

## STATEMENT

Dear Friends,

This is an important moment in history. In the aftermath of the Gaza Freedom Flotilla massacre and increased world-wide scrutiny of Israel's blockade of Gaza, the Israeli government has mounted a huge public relations campaign spreading the lie that by letting a few more items into Gaza the blockade has been lifted. This is not the reality. Gaza is still under siege, vital building materials and other supplies are banned, exports of goods from Gaza are denied and neither ships nor people can travel without permission from Israel, permission which Israel will not give. Gaza is essentially an open-air prison under a U.S.-backed Israeli blockade.

We are planning to launch a U.S. boat to Gaza, joining a flotilla of ships from Europe, Canada, India, South Africa and parts of the Middle East due to set sail in September/ October of this year. In order to succeed in this essential but costly human rights project, we need significant financial support.

Citizens around the world have responded to the plight of the Palestinian people and are taking action to help break the blockade which is suffocating the lives of the people of Gaza and denying them their liberty. The U.S. government is complicit through established policies that uncritically support Israel in its brutal attack on the Palestinian people and on those who attempt to intervene on their behalf. We in the United States must continue to step up and do our part. We must join with others from across the world to support an end to the collective punishment of 1.5 million Palestinians in Gaza.

We turn to you to help make the U.S. boat, *The Audacity of Hope*, a reality. We must raise at least \$370,000 in the next month. These funds will be used to purchase a boat large enough for 40-60 people, secure a crew, and cover the licensing and registering of the boat. In addition, the funds will subsidize some other costs of sending a U.S. delegation. We can make this happen together. For example, with 370 people giving \$1,000, or with 3,700 people giving \$100, we will have raised our full amount.

Give what you can and give generously. From the deck of *The Audacity of Hope*, we will be in a powerful and unique position to challenge U.S. foreign policy and affirm the universal obligation to uphold human rights and international law. Let us act now because every moment counts and every dollar counts. Together we will contribute to the great effort to end the blockade of Gaza and the illegal occupation of Palestine.

Please spread this appeal letter far and wide, so that others will contribute as well.

Thank you for your generosity.

On behalf of the U.S. BOAT TO GAZA,