**Israel asks UN to halt Libyan ship**

Israel envoy to UN: 'prevent Libyan aid ship from violating blockade.'

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Israel on Friday has requested the UN step up efforts in preventing the Gaza-bound Lybian ship from setting sail from Greece Friday.

In an in an official letter to UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon, Israeli Ambassador to the UN Gabriela Shalev requested the international community use its power to halt the humanitarian aid ship, funded by an organization headed by the son of Lybian leader Muammar Gaddafi.

"Israel calls upon the international community to exert its influence on the government of Libya to demonstrate responsibility and prevent the ship from departing to the Gaza Strip," the envoy requested.

"Israel reserves the right under international law to prevent this ship from violating the existing naval blockade on the Gaza Strip," Shalev told Ban Ki Moon.

The Moldova-flagged cargo ship Amalthea will leave no later than Saturday from the port of Lavrio, south of Athens, carrying 2,000 tons of food and medical supplies, officials from the organization told The Associated Press. There will be 27 people on board.

"The declared intentions of this mission are even more questionable and provocative given the recent measures taken by Israel to ensure the increase of humanitarian aid flowing into the Gaza Strip," Shalev stated in the letter.

Amalthea's journey to Gaza is expected to take up to 80 hours. Aid on the Amalthea included sacks of rice and sugar, and corn oil and olive paste mostly donated from Greek companies and charities, organizers said. The ship will also carry pro-Palestinian activists who are interested in breaking the blockade of Gaza.

The Israeli ambassador asked the UN and international community "to discourage their nationals from taking part in such action" and "expects the international community to ensure that this ship does not sail."