunger of lots of people, children, and civil society being dehumanised like this. So when the opportunity for joining the Global Sumud Flotilla appeared for me, it was obvious that I had to participate."

What is the Global Sumud Flotilla?

"The Global Sumud Flotilla is one of many, many attempts at breaking the siege of Gaza with humanitarian aid. There were many attempts at trying to carry donations, food, medicine for Palestinian people through land, sea and air, and Israel has blocked them for many years. Israel doesn't allow that help to arrive in Palestine. Other attempts by land or sea were attacked or just blocked, and this is another attempt to enter with humanitarian aid for Palestinian people. They are suffering this siege and genocide.

For the Global Sumud Flotilla, the important thing is that it is the combination of four big movements in solidarity with Palestine: The Global Movement to Gaza, the Freedom Flotilla, Sumud Nusantara and the North African Organisation for Solidarity with Palestine. It's an important thing that it's the union of such different movements. They made this union for being one of the biggest flotillas and biggest movements for aiding Palestine."

What is it like taking part in the Flotilla with activists from so many different countries?

“Being part of the Flotilla is, for me, an honour, because I think that when I see the genocide, someone has to do something about it. And we see that governments aren’t doing anything or just taking legal measures. So I think that if they don’t do anything, then the people have to do something.

The Global Sumud Flotilla is the organisation of the people of many countries, many cultures, many religions, together for one goal- That is a human goal, an important goal, to stop the dehumanisation of human beings. The experience of sharing this mission with many different activists of many different countries is just awesome. There are lots of socialist militants, lots of people from organisations, but also people that don’t participate in organisations too. But in this movement they are very dedicated, very sure about their participation, about risking their lives, and that’s awesome because it’s not just the militants that are participating, it’s regular people too, and they have stopped their daily lives just to join this movement.”

Why do you believe that the Flotilla’s mission is important?

“I think the Flotilla is important not just for carrying the humanitarian aid and opening a humanitarian corridor for other ships and other governments and NGOs to donate and carry aid, but also because it makes, with famous people and activists from many parts of the world, it makes the Palestinian situation more visible. More people in the world are knowing what’s happening day after day in Palestine because the media companies, the majority don’t talk about Palestine. So this movement is making more people talk about Palestine, not just people participating in the movement, but regular people in different countries. I’m seeing that a lot: People saying ‘Let’s talk about Palestine’ in their families and our jobs. I think that’s the importance of this mission.”

What dangers do you expect to face, or are already facing?

“This is a dangerous mission, but it shouldn’t have to be a dangerous mission. Because we are a legal movement and a peaceful movement, we shouldn’t have to face any dangers.

But we are facing dangers because Israel is planning the hunger of the Palestinian people, planning the extermination of the whole Palestinian people. It’s not me who is saying this- Israel is saying this, in their discourse that they won’t allow a Palestinian state, and that they will make the last invasion of Palestine.

So this mission is not good for the terror plans of Israel, and they want to stop solidarity with Palestine. They want to stop us in any way they can. That’s the danger- We can be intercepted, we can be attacked, but we can’t accept the Palestinian situation”

What does solidarity with Palestine mean for social movements back home in Brazil?

“This movement is an important thing to be reproduced in countries like Brazil. We are far away from Palestine, and when I arrived in Europe I saw that the Palestinian genocide is more discussed and talked about by the people here. But in Brazil we are not so near, and the indifference and the fact that the media is not talking about it, gives the idea that it’s not happening or that it’s not important. So reproducing Palestine solidarity and building the social movements in all the spaces that we can is very important for Brazil.”

Where can people in Scotland find out news about the Flotilla and how can they support it and show solidarity with it?

“To find news about the Flotilla you can follow the Global Sumud Flotilla on [Instagram](#), and on their [website](#). My

Instagram is [@niconigito](#).

To support the Flotilla, the best thing is to talk about Palestine in your families, in your jobs, in your schools, your colleges, and if you don't know how to bring it up, you could speak about the Flotilla- The Flotilla is a good way to speak about Palestine. It's got people from more than 44 countries carrying humanitarian aid and being attacked for that. It's a good way to show how Palestinian people are dying of hunger, dying from bombs.

Another way is to boycott. I have recently discovered an app called [No Thanks](#). You can scan a product, and it can tell if it has Israeli investment involved in that product. So you can choose a product that doesn't finance the genocide."

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As this article goes online (23 September), Nico and the other activists from the Flotilla will be sailing across the Mediterranean, headed for Gaza and an uncertain result. We do not know how the Israeli state will respond to this latest attempt at breaking the blockade, but the treatment of previous aid flotillas and the recent drone attacks on the GSF should make us alert to the danger faced by the Flotilla. In just the last few days, yet [more drones have been spotted](#) above Flotilla vessels. Much is at stake, but as Nico says, "we can't accept the Palestinian situation." Israel is committing a genocide and action must be taken to stop it.

We at Heckle stand in total solidarity with the Global Sumud Flotilla, and we also support the calls of Italian trade unions for strikes across Europe, should contact between the Flotilla and the mainland be lost. These are not empty threats- The Italian workers have already shown admirable determination to fight for Palestine, [with the port of Ravenna blocking a shipment of explosives](#) bound for Israel following action by dock-workers, along with the [24-hour general strike for Gaza](#) that saw Italy brought to a halt on Monday. We need to see more action like this all across the world, especially in the imperialist powers. Will the trade unions of France, Germany and the UK listen to their Italian siblings and defend the Global Sumud Flotilla? Will they challenge the arms trade with Israel and force their governments to take more than symbolic actions? Let the courage of the Italian workers, and Flotilla sailors like Nico Calabrese, be an inspiration to us all.

Break the blockade! Victory to the GSF!

Freedom for Gaza!

Freedom for Palestine!

23 September 2025

Source: [Heckle](#).

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