

October 7, 2025

## **RE: Embark Sustainability Society's Statement of Solidarity with Palestine and the Global Sumud Flotilla**

**Content Warning:** *descriptions of violence, starvation, and genocide that may be distressing or triggering, particularly for Palestinian, Muslim, and Arab community members, or those with lived experiences of war and displacement.*

### **The Global Sumud Flotilla**

Embark Sustainability Society fully supports the Global Sumud Flotilla—the largest coordinated civilian flotilla in history—that set sail from ports across the Mediterranean a month ago, carrying more than 40 ships and nearly 500 trained humanitarians and activists from at least 45 countries. Among them were parliamentarians, lawyers, and community leaders, all of whom underwent vetting, nonviolence training, and safety preparation. The mission's clear purpose is to break Israel's unlawful siege on Gaza and deliver life-saving aid directly to its people. Israel has already blocked two earlier flotilla missions in June and July that sought to deliver essential supplies by sea. This latest dispatch also included two delegates from Turtle Island: Mskwaasin Agnew (Cree/Dene, Salt River Nation), an outreach worker, advocate, and harm-reduction practitioner, and Dr. Suzanne Shoush (St'atl'imx/Leq'á:mel First Nation), an Indigenous and Sudanese physician. Their participation underscores the global and intersectional solidarity at the heart of this humanitarian initiative, as Mskwaasin Agnew said, "We are told that the greatest honour is to be able to give. Gaza has given the world more than we could ever measure. Gaza lit a fire within our hearts."

### **The Global Sumud Flotilla Has Rights**

The [Global Sumud Flotilla](#) is a coalition that "believe in human dignity and the power of nonviolent action", a peaceful humanitarian mission to deliver food, baby formula, and medical supplies to the people of Gaza, doing so by sailing through international waters to break Israel's unlawful and inhumane siege and blockade. Why by sea? Land routes are either fully blocked or subject to strict control by the

Israeli Occupation Forces and the U.S.-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF). Aid is often delayed, restricted, or turned into deadly traps. By sea, the Global Sumud Flotilla would pass these systems and confront the blockade head-on. This action is fully legal under international law; civilian vessels carrying humanitarian aid or engaging in peaceful protest in international waters are protected under maritime law. Israel's interference with the flotilla's free passage is therefore a clear violation, and the Israeli occupation's blockade of Gaza constitutes collective punishment and violates the Geneva Conventions. Meanwhile, Israel's continued ground offensive in Gaza City is forcing a mass exodus of Palestinians.

### **Smear Campaign**

Yet, Israel has attempted to twist this humanitarian mission into an alleged act of terrorism. The Israeli Foreign Ministry [posted on X](#), declaring, *"The Hamas-Sumud provocation is over. None of the Hamas-Sumud provocation yachts has succeeded in its attempt to enter an active combat zone."* Such rhetoric is part of a broader smear campaign aimed at discrediting the peaceful Global Sumud Flotilla. By branding humanitarian action as alleged "terrorism," Israel dismisses all forms of solidarity with Gaza and paints aid workers and activists as threats in need of state repression. This is not speculation—it is openly stated. Israel's National Security Minister, Itamar Ben-Gvir, [boasted](#): *"Those terror-supporting flotilla activists are here in high-security prison, we are done playing around. They are treated the same as terrorists, same cells, same circumstances. This means the bare minimum. That's what I promised, and that's what I will do."* In other words, peaceful humanitarians are being incarcerated and accused of violent acts of terror.

As Greta Thunberg emphasised in a [recorded statement](#) from aboard the Flotilla, prior to its interception by Israeli forces, this rhetoric "lays the groundwork for attacks on [the flotilla]," recycling the same genocidal propaganda long used against Palestinians while deflecting from the far graver reality: Israel's ongoing genocide in Gaza and repeated war crimes. Over two million people are trapped under an illegal siege, systematically starved, and subjected to daily bombings and attacks. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has gone further, [branding](#) the flotilla a "campaign of delegitimization" of Israel, while applauding the raid and unlawful detention of its members.

Between October 1st to the 3rd, while attempting to break Israel's siege on Gaza, 462 people were unlawfully seized in international waters—an act that amounts to the kidnapping of civilians engaged in a humanitarian mission. This blatant violation of maritime law underscores the illegality of Israel's interference with peaceful aid efforts. As of October 4th, 328 humanitarians remain illegally detained and held captive, facing imprisonment; only 134 have been released. Some facing deep brutality.

The reality is clear. As South African President Cyril Ramaphosa has rightfully [stated](#) in his call for the immediate release of participants—including Nelson Mandela's grandson, Nkosi Zwelivelile Mandela—*“the flotilla represents solidarity with Gaza, not confrontation with Israel.”* His words cut through Netanyahu's attempt to label and discredit the mission. The flotilla's fundamental and steadfast purpose is humanitarian: to break the unlawful siege on Gaza and deliver much-needed aid to its people.

### **The Genocide and Man-Made Starvation Televised: Facts**

The use of starvation as a weapon of war on Palestinians is deliberate violence and a war crime, leaving lasting physical, psychological and economic scars for current and future Palestinians amidst Israel's blockade. According to the United Nations-backed initiative, the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), Gaza is facing catastrophic levels of food insecurity and mass injury.

### **Food Insecurity and Malnutrition (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), + Palestinian Ministry of Health Reports)**

- Gaza faces **catastrophic food insecurity**; man-made famine has been officially confirmed (UN-backed IPC report, August 2025), compounding the devastation from relentless bombing, displacement, and disease.
- **Population at risk**: By the end of September, the IPC projected nearly **one-third of Gaza's total population** (641,000 people) would face famine conditions. Children are at high risk.
  - **Over half a million people** in the Gaza governorate alone are trapped in catastrophic hunger conditions, a cycle of “starvation, destitution and death.”.

- **Children most at risk:** Up to June 2026, at least **132,000 children under five** are expected to suffer acute malnutrition, including **41,000 severe cases** at heightened risk of death
- **Deaths from starvation:** As of October 1, Gaza's health ministry reported **455 Palestinians dead from malnutrition or starvation**, including **151 children**. Since famine was officially confirmed on August 15, at least **177 deaths** have occurred.
  - More than 450 people have died from malnutrition in Gaza, **86%** of them **since July**
- The UN and aid groups report Israel is throttling relief with **delayed approvals, arbitrary rejections, and calorie-based controls** on food trucks. Despite claims of sufficient entry, Palestinians are consuming only **1,400 calories per day** — just **67% of the minimum survival threshold** of 2,300.
- Aid distribution through the U.S.- and Israeli-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF) has been described by UN experts as *"death traps"*. Between May and September, at least **1,172 people were killed near militarised supply sites** and **1,084 along convoy routes**.
- **Destruction of food sources:** Only **1.5% of Gaza's cropland** remains accessible and undamaged (UN, July 2025). **Fishing is banned, farmland destroyed, and food production crippled.**

### **Injuries and Health System Collapse (WHO [report](#))**

- As of September 24, 2025, more than **167,000 Palestinians have been wounded** in Gaza since October 2023.
- Nearly **42,000 people** have "life-changing" injuries — including over **10,000 children** (about one-quarter of all injuries).
- Over **5,000 amputations were reported**.
- Fewer than **14 of Gaza's 36 hospitals** remain partly functional.
- Less than **one-third of pre-war rehabilitation services** are still operating, many facing imminent closure.
- Of roughly **1,300 physiotherapists and 400 occupational therapists** pre-war, many have been displaced and at least **42 killed**.

## Now What?

It should not require justification to speak out against atrocities of this scale. Yet in a world where silence often serves the oppressor, it is necessary to reaffirm our position. These acts of genocide, forced starvation, displacement, bombardment, and systemic denial of healthcare are not accidents of war—they are part of a deliberate campaign of Settler-Colonialism, Apartheid, and collective punishment against the Palestinian people.

As Embark Sustainability and as people of conscience, we will not remain silent. We align our voice with those resisting genocide and demanding justice. The Global Sumud Flotilla is one expression of this solidarity, a humanitarian act to break the blockade and bring life-saving aid to Gaza.

### **Demands:**

After 731 days of war on Gaza since October 7, 2023; after Canada's recognition of Palestine as a state; after Burnaby City Council (within SFU's jurisdiction) unanimously passed a motion calling on the federal government to impose a full two-way arms embargo and to add Burnaby as a signatory to the "Apartheid-Free Communities" pledge; and after genocide experts, the UN Council, and numerous human rights organizations have confirmed Israel's actions to be tantamount to genocide;

1. We demand that Simon Fraser University (SFU) divest from all companies, institutions, and corporations complicit in Israel's crimes, including those engaged in military arms production, surveillance technologies, and settlement expansions that enable the occupation and genocide of Palestinian children and people.
  - a. Many of these entities are already identified in the SFU Faculty for Palestine's [Divestment Petition](#) (launched in 2024), which was signed by over 1,000 faculty, fellows, staff, students, and alumni. The university must take **immediate** steps to implement its calls to action. On May 30, 2024, SFU's administration announced only a review of its Responsible Investment Policy in response—a symbolic gesture that has yet to lead to meaningful change. Over a year later, we continue to demand immediate divestment.

2. We demand that SFU break its silence and publicly acknowledge and condemn Israel's use of starvation and siege as war crimes against the people of Gaza.
3. We demand that SFU publish a reasonable timeline or progress report confirming that the Responsible Investment Policy review has been completed with new public disclosures showing actionable alignment with the divestment demands.
4. We further demand that the university recognize the profound grief, trauma, and struggle experienced by its own students affected by the war on Gaza, providing mental health supports and safe spaces through SFU Health and Counselling Services.

These demands reflect a moral and institutional responsibility. As an educational institution committed to sustainability and social justice, SFU cannot isolate its values from the realities of deliberate violence and environmental destruction in Palestine. The genocide in Gaza is not a distant crisis; it is a test of whether universities will uphold their ethical principles as opposed to diverting to lip service.

### **How Can You Take Action**

- [Send a Personalised Email](#): Urge governments and foreign offices to demand the release of their citizens who were on board the Global Sumud Flotilla to Gaza and to call for an end to the siege and genocide.
- Sign the SFU Faculty for Palestine's [Divestment Petition](#) and demand that SFU divest from harmful companies complicit in the genocide of the Palestinian people.

In Solidarity,

**Embark Sustainability Society**

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