

# *Israeli Gunboats Target Gaza Fishermen Off Rafah*

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Ramallah, February 21 (RHC)-- Israeli gunboats have opened fire at Gazan fishermen off the southern Gaza Strip town of Rafah, according to a report by Press TV.

Two Israeli gunboats shot at two fishing trawlers belonging to Palestinian fishermen near the Egyptian international waters on Thursday. Palestinian fishermen normally head south towards the Egyptian maritime border to buy fish from Egyptian fishermen as Israeli navy does not allow them to fish off the coast of Gaza.

An Israeli Navy source claimed that the fishermen were smugglers and tried to justify their action. The fishermen managed to swim to shore and they were not injured by the Israeli gunfire, but the trawlers were taken to the Israeli port of Ashdod.

Gazan fishermen are faced with Israeli aggressions on a nearly daily basis in a clear violation of international law. Palestinian boats are permitted to fish up to six nautical miles from the Gaza coast according to the terms of Israel's naval blockade of the Gaza Strip. Gaza has been blockaded since June 2007, which is a situation that has caused a decline in living standards, unprecedented levels of unemployment, and unrelenting poverty.



**Radio Habana Cuba**