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Global Gaza Flotilla Faces Israeli Naval Confrontation, Continues Voyage



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Activists aboard the Global Sumud Flotilla (GSF), attempting to breach Israel's naval blockade and deliver humanitarian aid to Gaza, reported a tense encounter with an Israeli warship in the early hours of Wednesday. The lead vessel, Alma, was "aggressively circled" by the Israeli ship, disrupting communications and forcing evasive manoeuvres, according to onboard activists. A second vessel, Sirius, faced similar "harassment," including interference with cameras and

livestream systems.

The flotilla, consisting of over 40 boats and 500 participants, includes Italian politicians and Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg. Italian and Greek naval escorts accompanied the flotilla until 150 nautical miles from Gaza, after which the vessels proceeded independently. GSF officials stated that the flotilla was less than 90 nautical miles from Gaza as of Wednesday afternoon, a zone where previous missions have often been intercepted by Israeli forces.

Former Israeli naval intelligence chief Eyal Pinko suggested that the Israeli military might delay engagement until the flotilla nears territorial waters to avoid escalation, emphasizing caution around vessels from other nations. GSF reiterated its commitment to continue, stressing the urgency of delivering aid and breaking the blockade.

Italy and Greece called for both sides to ensure the safety of the flotilla and proposed a compromise to unload aid in Cyprus for distribution by the Catholic Church. Pope Leo XIV expressed concern over the flotilla's security, while Thunberg defended the mission against claims of publicity motives. The humanitarian operation unfolds amid ongoing international efforts to end the Gaza conflict and deliver relief to civilians in need.