# Israel intensifies naval blockade, orders military to stop Gaza-bound aid ship carrying Greta Thunberg



Israel has escalated its efforts to enforce its longstanding naval blockade of the Gaza Strip by ordering its military to prevent a humanitarian ship, the Madleen, from reaching the war-torn area. The vessel, operated by the Freedom Flotilla Coalition and carrying notable activists including Swedish climate campaigner Greta Thunberg, is heading towards Gaza with the intention of delivering essential aid and highlighting the humanitarian crisis within the region. The announcement from Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz came amid intensifying violence, with reports indicating that more than 30 Palestinian civilians lost their lives in attacks since early Sunday morning.

In a statement, Katz labelled Thunberg and her fellow activists as "Hamas propaganda mouthpieces" and called for the group to turn back, asserting that "Israel will not allow anyone to break the naval blockade of Gaza." This blockade, which has been in place for years and has significantly intensified since the outbreak of war in October 2023, aims to prevent arms from reaching Hamas, which Israel deems a terrorist organisation. The minister highlighted the military's imperative to act against any attempts to breach this blockade, framing it as a necessary precaution against terrorism.

Tragic scenes unfolded in Gaza on the same day, where a civil defence agency announced the deaths of at least 14 people due to Israeli fire directed towards civilians queuing at an aid distribution centre in Khan Yunis. Eyewitnesses described a chaotic scene as hundreds gathered, only for Israeli forces to open fire. The military claimed that it responded to what it described as a threatening concentration of civilians despite prior warnings, maintaining that the area surrounding the distribution site had been marked as an "active combat zone."

Further complicating the humanitarian situation, a recent Israeli airstrike targeted civilians sheltering within a school in central Gaza, resulting in at least 30 fatalities, including numerous children. This incident reflects the ongoing tension, as the Israeli military stated that it aimed to strike Hamas command centres, while local authorities and humanitarian agencies condemned these actions, labelling them as indiscriminate and harmful to civilians.

Thunberg has previously spoken out against military actions in the region, condemning what she views as violations of international law and human rights. In a recent video, she declared, "This is yet another crystal clear example of how international law and human rights are being completely disrespected.” Her engagement with the Freedom Flotilla Coalition aligns with her broader advocacy for humanitarian causes, particularly in contexts deemed to lack sufficient international attention.

As the Madleen approaches Gaza, the tension between humanitarian aid efforts and military enforcement policies reveals the complexities underlying the conflict. Activists face the dual challenge of providing aid while navigating a perilous political landscape, marked by accusations and military responses that complicate their missions.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.daily-sun.com/post/808604), [[2]](https://apnews.com/article/5899bcc088496dbcba4cb192c84ea367)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.daily-sun.com/post/808604), [[3]](https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israel-orders-military-stop-gaza-bound-yacht-carrying-greta-thunberg-2025-06-08/), [[4]](https://www.jpost.com/international/article-852772)
* Paragraph 3 – [[5]](https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/israeli-strike-on-school-sheltering-people-in-central-gaza-kills-at-least-30-including-children), [[6]](https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/6/6/israel-bombs-unrwa-school-in-gaza-kills-32-displaced-palestinians), [[7]](https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/israeli-strikes-kill-at-least-30-people-including-children-in-gaza-as-stalled-ceasefire-talks-set-to-resume)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.daily-sun.com/post/808604> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://apnews.com/article/5899bcc088496dbcba4cb192c84ea367> - Israel has pledged to stop the Madleen, an aid boat carrying climate activist Greta Thunberg and others, from reaching Gaza. Defence Minister Israel Katz reaffirmed the enforcement of the naval blockade aimed at preventing Hamas from obtaining weapons, labelling Thunberg and other activists as Hamas sympathisers. The boat, operated by the Freedom Flotilla Coalition, left Sicily aiming to deliver humanitarian aid and raise awareness about the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Gaza, now 20 months into the Israel-Hamas war. ([apnews.com](https://apnews.com/article/5899bcc088496dbcba4cb192c84ea367?utm_source=openai))
3. <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israel-orders-military-stop-gaza-bound-yacht-carrying-greta-thunberg-2025-06-08/> - On June 8, 2025, Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz instructed the military to intercept the British-flagged Madleen yacht, operated by the pro-Palestinian Freedom Flotilla Coalition (FFC), which is en route to Gaza. Among the activists on board is Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg, who joined the mission to protest Israel's blockade of Gaza and highlight humanitarian needs. The boat, having departed from Sicily on June 6, is currently near the Egyptian coast and carrying symbolic aid such as rice and baby formula. Katz emphasised the blockade’s role in preventing weapons from reaching Hamas, labelling participants as sympathisers with antisemitic and Hamas propaganda. The Israeli military plans to intercept and escort the vessel to Ashdod, after which the crew, which includes 11 other members such as European Parliament member Rima Hassan, would be deported. ([reuters.com](https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israel-orders-military-stop-gaza-bound-yacht-carrying-greta-thunberg-2025-06-08/?utm_source=openai))
4. <https://www.jpost.com/international/article-852772> - Climate activist Greta Thunberg blamed Israel for the drone attack on a vessel transporting humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip that occurred in international waters off Malta. In a video posted to Instagram, Thunberg stated that she had planned to board the ship in a mission with the Freedom Flotilla Coalition (FFC) to 'end the siege and open a humanitarian blockade' in Gaza. 'This is yet another crystal clear example of how international law and human rights are being completely disrespected,' Thunberg claimed in the video while wearing a keffiyeh scarf, commonly associated with pro-Palestinian groups. Thunberg told Reuters that the attack had 'caused an explosion and major damage to the vessel, which made it impossible to continue the mission.' 'I was part of the group who was supposed to board that boat today to continue the voyage towards Gaza, which is one of many attempts to open up a humanitarian corridor and to do our part to keep trying to break Israel's illegal siege on Gaza,' she said. ([jpost.com](https://www.jpost.com/international/article-852772?utm_source=openai))
5. <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/israeli-strike-on-school-sheltering-people-in-central-gaza-kills-at-least-30-including-children> - Israeli airstrikes hit a school being used by displaced Palestinians in central Gaza on Saturday, killing at least 30 people including several children, as the country’s negotiators prepared to meet international mediators to discuss a proposed cease-fire. At least seven children and seven women were among the dead taken from the girls’ school in Deir al-Balah to Al Aqsa Hospital. Israel’s military said it targeted a Hamas command center used to direct attacks against Israeli troops and develop and store 'large quantities of weapons.' Hamas in a statement called the military’s claim false. Civil defense workers in Gaza said thousands had been sheltering in the school, which also contained a medical site. ([pbs.org](https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/israeli-strike-on-school-sheltering-people-in-central-gaza-kills-at-least-30-including-children?utm_source=openai))
6. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/6/6/israel-bombs-unrwa-school-in-gaza-kills-32-displaced-palestinians> - Israeli forces have bombed a United Nations-linked school in central Gaza where forcibly displaced Palestinians are sheltering, killing at least 40 and wounding more than 70. Officials from Gaza’s government media office and the Health Ministry confirmed the death toll, which included 14 children and 9 women, following Thursday’s predawn strikes which hit al-Sardi school and homes in Nuseirat camp. Hamas, which governs the Gaza Strip, condemned the attack on Thursday as a 'horrible massacre' and said many women and children were among those killed and wounded. The Palestinian Wafa news agency said that thousands of displaced Palestinians were sheltering at al-Sardi school, which is linked to the UN agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA), when it came under attack. Ismail al-Thawabta, a spokesman for Gaza’s government media office, said 'huge numbers of dead and wounded' were arriving at the Al-Aqsa Hospital in central Gaza, which had reached three times its clinical capacity. 'This horrible massacre committed by the Israeli occupation is clear evidence of genocide, ethnic cleansing against civilians, including women and children and displaced people in the Gaza Strip,' he told reporters. ([aljazeera.com](https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/6/6/israel-bombs-unrwa-school-in-gaza-kills-32-displaced-palestinians?utm_source=openai))
7. <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/israeli-strikes-kill-at-least-30-people-including-children-in-gaza-as-stalled-ceasefire-talks-set-to-resume> - At least 30 people, including children, were killed in Gaza by Israeli strikes overnight and into Friday morning, hospital staff said, as sirens also sounded across Israel and stalled ceasefire talks were set to resume. Staff at the Al Aqsa Martyrs hospital said more than a dozen women and children were killed in strikes that hit various places in Central Gaza, including Nuseirat, Zawaida, Maghazi and Deir al Balah. Dozens of people were also killed across the enclave the previous day, bringing the total of people killed in the past 24 hours to 56. The Israeli army did not comment on the latest strikes. However, in a statement Friday, it said during the past day it had struck dozens of Hamas gathering points and command and control centers throughout Gaza, areas where Hamas had planned and executed attacks. The army said measures were taken to mitigate civilian harm, such as using precise munitions and aerial surveillance. ([pbs.org](https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/israeli-strikes-kill-at-least-30-people-including-children-in-gaza-as-stalled-ceasefire-talks-set-to-resume?utm_source=openai))