# Greta Thunberg accuses Israel of illegal kidnapping amid Gaza aid boat interception



Greta Thunberg has emerged at the centre of a storm following her deportation from Israel, where she accused the Israeli authorities of committing an “illegal act” by kidnapping her and fellow activists in international waters. The Swedish climate activist was aboard the Madleen, a UK-flagged boat carrying limited humanitarian aid, when it was intercepted by Israeli forces off the coast of Egypt on June 9. Following the interception, multiple passengers were deported, while some remain in detention in Israel.

Speaking to reporters upon her arrival in Paris on June 10, Thunberg rejected Israel’s portrayal of the situation, asserting, “We were illegally attacked and kidnapped by Israel and taken against our will there where we were detained.” This incident has ignited debate around not only the treatment of activists but also the broader humanitarian situation in Gaza, which has been under an Israeli blockade since 2007 and has faced severe humanitarian crises exacerbated by ongoing military operations.

Thunberg's mission aimed to deliver food items such as rice and baby formula as a form of protest against the blockade, which many claim has pushed Gaza to the brink of famine. In this context, she described Israel’s actions as a "PR stunt," and called for the immediate release of the remaining activists still in custody. Reports indicate that eight activists are still detained, with legal representatives challenging Israel’s jurisdiction over the incident that unfolded in international waters. France has confirmed that it is providing consular support for its detained citizens, while Spain has condemned the seizure, labelling it a “pirate attack.”

The Israeli government has portrayed the operation as necessary for enforcing a naval blockade established to restrict Hamas. In their view, the humanitarian mission was merely a publicity stunt disguised as a charitable effort. Israeli officials further defended the interception, underscoring their rationale by citing videos shown to detainees, which were intended to illustrate the justifications for the blockade. However, critics argue that such measures disproportionately affect the civilian population, amounting to collective punishment.

The blockade and the ongoing conflict in Gaza have produced staggering humanitarian consequences. UN reports estimate that over 54,000 Palestinians have lost their lives in the recent conflict, while Israeli fatalities have also risen sharply following a Hamas attack that resulted in the deaths of 1,200 Israelis and numerous taking of hostages. The humanitarian crisis in Gaza has worsened significantly since the intensified conflict began, propelling humanitarian organisations to push for increased access to the region.

Thunberg, while advocating for the people of Gaza, has downplayed her personal experiences of detention compared to the suffering of those in the region. Her statements have already been met with controversy, with Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Saar dismissively referring to her involvement as a "ridiculous publicity stunt." While Thunberg’s activism has garnered international attention, the complexities surrounding the blockade and the conflict reveal a deep-seated crisis that demands a more nuanced approach from the global community regarding solidarity efforts and humanitarian interventions.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/video-greta-thunberg-kidnapped-israel-b2767311.html), [[3]](https://elpais.com/internacional/2025-06-10/los-activistas-de-la-flotilla-de-la-libertad-son-deportados-a-sus-paises.html)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/video-greta-thunberg-kidnapped-israel-b2767311.html), [[2]](https://apnews.com/article/7d6868f213dfcf78969f8e3d982788c6), [[5]](https://www.huffingtonpost.es/global/greta-thunberg-acusa-israel-realizar-un-acto-ilegal-deportacion-denuncia-el-genocidio-marcha-gaza.html)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://elpais.com/internacional/2025-06-10/los-activistas-de-la-flotilla-de-la-libertad-son-deportados-a-sus-paises.html), [[4]](https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/israel-set-deport-greta-thunberg-other-activists-ministry-says-2025-06-10/), [[6]](https://www.huffingtonpost.es/global/los-activistas-flotilla-gaza-aeropuerto-tel-aviv-aceptan-deportacion-quedan-detenidosbr.html)
* Paragraph 4 – [[2]](https://apnews.com/article/7d6868f213dfcf78969f8e3d982788c6), [[4]](https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/israel-set-deport-greta-thunberg-other-activists-ministry-says-2025-06-10/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[5]](https://www.huffingtonpost.es/global/greta-thunberg-acusa-israel-realizar-un-acto-ilegal-deportacion-denuncia-el-genocidio-marcha-gaza.html), [[6]](https://www.huffingtonpost.es/global/los-activistas-flotilla-gaza-aeropuerto-tel-aviv-aceptan-deportacion-quedan-detenidosbr.html)

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/video-greta-thunberg-kidnapped-israel-b2767311.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://apnews.com/article/7d6868f213dfcf78969f8e3d982788c6> - Greta Thunberg was deported by Israel after being detained aboard the Gaza-bound ship Madleen, which was seized by the Israeli military in international waters. Thunberg, along with 11 other activists and a journalist, was attempting to deliver humanitarian aid to Gaza amidst the ongoing humanitarian crisis induced by the 20-month war and Israeli blockade. Upon her arrival in Paris, Thunberg called for the release of the remaining activists, criticized Israel's treatment of Palestinians, and reaffirmed her support for Gaza. Israel labeled the mission a publicity stunt with minimal aid and justified the seizure as enforcement of a naval blockade against Hamas. Eight activists remain detained, and legal representatives argue Israel lacks jurisdiction since the seizure occurred in international waters. France confirmed consular support for its detained citizens, while Spain condemned the seizure as a "pirate attack." The blockade, imposed since 2007, has intensified during the present conflict, pushing Gaza toward famine. Israel claims the measures aim to restrict Hamas, though critics cite collective punishment. The war has resulted in over 54,000 Palestinian deaths and massive displacement, while Hamas' 2023 attack sparked the conflict by killing 1,200 Israelis and taking hostages.
3. <https://elpais.com/internacional/2025-06-10/los-activistas-de-la-flotilla-de-la-libertad-son-deportados-a-sus-paises.html> - Israel has begun deporting activists from the Freedom Flotilla, detained while attempting to deliver humanitarian aid to Gaza aboard the Madleen sailboat. The ship was intercepted by the Israeli military in international waters and towed to the port of Ashdod. Among those deported is Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg, who acknowledged entering Israel illegally. Thunberg described the boarding as a "kidnapping" and a violation of international law. Another deported activist, Spaniard Sergio Toribio, called the action a "pirate attack" and recounted moments of fear during the boarding. Twelve volunteers were aboard the Madleen with a symbolic cargo of rice and baby formula to protest the blockade imposed by Israel on Gaza since March, which has caused a severe humanitarian crisis. While some activists were sent back to their countries, others have rejected the deportation conditions and will be transferred to the Givon detention center to possibly file an appeal. The Israeli government defended its actions and showed the detainees a video of the October 7 massacre, describing the activists as supporters of Hamas.
4. <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/israel-set-deport-greta-thunberg-other-activists-ministry-says-2025-06-10/> - Swedish climate and human rights activist Greta Thunberg was deported from Israel after the Israeli navy intercepted a charity vessel she was aboard, attempting to breach the naval blockade of Gaza. Alongside Thunberg, three other activists voluntarily accepted repatriation, while eight others are contesting their deportations and are being held pending a court hearing. The vessel, a British-flagged yacht, carried limited humanitarian aid such as rice and baby formula aimed at raising awareness about Gaza’s severe humanitarian crisis following months of war. The Israeli government criticized the voyage as a pro-Hamas publicity stunt and confirmed the aid would be redirected through official humanitarian channels. U.S. President Donald Trump mocked Thunberg's involvement, while Israel released a photo of her onboard a flight to France, en route to Sweden. Despite Thunberg’s usual stance against flying due to environmental concerns, she was deported by air. The blockade on Gaza dates back to Hamas gaining control in 2007 and was intensified after the October 2023 Hamas attacks, with Israel responding through military operations and cutting off all supply routes in March 2025. The UN has warned that these measures have brought Gaza’s population close to famine, with limited aid now entering under strict Israeli oversight.
5. <https://www.huffingtonpost.es/global/greta-thunberg-acusa-israel-realizar-un-acto-ilegal-deportacion-denuncia-el-genocidio-marcha-gaza.html> - Swedish activist Greta Thunberg has accused Israel of committing "an illegal act" following her deportation, after Israeli authorities intercepted the Freedom Flotilla in international waters to prevent its arrival in Gaza. Thunberg, who participated in the humanitarian mission to deliver food to the Gazan population, denounced from Paris the "ongoing genocide in Gaza" and called on the international community to take more decisive measures. Despite her detention and subsequent deportation, Thunberg downplayed her experience compared to the suffering of the Palestinian people and demanded the immediate liberation of Gaza. She also valued the international recognition of Palestine as a minimal step and called for more significant actions. For his part, Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Saar defended his country's peaceful action, described the attempt as a "ridiculous publicity stunt," and declared that Thunberg, whom he called "non-Greta," would not be welcome in Israel.
6. <https://www.huffingtonpost.es/global/los-activistas-flotilla-gaza-aeropuerto-tel-aviv-aceptan-deportacion-quedan-detenidosbr.html> - Activists from the Madleen boat, part of the Freedom Flotilla transporting humanitarian aid to Gaza, were intercepted by Israeli authorities in international waters and transferred to the port of Ashdod. They are currently at Tel Aviv's Ben Gurion airport, where Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs has confirmed they can choose to sign deportation documents to return to their countries or face detention and legal proceedings. Among the detainees is Swedish activist Greta Thunberg. The Palestinian legal organization Adalah, which represents them, denounced the illegality of the interception and highlighted that some activists will not sign without prior legal consultation. The United Nations also expressed concern about the Israeli operation outside its territorial waters. If the activists refuse to leave the country, they could be transferred to the Ramleh detention center. The operation has generated protests in various countries, such as Greece.