



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Global Sumud Flotilla Demands Urgent EU Intervention After Two Civilians Abducted and Disappear

Brazil and Spain condemn interception as international alarm grows—while Greek and other European authorities remain complicit and enable crimes

**May 1,
2026**

GREECE – The Global Sumud Flotilla is calling for immediate intervention from Members of the European Parliament following the disappearance of two civilian participants on a humanitarian mission to Gaza after Israeli naval forces intercepted vessels engaged in a humanitarian mission. International concern is now escalating. The governments of Brazil and Spain have issued [a joint statement](#) condemning the interception and denouncing the acts committed against the two civilians, underscoring the seriousness of the situation and the growing diplomatic pressure for accountability.

Saif Abukeshek (a Spanish and Swedish national with Palestinian origin) and Thiago Ávila (a Brazilian national), civilian flotilla participants sailing under an Italian vessel have not been heard from since the interception. Their whereabouts, legal status, and physical condition remain unknown.

First hand testimony from participants reveals that Abukeshek was on an observer boat, which was never intended to go to Gaza, and was harshly beaten before being removed and isolated from the rest of the participants; and has not been heard from ever since.

There is credible reason to believe that both individuals may still be in or near Greek waters, potentially aboard an Israeli naval vessel. Despite the gravity of the situation, no authority has confirmed their location or whether they have access to legal counsel, consular support, or basic legal protections.

We are calling on the Spanish, Swedish and Brazilian governments to confirm both of their well being and exact whereabouts, and pursue their immediate release.

This incident cannot be separated from its context: a global civilian-led effort to break the ongoing siege on Gaza, where over two million Palestinians continue to live under blockade and sustained military assault. The harsh treatment to the humanitarian volunteers on Greek waters is only a small portion of the routinely applied violence to the almost ten thousand Palestinians living in Israeli dungeons.

Recently, the Israeli Knesset approved the death sentence law, applied solely to Palestinians highlighting the Apartheid and Ethnic Cleansing efforts of its colonial project.

This is not an isolated incident, it is part of a broader pattern of targeting those who act in solidarity with Palestinians. The interception of civilians attempting to reach Gaza, and their subsequent disappearance, raises urgent legal and moral questions for Europe.

Under international and European law, the interception and detention of civilian humanitarian actors, particularly in international or third-country waters, carry serious legal implications, particularly in the context of Israel's continuation of the crime of genocide against the Palestinian people in Gaza and the use of starvation as a weapon of war. Failure to act may constitute a breach of obligations related to due process, unlawful detention, the protection of fundamental rights, and the prevention of international crimes.

The Global Sumud Flotilla is urgently calling on Greek Members of the European Parliament to:

- Demand immediate clarification from Greek authorities regarding the precise location and legal status of Saif Abukeshk and Thiago Ávila
- Insist that, if within Greek waters or jurisdiction, Abukeshk and Ávila be allowed to disembark safely in Greece without delay
- Ensure full protection of their rights under European and international law, including access to legal counsel and due process
- Inquire for an official investigation and accountability on the acts of violence committed against the Global Sumud Flotilla participants in Greek territorial waters and international waters.
- Oppose any transfer of the detained civilians to Israeli authorities and to Israel

Time is critical. This is about more than two individuals, it is about whether Europe will uphold the rule of law when it comes to Gaza, or allow it to be suspended in the face of Israeli actions.

Inaction risks enabling unlawful detention and further attacks on civilian efforts to break the siege on Gaza. We are calling for immediate political and diplomatic intervention.

SEARCH & RESCUE SUPPORT CONTACT

rescue@globalsumudflotilla.org

MEDIA CONTACT

Email: media@globalsumudflotilla.org

Tel: +44 1414 620 950

Website: globalsumudflotilla.org

Social: <https://www.instagram.com/wavesofsumud/>

Follow our announcements on [telegram](#).

Social: @globalsumudflotilla