

Press release from THE SWEDISH DOCKWORKERS UNION

Stockholm 2010-06-11

[Change of dates for the blockade on Israeli ships and cargo to and from Israel](#)

The Swedish Dockworkers Union gave notice on June 3, 2010 that their blockade of Israeli ships and cargo to and from Israel will take place from 15th-24th June. The measure was based on the Israeli attack on the Freedom Flotilla (of which the Swedish Ship to Gaza was a member), an action that was contrary to public international law.

The Swedish Dockworkers Union had previously decided to voice their support for the humanitarian project Ship to Gaza. An additional component of the blockade was a demand that the state of Israel lifts its illegal blockade of Gaza. The employers association Ports of Sweden responded to this notice by threatening to take action against union members taking part in the blockade without stating any objections to the notice itself or the action as such.

According to Ports of Sweden, participation in the blockade would violate the rules of obligation in individual employees' contracts and financial compensation would be sought for any damage caused. The Swedish Dockworkers Union believes that a union notice protects individual members from such retaliation and that such action by the employer instead constitutes a violation of freedom of association. Furthermore, the approach of Ports of Sweden, contrary to their claim to be making an assessment purely based on labour laws and free of political values, constitutes in our opinion an extended statement of political position, at least in its consequences.

After evaluating the situation, the Swedish Dockworkers Union have decided to withdraw its original notice in order to put forward a reformulated notice, with a somewhat limited time frame. United Palestinian trade unions have directed a request for sympathy blockades against Israel to every port workers' union in the world.

The Swedish Dockworkers Union's action has, therefore, in addition to the reasons mentioned above, an underlying union purpose as the Israeli blockade of Gaza has led to unparalleled unemployment levels for the people of Gaza. The blockade will now take effect at midnight on Tuesday 22nd June and last until midnight on Tuesday, June 29, 2010. It will therefore coincide with the second week of the Norwegian port workers' blockade of Israeli ships and cargo that comes into effect on June 15th and lasts for two weeks.

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