

Catholic Worker peace team sets eyes on Gaza visit

NCR Staff | May. 10, 2009

CAIRO-

Six members of a American Catholic Worker Peace Team arrived in Cairo, Egypt May 9 with \$18,000 worth of medical supplies donated by Venture International and with toys donated by children from Wayland, Mass., which they plan to deliver to a hospital and children's center respectively in the besieged Gaza Strip.

Access to Gaza has been severely restricted, if not completely blocked by Israel and Egypt for nearly two years, since Hamas won democratic elections in the Palestinian occupied territories.

The United Nations and the International Red Cross have faulted this closure as a humanitarian catastrophe and their objections came before Israel attacked Gaza in December and January.

The Catholic Worker group has been invited to hospitals and other centers in Gaza to assess the human cost of that assault and the continued closure. If the team is refused entry to Gaza May 10 it will consider what nonviolent methods can be employed to persuade the authorities to allow them to pass.

On Tuesday, May 12th the group is invited by the Sderot Media Center to visit the Israel city which has suffered the highest number of missile attacks launched from Gaza. From there, the Catholic Workers plan to visit Jerusalem and the occupied West Bank.

No previous team has successfully crossed all of these borders and reported on the humanitarian and political situation in all three of these places.

Elizabeth Brockman of the Durham, North Carolina Catholic Worker, a spokesperson for the group said, "It is imperative, as Christians and American citizens, that we cross all of these borders to bring hope to people who have suffered so much from arms provided by our government. We hope that our crossing will help ensure that these borders are permanently opened so people and civilian necessities can pass freely."

The other members of the team are Brenna Cussen and Scott Schaeffer-Duffy of Worcester, MA, Jennifer Thomas of Royalton, VT, Colin Gilbert of Palm Desert, CA, and Mark Colville of New Haven, CT.

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