

# Detailed Compiled Eyewitness Accounts Confirm Cold-Blooded Murder and Executions by Israeli Military

By [Mahdi Darius Nazemroaya](#)  
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Theme: [Crimes against Humanity](#)  
In-depth Report: [FLOTILLA TO GAZA, PALESTINE](#)

## Global Research Editor's Note

*On June 1st, the President of the UN Security Council issued a statement on behalf of the Council.*

*"The Security Council deeply regrets the loss of life and injuries resulting from the use of force during the Israeli military operation in international waters against the convoy sailing to Gaza. The Council, in this context, condemns those acts which resulted in the loss of at least ten civilians and many wounded, and expresses its condolences to their families."*

*No formal UNSC Resolution was voted upon, condemning Israel for conducting what is tantamount to an act of piracy in international waters, in violation of the International Law of the Sea and the UN Charter.*

The following text by Mahdi Darius Nazemroaya, Research Associate at the Centre for Research on Globalization (CRG) presents a preliminary compilation of the evidence. In the weeks and months ahead, Global Research will be preparing a comprehensive dossier on Israel's attack in international waters directed against the Gaza Freedom Flotilla.

## Michel Chossudovsky, 3 June 2010

After carefully studying the eyewitness accounts, it can be concluded that "the fighting" on the Gaza Peace Flotilla between heavily armed Israeli commandos and unarmed civilians was deliberately instigated by the Israeli military.

The actions of the Israeli commandos ordered by the Israeli government were characterized by cold-blooded murder and executions. According to testimony of the passengers, individuals who surrendered were killed, while a white flag was flying. Because some activists in critical condition were refused aid by the Israelis, they also died.

The civilian passengers of the Mavi Maramara included academics, parliamentarians, artists, doctors, lawyers, journalists, and representatives of human rights organizations. Amongst them was the Melkite Greek Catholic Archbishop of Jerusalem. Israel and the U.S. also pressured Cyprus into preventing 30 parliamentarians from across the E.U. and a Jewish Holocaust survivor from boarding the Gaza Peace Flotilla.

Confronted by the Israeli commandos, the civilian passengers were involved in desperate

acts of self-defence, to protect their lives after fellow passengers had already been killed by Israeli sniper fire. All members of the Gaza Peace Flotilla from the German parliamentarians to Turkish aid workers have testified to this.

The Israeli commandos, through their actions, deliberately triggered these acts of self-defence, with a view to demonizing the passengers and justifying Israeli brutality.

The Israeli forces initially used automatic rifles before paintball guns.



According to the Algerian activists on board, some of the passengers managed to resist, but eventually surrendered when the Turkish captain's young son was held hostage by the Israelis in a second wave of attacks.

From the passengers' accounts, there is a possibility that some of the casualties also included Algerian nationals. It is already known that one American and several Turks were killed by the IDF.

**There was no “bad intelligence” on the part of the Israeli military as claimed by the Israeli media and Israeli apologists. The Israeli cabinet had several advanced meetings prior to the multi-national Gaza Freedom Flotilla's departure. The Israelis could also have prevented the ships from running without boarding.**

**The witness accounts suggest that the attacks were part of a carefully planned military intelligence operation. Israel even had naval practices to stop the humanitarian vessels from reaching the Gaza Strip.**

All the weapons allegedly used by the passengers were part of the ship's “standard equipment”, including repair tools and kitchen utensils. These were gathered by the IDF to create a fake and fabricated account of what happened.

So-called “video and picture evidence” is provided in a Ministry of Foreign Affairs dossier:

[http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Government/Communiques/2010/Israel\\_Navy\\_warns\\_flotilla\\_31-M](http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Government/Communiques/2010/Israel_Navy_warns_flotilla_31-M)

[ay-2010.htm](#)

The Israeli forces gathered the tools and equipment belonging to the ship.

The claims that weapons had been smuggled on board to confront the IDF is pure fabrication.

A careful look at the pictures suggests that the IDF gathered knives from the kitchen and other tools from the ship. This is obvious from the kitchen knife sharpener. One of the knives in the pictures presented by Israel is a traditional khanjar knife, which could belong to the Omani or Yemenite parliamentarian member(s) of the Gaza Peace Flotilla.





Vests with clear Red Crescent signs used by medics and humanitarian workers of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent were claimed to be proof that the group of international humanitarians were violent supporters of terrorism too.

In regards to the videos, they are selectively presented and the videos should be disclosed in full. If the Israelis were sincere they would have disclosed the full tapes and not selected scenes with activists fighting.

It should be noted that according to eye witnesses, the IDF systematically targeted international journalists first. If the IDF had nothing to hide, why did they confiscate all video and audio recording devices? It is clear that the Israeli military was systematically preventing the international journalists from showing what really happened.

One of the Turkish organizations, IHH (Insani Yardim Vakfi/Humanitarian Aid Fund), tied to this multi-national flotilla of humanitarian ships from all over Europe and the Mediterranean has also been accused of being tied to Al-Qaeda.

The Turkish government has responded and has labelled the Israeli officials as outright liars.

In an interview with Bulent Yildirm, an IHH official, conducted in English by Hassan Ghani the IHH official talks about only having humanitarian intentions and says that he hopes common sense and moderation will prevail in the Israeli cabinet.

In the interview the IHH official also says that other vessels (most probably Israeli commercial vessels) were traveling in Israeli's so-called "military exclusion zone." See minute 3:30 of the interview:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hqjNim1Ak4E&feature=related>

Israel violated international law. It did not even wait to see if the ships would enter its so-called "military exclusion zone" before acting.

According to reports from freed Kuwaiti parliamentarians and activists, the ships were going to negotiate their entry with Israel.

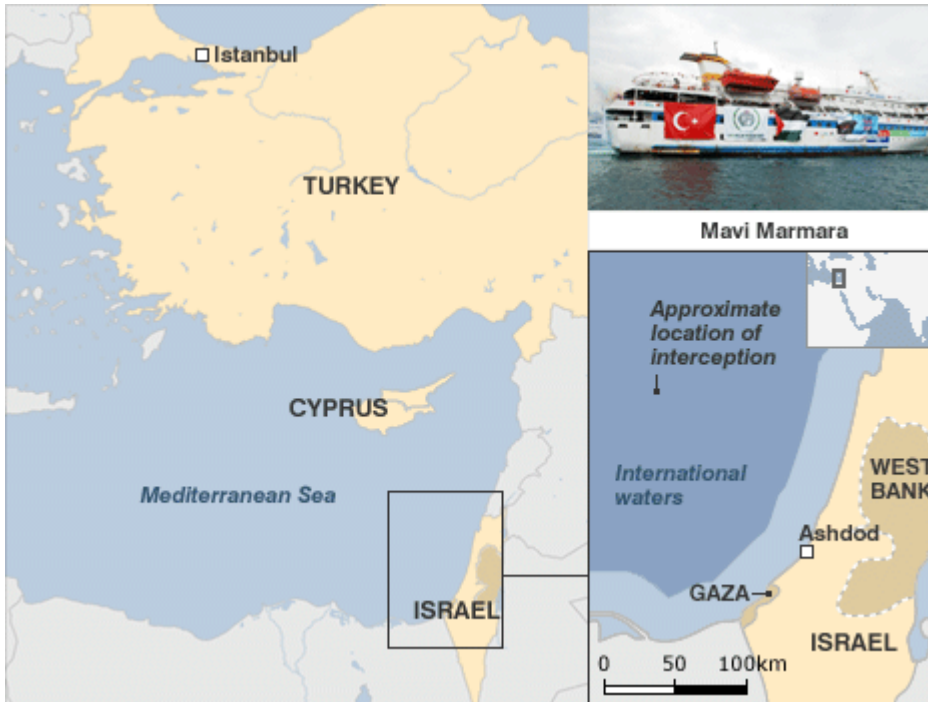
### **Concluding Remarks**

One last point, the U.S. entered the First World War when the R.M.S. Lusitania was attacked by a German submarine or u-boat.

Attacking ships and civilians in international waters is an act of war and illegal under international law. It is ironic that Joseph Meadors, one of the members of the Gaza Freedom Flotilla, which was attacked, was a former U.S. Navy sailor who was a survivor of the U.S.S. Liberty attacked by Israel in 1967. This will be the second time he has been attacked in international waters by the IDF.

Israel's actions go far beyond the violation of international law. The IDF's military spokeswoman, Avital Liebowitz, even refers to the Gaza Strip as being Israeli territory. She articulates what Israel really thinks, but does not say internationally. Israel is a danger to itself and to global security. Israel is also preparing itself for a major war directed against Lebanon, Syria, and Iran. There is no way Israel could defeat Iran by itself and without the use of nuclear weapons.

Worldwide, people must demand justice for the Palestinians and for an end to the occupation of Arab lands. They must also mobilize to prevent the launching of a broader war in the Middle East.



## ANNEX

### COMPILATION OF SELECTED WITNESS ACCOUNTS

**1. Algerian activists** give accounts that IDF forced passengers to fight in self-defence and kidnapped the captain's child:

<http://in.reuters.com/article/idINIndia-48995420100602>

**..."We used sticks and all what we could find to defend ourselves to stop the assault. During the second assault, they succeeded in kidnapping the young son of the captain, and then we found ourselves obliged to give up."**

**2. Kuwaiti activists** give details that fighting started because IDF killed humanitarians by firing before boarding vessel and give accounts of abuse:

[http://www.kuwaittimes.net/read\\_news.php?newsid=NDg0MzQ1OTYy](http://www.kuwaittimes.net/read_news.php?newsid=NDg0MzQ1OTYy)

**..."Our original plan was to stop there and ask for Israeli permission before we entered and, if they refused, to stay at sea in protest ... but they attacked us before we had a chance to do that," Abdullah added."**

**3. Israeli parliamentarian**, who was on board the Gaza Peace Flotilla, refutes Israeli claims:

<http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3897396,00.html>

**4. Greek passenger** gives account of beatings, excessive firing, torture, electric shock, and ridicule by Israelis:

<http://www.cyprus-mail.com/cyprus/greeks-return-home-after-israeli-detention/20100602>

**5. Greeks, Germans** refute IDF claims; Greek activists beaten by Israeli police in prisons, German parliamentarians speak of abuse:

<http://dalje.com/en-world/german-and-greek-eyewitnesses-on-israeli-commando-action/307256>

..."This was an attack in international waters on a peaceful mission and a clear act of piracy. We had not prepared in any way to fight. We didn't even consider it. We wanted to show that we were peaceful. No violence, no resistance, because we knew very well that we would have absolutely no chance against soldiers like this..."

**6. Swedish activist, Mankell**, says IDF attacked sleeping activists:

<http://www.helsinkitimes.fi/htimes/domestic-news/politics/11291-stubb-israeli-attack-shocking-.html>

**7. Swedish activists** give account of abuse and humiliation (Mankell: "Will Israel drop Atom Bomb Next Time?"):

<http://www.thelocal.se/26980/20100602/>

..."The Israelis did all they could to humiliate us... They wanted to scare us into obedience,"

**8. Swedish scholars** on Turkish ship say Israeli military committed premeditated murder of civilians:

<http://www.swedishwire.com/politics/4842-swedes-accuse-israel-of-premeditated-murder>

"We were witnesses to premeditated murders," said historian Mattias Gardell who was on the Mavi Marmara along with his wife, fellow historian Edda Manga, when Israeli commandos attacked the ship early Monday, killing at least nine people.

"This was a military attack on a humanitarian aid operation far out in international waters ... It was a very surprising and aggressive overreaction by Israel," he told Swedish public radio upon arrival in Istanbul with planeloads of nearly 500 activists, including seven Swedes, early Thursday.

...Asked about why activists on the Turkish ship had attacked the Israeli soldiers, Gardell stressed "it is not as if Israel is a police officer who no human being has the legitimate right to defend him or herself against."

"If you are attacked by commando troops you of course must have the right to defend yourself ... Many people on this ship thought they were going to kill

everyone. They were very frightened ... It's strange if people think one should not defend oneself. Should you just sit there and say: 'Kill me'?" he said.

**9. Canadian activist** give account of Israeli attacks and abuse:

<http://www.ctv.ca/CTVNews/TopStories/20100602/canadian-activist-account-100602/>

**10. Canadian activist** talk about IDF killing other passenger and beatings:

<http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/article/817854-canadian-detained-on-gaza-aid-flotilla-says-he-was-beaten?bn=1>

**11. Irish activist** hurt while getting into fight with Israelis in airport during their deportation, being treated in Turkey:

<http://www.rte.ie/news/2010/0603/mideast.html>

**12. Irish activist** refutes Israeli claims of weapons and says journalists were targeted first by the Israeli military:

<http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/breaking/2010/0602/breaking65.html?via=mr>

...“Any of the weapons I have seen demonstrated by the Israeli defence forces were typical equipment that you would have on a ship,” said Mr Dillon, a member of the Irish Palestine Solidarity Campaign.

“There was a knife for a galley. They also showed a sledgehammer, which would be on a merchant vessel for anchor cables etc. There was nothing on display to show there were any weapons.”

...He said the Israeli's initially focused their attention on the journalist onboard as it appeared they did not want footage, photographs or reports of what had transpired to be released.

**13. British activists** give details about attack and abuse while in Israeli custody:

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/israel/7799706/Gaza-flotilla-attack-British-activists-tell-of-abuse-by-Israelis.html>

**14. Australian photojournalist** tasered:

<http://www.mediaspy.org/report/2010/06/03/fairfax-photographer-was-hit-by-stun-gun/>

...Another person on the MV Samoud, **Shane Dillon**, told [The Age](#) that when Israeli forces boarded, they directly approached McGeough and Geraghty. He said that the Israeli personnel had immediately sought to seize all electronic equipment from the vessel, including those of the journalists.



**15. Australian photojournalist's** account, other Australian shot in leg

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/world/aussie-photographer-kate-geraghty-tasered-during-flotilla-raid/story-e6frf7lf-1225874808220>

**16. American linguistics professor** abused (e.g., cut, beaten, tasered) in Israeli captivity:

<http://www.sacbee.com/2010/06/02/2793999/activist-in-gaza-bound-flotilla.html>

**17. American passenger** tortured/abused:

<http://www.ktvu.com/news/23776714/detail.html>

...“I was treated pretty rough,” said Larudee. “Basically any part of my body that could be hit was hit; any joint of my body that could be twisted was twisted.”

**18. Accounts by former U.S. ambassador** and U.S.S. Liberty veteran of Israeli about use of force on Sfondoni and false Israeli CLAIMS that activists had violated Israeli laws in high seas; People put in crutches, bandages, arms in slings, and the captain's neck in a brace;

<http://www.berkeleydailyplanet.com/issue/2010-06-01/article/35522?headline=More-Gaza-Flotilla-Detainees-Released-Larudee-Badly-Beaten-But-Now-Headed-to-Greece>

...Ambassador Peck this morning described the Israeli commando raid on the Sfondoni, the Freedom Flotilla ship he and other FPM delegates were aboard: “The first thing we knew was the sound of footsteps, and my eyelids flicked open, and there they were, heavily armed. The Israeli government keeps referring to the paint guns, but the paint guns were attached to the automatic weapons and the stun grenades and the pepper spray and the tasers and everything else that these guys carry. ... And it was all over in the inside of the ship, where I was. But up on the upper deck, where some people had been sitting and sleeping, they made an effort to peacefully prevent the Israelis from taking over the wheelhouse, and we had a number of people injured in that. Nothing of a critical nature, but we had people on crutches and people with bandages and peoples with their arms in slings, and the captain had his neck in a brace.”

“I was deported for having violated Israeli law,” Peck added. “I asked [the Israeli official processing his deportation], ‘What law have I violated?’ He said, ‘You have illegally entered Israel.’ I said, ‘Well, now, wait. Our ship was taken over by armed commandos. I was brought here at gunpoint against my will, and you call that illegally entering Israel?’”

...“As a survivor of the June 8, 1967 Israeli attack on the USS Liberty,” Meadors said, “I am fully aware of the tactics the Israelis are capable of and willing to use with impunity and without remorse. That time they fired machine guns, cannon, rockets, napalm, and torpedoes on us, then deliberately machine-gunned life rafts we had dropped over the side in anticipation of abandoning ship. And the only response from the American government was to impose a gag order on the crew of the USS Liberty.”

**19. VIDEO:** Israeli MP's account of IDF attacks on activists, refutes IDF claims:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0LGC1y1xdUo>

**20. VIDEO:** German parliamentarians accounts of IDF attacks, refute Israeli claims about violent activists:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=05bo1xh1JDo>

**21. VIDEO:** Husband of arrested activist (Huwaida Arraf) gives detail of physical abuse of wife and other activists from an American ship while they were held in captivity by Israelis:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bmDjAu0DSiM>

**22. VIDEO & Transcript:** Activists, Huwaida Arraf, gives account of how Israelis started violence, used dog(s), and human rights abuses:

[http://rt.com/Top\\_News/2010-06-03/israel-aggressor-flotilla-attack.html](http://rt.com/Top_News/2010-06-03/israel-aggressor-flotilla-attack.html)

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### **About the author:**

An award-winning author and geopolitical analyst, Mahdi Darius Nazemroaya is the author of *The Globalization of NATO* (Clarity Press) and a forthcoming book *The War on Libya and the Re-Colonization of Africa*. He has also contributed to several other books ranging from cultural critique to international relations. He is a Sociologist and Research Associate at the Centre for Research on Globalization (CRG), a contributor at the Strategic Culture Foundation (SCF), Moscow, and a member of the Scientific Committee of Geopolitica, Italy.

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