

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Embassy Confirms Torture of Brazilian Citizen and First-Hand Accounts Confirm Torture of Spanish Citizen as Global Sumud Flotilla Activists Forcibly Transferred to Askalan in Occupied Palestine**

**New testimony details beatings, medical neglect, and hunger strike as Saif Abukeshek and Thiago Ávila remain in custody without charges following interception in international waters**

**May 2, 2026**    **Mediterranean Sea / Askalan (Occupied Palestine)** — As thousands of Palestinians remain imprisoned without charge and subjected to systemic abuse, the Global Sumud Flotilla confirms that Saif Abukeshek and Thiago Ávila have now been transferred into Shikma Prison in Askalan, north of Gaza in occupied Palestine, following their illegal abduction in European waters by Israeli forces.

The prison is known for being used to detain Palestinian prisoners under harsh conditions, most recently being used to imprison civilians abducted from Gaza as part of Israel's genocidal campaign against the Palestinian people.

This development marks a critical escalation, now compounded by confirmed reports of torture in custody. Despite urgent legal interventions and widespread international appeals, European countries abdicated their legal obligations and allowed the transfer of the two civilians, placing them at immediate risk.

Following their forced transfer, urgent new testimony has emerged through diplomatic channels raising alarm about the treatment of detainees in custody.

According to the Brazilian embassy, Thiago Ávila reported being subjected to torture, beatings, and mistreatment. During a monitored visit in which he was separated by glass and unable to communicate freely, embassy officials observed visible marks on his face. He reported significant pain, particularly in his shoulder.

Despite being examined by a doctor, adequate medical care was not provided. The embassy is now insisting on immediate and appropriate treatment.

Thiago has been on a hunger strike since his abduction, only drinking water. He has not been informed of any charges against him, and the embassy itself has received no clarification regarding the legal basis for his detention. Legal counsel is expected to visit him shortly.

In a further act of solidarity, Thiago communicated that he will not leave detention unless Saif Abukeshek is also released, insisting that they leave together. Abukeshek is also currently on a hunger strike.

What is being reported in this case reflects, in concentrated form, the conditions Palestinians have been subjected to for years under siege, occupation, and detention

These developments build on prior eyewitness testimony from released participants indicating that Saif Abukeshek was subjected to torture and severe abuse while detained aboard the military vessel prior to transfer, treatment consistent with longstanding reports of abuse of Palestinian detainees under Israeli custody.

Saif Abukeshek, a Spanish-Swedish national of Palestinian origin, and Thiago Ávila, a Brazilian national, were the only two participants not released following the interception of the Global Sumud Flotilla in international waters near Crete. Their continued detention raises serious concerns of arbitrary detention, denial of due process, and violations of the absolute prohibition on torture under international law.

The Global Sumud Flotilla reiterates that the forced transfer of civilians from international and European waters into custody, combined with credible allegations of torture and the absence of due process, constitutes a serious violation of international law and must be met with accountability.

We urgently call on governments, human rights organizations, legal institutions, media outlets, and civil society worldwide to demand:

- The governments of Spain, Sweden, and Brazil to take immediate diplomatic action to secure the release of their nationals
- International organizations and legal bodies to urgently intervene to ensure the safety and rights of the detainees
- Governments and public institutions to reject and challenge unsubstantiated accusations that endanger detained civilians
- Relevant authorities to ensure accountability for violations including torture, unlawful detention, and forced transfer

### **General Principles and Human Rights Statement**

The treatment of detainees in any context must be governed by binding international legal standards, including an absolute prohibition of torture and the obligation to ensure due process and humane treatment.

The reported treatment of detainees under Israeli custody, combined with escalating rhetoric and unsubstantiated accusations, raises urgent and profound concerns for the international community. Any policy or practice that places the lives of prisoners at risk constitutes a direct challenge to the fundamental principles of international law, human dignity, and justice.

Saif and Thiago are not abstractions, they are human beings with inviolable rights. They are entitled to protection, to due process, and to the full preservation of their lives and

dignity. They are fathers, sons, and pillars of communities that depend on their safe return. Their abduction is a grave violation of international norms and demands urgent, uncompromising, and coordinated global action.

Their abduction requires immediate and decisive international action, not only to secure their release, but to confront the broader system of siege, detention, and dehumanization imposed on Palestinians, particularly in Gaza.

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