



PRESS RELEASE

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Free the 11 Global Sumud Land Convoy Volunteers

June 3, 2026 **BENGHAZI, LIBYA** – Eleven unarmed civilian volunteers, comprised of doctors and humanitarians, remain unlawfully detained in Libya. They are part of the Global Sumud Land Convoy, a peaceful humanitarian mission of 230 participants from 21 countries carrying ambulances, medicine, and mobile homes overland to break the siege on Gaza. The eleven have been subjected to arbitrary detention, severed communications, and sustained psychological pressure.

The Timeline of Injustice

- **19 May:** Mehdi Bouzguenda, a 24-year-old Tunisian technical team member, was arrested by Libyan authorities approximately 25 kilometers from the Tunisian-Libyan border while returning home. Unofficial reports suggest fabricated accusations of espionage, though no official notification has been provided.
- **24 May:** A 10-member negotiation delegation approached a checkpoint near Sirte in complete good faith. Their objective was solely to continue discussions with authorities to coordinate safe passage, as previously agreed. Instead of being met for dialogue, they were forced into unmarked white vans and disappeared to an unknown location, all communication cut off. All men in the group were interrogated and forced to sign statements written in Arabic - a language they do not comprehend - without the support of an interpreter.
- **25 May:** Libyan authorities announced their detention, weaponizing Law 19 of 2011 to falsely accuse the delegates of violating entry procedures and "gathering without a permit". The fact remains that all 10 volunteers hold valid visas and entered the country entirely legally.
- **2 June:** After more than seven days in isolation without seeing a judge or prosecutor, the 10-delegate negotiation team were brought before the Attorney General in Benghazi to record statements. Denied their fundamental right to legal counsel, their arbitrary detention was extended for 10 more days.

A Clear Violation of International Law

This is a textbook case of arbitrary detention under international human rights law, violating Article 9 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and Articles 6 and 7 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights.

Furthermore, by weaponizing border regulations to violently obstruct a *bona fide* humanitarian aid convoy, at a time when international courts and bodies have recognized

the catastrophic starvation of civilians in Gaza, transit states are failing their global obligations to facilitate unimpeded relief.

We will not stop demanding their immediate, unconditional release. And we demand the governments who represent them do the same.

The Illegally Detained Volunteers Include:

Achraf Khoja (Tunisia)

Achraf Khoja built a career in international development and education through roles at UNICEF and UNHCR, where he led initiatives on inclusion, international mobility, and support for vulnerable populations. Trained at IE Business School, he left institutional work to dedicate himself fully to the Palestinian liberation movement. A veteran of the Global Sumud Flotilla's sea mission, he sailed on the *Anas El Charif* and refused evacuation despite severe seasickness, remaining with his crew until the end.

Lucas Ezequiel Aguilera (Argentina)

Lucas Ezequiel Aguilera is a veterinarian from Argentina, born in 1977, with expertise in livestock management, animal health, and basic sanitary practices in conditions of scarcity. Politically engaged in the Palestinian cause since 1996, his commitment spans three decades of sustained solidarity. He joins the Global Sumud Land Convoy as a form of active, practical participation, bringing professional skills to bear on a political mission he has pursued his entire adult life: breaking Gaza's isolation and raising global awareness.

Maria Paula Giménez (Argentina)

Maria Paula Giménez is an Argentinian psychologist born in 1983, with extensive experience in psychosocial support, crisis intervention, and community-based care across urban and rural settings. Her work encompasses psychological first aid, group facilitation, counseling, and maintaining team cohesion under sustained pressure. She has provided direct support in high-stress and conflict situations, including street-level crisis response. Motivated by ethical and political commitment, she joins the convoy to offer care and solidarity to those most affected by the ongoing siege on Gaza.

Ana Margarida França Santana Baptista (Portugal)

Ana Margarida is a humanitarian activist and member of the Abraça Gaza Community in Portugal. Calm in presence and unshakeable in principle, she joined the overland solidarity convoy in Egypt driven by a lifelong commitment to justice and human rights. Known for her boundless empathy, she works to raise awareness of the situation in Gaza through grassroots community organizing and political education. She brings to the mission both her capacity to care for those around her and her refusal to remain a bystander.

Domenico Centrone (Italy)

Domenico Centrone is a 33-year-old filmmaker and film educator from Molfetta, Italy, who has studied and worked across Rome, Budapest, Lisbon, Brussels, and Barcelona. He teaches at DAMS (University of Bari "Aldo Moro") and at the Accademia del Cinema dei Ragazzi. A member of the Molfetta Coordination for Palestine, he came to the Global

Sumud movement over the past year, describing his involvement as "the only possible meaning of life today." He brings his skills in storytelling and visual culture to the mission.

Leonarda "Dina" Alberizia (Italy)

Leonarda Alberizia, known as Dina, spent more than thirty years as a preschool teacher at the Piazza Cavour nursery in Trento, working with rare passion and care for children and their families. Since retiring, she has channeled that same dedication into advocacy for the children of Gaza, refusing the separation between those she cared for daily and those suffering under siege. Her presence on this mission is a continuation of the same conviction: no child's life is worth more than another's.

Jenelle Jones (US)

Jenelle Jones is an American humanitarian advocate and ethical travel professional with ties to the University of South Florida and the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Her work centers on sustainable tourism, global awareness, and community-led humanitarian efforts. Known for her commitment to ethical engagement and human rights, she joined the Global Sumud Land Convoy to act on principles she has long held—that solidarity requires presence, and that breaking Gaza's isolation is inseparable from the broader struggle for justice and inclusive global citizenship.

Matías Álvarez (Uruguay)

Matías Álvarez is a 29-year-old marketing professional from Montevideo, Uruguay, born in 1996. Since 2014, the humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza has shaped his political consciousness and driven his commitment to the Palestinian cause. Fatherhood deepened that commitment further. He joins the convoy as an active expression of solidarity, bringing his skills in communication and public awareness to a mission he regards as both a moral necessity and a direct response to the ongoing siege and the international silence that enables it.

Laura Kwoczała-Alsubaih (Poland)

Laura Kwoczała-Alsubaih is a 24-year-old Polish political science student, humanitarian activist, and human rights defender from Oleśnica. Between 2022 and 2023, she led the Refugee Rights Intervention Team, documenting human rights violations at the Polish-Belarusian border, supporting refugees through legalization processes, and collaborating with the Parliamentary Committee for Migration and Integration. She participated in the convoy's negotiation committee, bringing direct experience of frontline human rights work to bear on a mission that demands both political clarity and operational skill.

Alicia Armesto (Spain)

Alicia Armesto is a journalist and member of the Madrid Journalists' Union with years of experience covering humanitarian crises and social conflicts. A veteran of the Global Sumud Flotilla's sea mission, she returns for her third mission with the land convoy, driven by the conviction that breaking the information blockade on Gaza is as urgent as breaking the siege itself. "Where there is no press, there is impunity," she says. Her journalism is an act of solidarity, bearing witness as a form of accountability.

Mehdi Bouzguenda (Tunisia)

Mehdi Bouzguenda is a 24-year-old Tunisian engineering and technology student whose skills have consistently outpaced formal structures. A student at ESPRIT in Tunis, he built his expertise through hands-on experience, technical curiosity, and a strong instinct for creating practical solutions. Known for his community involvement, he volunteered with the Tunisian Red Crescent between 2018 and 2019. On the Global Sumud Land Convoy, he served on the tech team and helped build key operational infrastructure. On 19 May, while returning to Tunisia, he was detained approximately 25 kilometers from the Tunisian-Libyan border.

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