

# Israeli interception of anti-blockade flotilla sparks global fury

*‘Act of terror’:* Iran blasts Israel’s attack on humanitarian vessels

International Desk

Israeli navy attacked on Thursday an aid flotilla of 42 vessels sailing toward the Gaza Strip, intercepting them and detaining activists on board. The activists, including European lawmakers, were taking part in a flotilla attempting to break Israel’s blockade of Gaza when their vessels were intercepted, drawing widespread condemnation and sparking protests around the world. Hundreds of Israeli police officers earlier in the day were deployed to the southern port of Ashdod in the Israeli-occupied territories to process more than 450 international activists from 46 countries detained by the regime’s naval forces in the Mediterranean Sea. The Global Sumud Flotilla was the largest yet to try to break the blockade, and it comes at a time of growing criticism of Israel’s conduct in Gaza, where its aggression has laid waste to wide swaths of territory and killed tens of thousands of people. Activists had said they hoped that the

sheer number of boats would make it more difficult for Israeli authorities to intercept them all, but Israel’s foreign ministry declared the operation over on Thursday afternoon.

Pro-flotilla rallies

Thousands of people supporting the flotilla took to the streets in several major world cities after news of the interception broke to decry the Israeli operation and the ongoing offensive in the Gaza Strip. Italy’s largest union called for a one-day general strike on Friday. While the majority of marches were peaceful, clashes erupted between police and pro-Palestinian protestors in Paris and in Barcelona, Spain. The flotilla was carrying a symbolic amount of humanitarian aid to Gaza. Its main goal, the activists said, remained “to break Israel’s illegal siege and end the ongoing genocide against the Palestinian people.” Israel has come under intense criticism for how much aid it lets into Gaza and how it distributes the goods. Israel has maintained varying degrees

of blockade on Gaza since the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas came to power in 2007. After the war started in 2023, Israel tightened the blockade but eased up later under US pressure. In March, it sealed the territory off from all food, medicine and other goods for 2 ½ months, contributing to Gaza’s slide into famine. The flotilla said it wanted to establish a humanitarian corridor by sea, given the little aid that was reaching Gaza by land. Israel’s onslaught on Gaza has killed more than 66,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza’s Health Ministry. Live broadcasts from the activists showed Israeli boats approaching their vessels, spraying them with water cannons and flashing bright lights before troops boarded the flotilla.

Global condemnations

Iran, Turkey, Colombia, Pakistan and others condemned Israel’s interception of the aid flotilla. Iran’s Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baqaei in a statement on



A boat from the Global Sumud Flotilla intercepted by Israeli forces in the Mediterranean Sea off the Gaza Strip waters, is escorted into the southern port of Ashdod on October 2, 2025. AFP

Thursday strongly condemned the Israeli move, describing it as a “blatant violation of international principles” and “an act of terror.” The Turkish Foreign Ministry described the interception as an “act of terrorism” and a severe breach of international law in a statement late

Wednesday. The detention of activists was part of Israel’s “ongoing aggression,” the Pakistani Foreign Ministry said, adding that Israel’s blockade of Gaza had caused “immense suffering” for more than two million Palestinians in the strip.

## Pezeshkian decries lack of Muslim unity vis-à-vis regional tragedies

International Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian denounced lack of unity among Muslim countries in the face of tragedies in the West Asia region, including what is happening in the Gaza Strip. Addressing a meeting with intellectuals and political, social, and cultural activists of Hormozgan Province in Bandar Abbas on Thursday, Pezeshkian criticized the exploitation of Muslim disunity by the region’s adversaries, who seize the region’s oil, gas, and mineral resources while supplying weapons designed to fuel conflict among Muslim nations. “The Zionist regime, with a small population, kills women and children before the eyes of hundreds of millions of Muslims, and the reaction of some governments at best is mere condemnation. Some even secretly sit beside those criminals and exchange pleasantries,” he said. “If Muslims were united, such atrocities would not occur,” said the president, as the Israeli genocidal war on the Gaza Strip has killed more than 66,200 people, internally displacing almost all of the population, and causing a dire humanitarian situation

in the past two years. The Iranian president also referred to the country’s situation after the recent reimposition of international sanctions on the country under pressure from the United States and European powers, calling for unity and reliance on faith and the people in the face of threats and sanctions. Pezeshkian urged officials and citizens alike to trust in domestic capabilities and the support of the populace to maintain momentum despite pressures. “The enemies think that by assassination they can bring our nation to its knees, while thousands of more worthy people are ready to take up this flag,” he said, referring to the decades-long assassination campaign by the United States, Israel, and other terror groups supported by them against Iran. One of the latest assassination plots occurred in June when the Israeli regime launched an unprovoked aggression against Iran, targeting top military commanders and scientists, also killing hundreds of civilians. Pezeshkian also pointed to the illegal sanctions imposed against the country over its peaceful nuclear program, saying



that they cannot block the path for the nation. “Those who fear sanctions do not believe that one can continue the path by relying on God and the people.” The comments come as the UN Security Council restored the anti-Iran sanctions that had been lifted under the 2015 nuclear deal on Sunday. The sanctions will again freeze Iranian assets abroad, halt arms deals with the Islamic Republic and target the country’s defensive missile program. The sanctions came back as part of a so-called snapback mechanism that three European parties to the deal used after they accused Iran of non-compliance with the agreement despite their own failure to adhere to their part of the commitments.

## FM spox slams G7 supportive statement on anti-Iran sanctions



International Desk

Iran’s Foreign Ministry in a statement on Thursday censured the G7’s support for the reimposition of UN sanctions against Tehran, saying that the group’s move will not change the “illegal and unjustified” nature of the sanctions. The ministry’s spokesman Esmail Baqaei said the G7’s support for the “illegal and unjustified” move by the United States and three European countries to reinstate terminated UN Security Council sanctions amounted to an endorsement of a violation of international law.

The ministry’s reaction followed a statement by the G7 Foreign Ministers and the High Representative of the EU on Wednesday, which welcomed the E3 activation of the snapback regime reimposing United Nations Security Council (UNSC) sanctions and other restrictions against Iran. Baqaei underscored that this stance by the G7 cannot change the “illegal and unjustified” nature of the action, which he said abused the dispute resolution mechanism of the 2015 nuclear agreement between Iran and world powers. On September 19, the 15-member Security Council failed to adopt a resolution that would have prevented the re-imposition of UN sanctions on Iran after the three European parties to the 2015 nuclear deal — France, Germany and Britain — triggered the “snapback” mechanism and accused Tehran of failing to comply with the agreement known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

A subsequent resolution, which sought to grant a six-month extension to both the JCPOA and Resolution 2231, also failed to pass at the Security Council on Friday. The ministry’s spokesman described the G7’s claim that the three European countries and US had repeatedly offered Iran “diplomatic avenues in good faith” as a “complete lie.” He stated the claim was a “distortion of the truth,” recalling the Israeli military aggression against Iran and a subsequent direct US strike on its nuclear facilities in June, which occurred during diplomatic negotiations. Baqaei said that the US administration is the primary factor behind the current situation due to its illegal and unilateral withdrawal from the JCPOA in 2018. Failure by the three European parties to the nuclear deal to fulfill their commitments as well their support for the US-Israel aggression against Iran contributed to the current situation, the Iranian official said.

## Tehran-Moscow strategic partnership treaty comes into effect

International Desk

The 20-year Comprehensive Strategic Partnership deal finalized between Iran and Russia in January took official effect on Thursday, marking a significant step towards strengthening their bilateral ties. The treaty, signed by Russian President Vladimir Putin and Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian in Moscow on January 17, aims to expand economic, diplomatic and military cooperation between Moscow and Tehran and will likely act as a counterbalance to illegal Western sanctions. Iran’s Foreign Ministry in a statement on Thursday praised the implementation of the treaty, noting that it embodies the commitment of both countries’ leaders to enhance relations across various fields based on mutual respect, good neighborliness, and shared interests. The ministry called the treaty a turning point in the history of the two countries’ relations, which can help expand bilateral relations in various areas ranging from defense, energy and finance to agriculture, science, and technology. The Russian Foreign Ministry also issued

a statement on the implementation of the treaty, saying, “The pact is evidence of the strategic choice made by the political leadership of Russia and Iran in favor of further strengthening our friendly and good-neighborly relations, which meets the fundamental interest of our two nations.” The document sets key benchmarks “for priority spheres of bilateral cooperation in the long term,” the ministry added. “It envisages efforts to strengthen cooperation in the international arena amid the evolving multipolar world order, including close coordination at major multilateral associations, and joint efforts towards consolidating stability and security in the region while countering common challenges and threats.” The treaty provides the legal framework for the long-term development of cooperation in areas ranging from defense, energy, finance, and transportation to industries, agriculture, culture, science, and technology. Iran and Russia, as two close and strategic allies, have deepened relations in various fields, despite heavy Western sanctions.

