

12 M'sians on Gaza-bound aid ship return home
Malaysiakini.com
June 06, 2010

Twelve Malaysian volunteers who were on board a humanitarian aid ship attacked by Israel while on its way to blockaded Gaza on Monday returned to Kuala Lumpur this morning.

They arrived at 5.40am and were greeted by Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin, several of his officers, Foreign Ministry representatives and the volunteers' family members.

The volunteers, who were accompanied by Foreign Minister Anifah Aman and several ministry officers, arrived from Istanbul by a Malaysia Airlines (MAS) flight.

They had taken off from the Queen Alia International Airport in Jordan at 11.20am (4.20pm Malaysian time) on Friday and flown to Istanbul where they were on transit until Saturday evening.

In the Monday incident, the Turkish aid ship 'Mavi Marmara', which was carrying the volunteers and activists from other countries as well as medical supplies, was raided by Israeli naval forces, resulting in the death of nine activists.

The Malaysian volunteers on board were unharmed but were detained by the Israeli forces and taken to Ashdod port in Israel before being transported to Amman, Jordan.

Following this, Anifah and several of his officers left for Jordan on Wednesday to secure the release of the 12 Malaysians.

The volunteers are scheduled to meet Prime Minister Najib Razak at his residence at about 9am today.

Another ship seized

Meanwhile, another ship MV Rachel Corrie which sought to bring humanitarian aid to Gaza was intercepted yesterday and forcibly towed at gunpoint to Ashdod by Israel's naval forces.

NONESix Malaysians were among those on board - Parit parliamentarian Mohd Nizar Zakaria, Perdana Global Peace Organisation (PGPO) members Shamsul Akmar, Matthias Chang and Ahmad Faizal Azumu, as well as two members of the press, Halim Mohamed and Mohd Jufri Judin from private television station TV3.

They are joined on board by former United Nations assistant secretary-general Dennis Halliday, Nobel Prize laureate Mairead Maguire, Derek and Jenny Graham from the Free Gaza Movement and documentary filmmaker Fiona Thompson.

PGPO adviser Mukhriz Mahathir has called for their "unconditional and immediate release".

"The immoral indefensible actions by the Israel Defence Force in seizing and towing the Rachel Corrie from international waters to Ashdod thereby disallowing the aid ship from reaching the port of Gaza is an act of piracy," he said in a statement late last night.

"Israel has committed serious crimes on the high seas. PGPO demands that all kidnapped Malaysians and other nationals on board the Rachel Corrie be swiftly released unharmed."

The Rachel Corrie ship is named after an American woman who was killed by an Israeli military bulldozer in the Gaza Strip in 2003, while trying to protest a house demolition.

- Bernama

Copyright © 1999-2007 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd.
Source : <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/133735>