

Israel Military Admits It Doctored Gaza Freedom Flotilla Audio Clip

Washington Post's Kessler Must Retract

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The IDF [admitted today in a press release](#) that it doctored audio footage from its exchanges with the Gaza flotilla in order to paint the flotilla passengers as anti-Semites. I am beginning to wonder if the Israeli military hired James O'Keefe to handle its press shop.

This is the IDF's "clarification:"

Yesterday evening on 4 June 2010, the IDF released an audio recording of a radio transmission between the Israeli Navy vessel and the Flotilla ships wherein unidentified flotilla passengers tell the Israeli Navy vessel to "shut up, go back to Auschwitz" and "we're helping Arabs go against the US, don't forget 9/11." There have been questions regarding the authenticity of the recording as well as its attribution to a communication with the Mavi Marmara.

So to clarify: the audio was edited down to cut out periods of silence over the radio as well as incomprehensible comments so as to make it easier for people to listen to the exchange. We have now uploaded the entire segment of 5 minutes and 58 seconds in which the exchange took place and the comments were made.

This transmission had originally cited the Mavi Marmara ship as being the source of these remarks, however, due to an open channel, the specific ship or ships in the "Freedom Flotilla" responding to the Israeli Navy could not be identified. During radio transmissions between Israeli Navy and the ships of the "Free Gaza" Flotilla on 31 May 2010, the Israeli Navy ship attempts to make contact with the 'Defne Y' on channel 1-6. Other ships from the flotilla respond on the channel, without identifying themselves. At some point during the radio exchange the Israeli Navy is told by one of the ships to "shut up, go back to Auschwitz" (2:05) and "don't forget 9-11?" (5:42).

It's nice that the IDF has "clarified" its doctoring of footage. But the new clip it has released that supposedly shows "the entire segment...in which the exchange took place and the comments were made" is highly suspect as well. Why? Because it contains an exchange with Huwaida Arraf that Arraf claims took place on an entirely different attempt to break the siege — Arraf has led previous aid boats to Gaza that were intercepted and hijacked by the IDF. Arraf [told Ma'an News](#):

"I was by the radio the whole time there was any communication. Mine was the only boat in which I answered and not the captain and they all answered in a

very professional manner.” Arraf told Ma’an that while she might have spoken of having permission from the Gaza Port Authority on a previous attempt to break the blockade, she is certain that she did not say it on Monday morning. “When they radioed us, we were still 100 miles away,” she explained.

Mya Guarnieri of Ma’an [goes into more detail](#) about the suspicious nature of the new clip the IDF has released, demonstrating how absurd their latest attempt to save face is. The lesson of the debacle is that nothing the IDF says can be trusted by anyone. Not ever. (Of course, that should apply to any nation’s military, and not just “the most moral army in the world”).

Hours after the IDF’s admission, major news outlets which reported on the doctored audio clip as though it was a shocking revelation and not a scandalous forgery have still not corrected themselves. The most blatant stenographer of IDF propaganda is the Washington Post’s Glenn Kessler. [Here is what Kessler reported](#) after being participating a briefing session with an IDF flack:

Israeli forces spent four hours trying to persuade the 300-foot-long Turkish ship to shift course away from Gaza, senior Israeli officials said in a briefing Friday for a small group of reporters.

The activists responded repeatedly with shouts — “Go back to Auschwitz!”— and kept the ship at its maximum speed of 10 knots.

Besides the fact that Kessler reported on the “Go back to Auschwitz” claim without investigating it, he claimed that the passengers “repeatedly” shouted the slur. But even the IDF did not claim that anyone “repeatedly” shouted anything; the “Auschwitz” statement is heard in the doctored audio clip only once.

Kessler’s report was so slanted in favor of the Israeli military he was compelled to include this as his opening line: “This is the Israeli version of the deadly raid on an aid ship bound for Gaza.” But Kessler also cited the opinions of “Turkish officials,” and worded his article as though it were an authoritative report on what really happened on board the Mavi Marmara.

Finally, Kessler reports the IDF’s [discredited](#) claim that numerous Mavi Marmara passengers were terrorist “mercenaries:”

The activists also had substantial funds, perhaps 1 million euros. Many of the activists who battled the soldiers were each carrying 10,000 euros, which officials speculated meant that they were mercenaries who had been paid to fight.

Right. The IDF had [retracted its claim](#) about terrorist mercenaries on board the Mavi Marmara a full day before Kessler filed. Kessler and the Washington Post have let the Israeli military play them for fools. They should issue corrections immediately.

If the Post does not correct, readers should let WaPo Ombudsman Andrew Alexander know that his paper’s coverage of the flotilla massacre remains riddled with major factual errors. Alexander can be reached at ombudsman@washpost.com or 202-334-7582.

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