

# “Operation Justified Vengeance”: Israeli Strike on Freedom Flotilla to Gaza is Part of a Broader Military Agenda

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

*War Criminal Prime Minister Netanyahu, who directly ordered the strike on the international flotilla to Gaza, was on an official visit to Canada at the time of the Israeli attack.*

The strike constitutes an act of piracy in violation of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Netanyahu's actions, which have resulted in 19 deaths and up to 60 injured, constitute a criminal act committed in international waters. ([BBC News - Deaths as Israeli forces storm Gaza aid ship](#)).

*In a cruel irony, Netanyahu, in a recent statement, committed himself to peace with Palestine: “We want to move as speedily as possible to direct talks because the kind of problem that we have with the Palestinians can be resolved in peace and can be arranged only if we sit down together”.*

*Several prominent personalities as well as several Global Research authors and partners were on board the ships.*

The May 31st strike is a follow-up on “Operation Cast” initiated in late December 2008. It is meant to enforce the status of Gaza as a de facto urban prison.

Operation “Cast Lead” was part of a broader military-intelligence operation initiated at the outset of the Ariel Sharon government in 2001. It was under Sharon's “Operation Justified Vengeance” that F-16 fighter planes were initially used to bomb Palestinian cities. The strike on the Freedom Flotilla is part of the logic of transforming Gaza into an urban concentration camp.

“Operation Justified Vengeance” was presented in July 2001 to the Israeli government of Ariel Sharon by IDF chief of staff Shaul Mofaz, under the title “The Destruction of the Palestinian Authority and Disarmament of All Armed Forces”. “Operation Justified Vengeance” was also referred to as the “Dagan Plan”, named after General (ret.) Meir Dagan, who currently heads Mossad, Israel's intelligence agency. (See [Ellis Shulman, Operation Justified Vengeance, A Secret to Destroy the Palestinian Authority, Global Research, 2002](#))

Meir Dagan, in coordination with his US counterparts, had been put in charge of various military-intelligence operations. It is worth noting that Meir Dagan as a young Colonel had

worked closely with then defense minister Ariel Sharon in the raids on Palestinian settlements in Beirut in 1982.

The 2009 ground invasion of Gaza, in many regards, bear a canny resemblance to the 1982 military operation led by Sharon and Dagan.

Dagan as head of Israeli intelligence, no doubt also took part in the decision to launch the strike on the Freedom Flotilla.

### **Was the Decision Taken in Consultation with Washington?**

On May 26, the Israeli military (IDF) confirmed that it would confront the Freedom Flotilla in international waters, while intimating that there may be terrorist elements on board the ships:

“As part of the military preparation, the navy carried out an exercise intercepting ships and arresting passengers.

Navy Commander Major-General Eliezer Marom said the navy forces will use measures to protect the soldiers’ lives and ensure that there are no terrorist elements or explosives on the ships.

Marom said he instructed the forces to act sensibly and avoid provocations, adding that the IDF had no intention of harming the hundreds of passengers on board these ships.” ([Israel’s Military Command Says Will Stop Flotilla, but Transfer Supplies to Gaza](#))

It is worth noting that prior to this announcement, the IDF launched a public relations campaign, describing the Flotilla as a “provocative act”:

“Head of Gaza ‘s Coordination and Liaison Authority, Colonel Moshe Levi convened a press conference and said that there was no shortage in food and supplies in the Strip.

“The planned flotilla to Gaza is a provocative act that is unnecessary under the existing conditions in the Gaza Strip, where the humanitarian situation is good and stable,” he said, adding that Israel allows many products into the Strip, and only limits those that might serve Hamas in advancing terror activities.” (Ibid)

Washington was fully aware as to the nature as well as the likely consequences of the IDF naval operation in international waters, including the killings of civilians. There are indications that the decision was taken in consultation with Washington.

### **The Role of Rahm Emmanuel**

Obama’s White House Chief of Staff Rahm Emanuel was in Israel in the week prior to the launching of the raid on the Freedom Flotilla.

Although on a private visit, Rahm Emanuel met Prime Minister Netanyahu in high level discussions on May 26. Rahm Emanuel also met president Shimon Peres on May 27. The White House described the May 26 meeting with Netanyahu as “an informal discussion of a

range of issues in the U.S.-Israel bilateral relationship.”

And on that same day (May 26), the IDF confirmed the launching of a military operation directed against the Freedom Flotilla. On May 26, Rahm Emanuel also extended an invitation to Netanyahu to meet president Obama in early June following his scheduled official visit to Canada. In recent developments, Netanyahu has cancelled his US trip and is returning to Tel Aviv.

### The Broader Military Agenda

It should be understood that the raid on the Flotilla also coincided with NATO-Israel war games directed against Iran. According to the Sunday Times “three German-built Israeli submarines equipped with nuclear cruise missiles are to be deployed in the Gulf near the Iranian coastline.” ([Israel Deploys Three Nuclear Cruise Missile-Armed Subs Along Iranian Coastline](#)). The report tacitly presents Israel as the victim rather than the perpetrator of military threat:

“Israel’s business and defence centre, remains the most threatened city in the world, said one expert. “There are more missiles per square foot targeting Tel Aviv than any other city,” he said.

... The first [submarine] has been sent in response to Israeli fears that ballistic missiles developed by Iran, Syria and Hezbollah, a political and military organisation in Lebanon, could hit sites in Israel, including air bases and missile launchers.

The submarines of Flotilla 7 — Dolphin, Tekuma and Leviathan — have visited the Gulf before. But the decision has now been taken to ensure a permanent presence of at least one of the vessels.

The flotilla’s commander, identified only as “Colonel O”, told an Israeli newspaper: “We are an underwater assault force. We’re operating deep and far, very far, from our borders.”

... The deployment is designed to act as a deterrent, gather intelligence and potentially to land Mossad agents. “We’re a solid base for collecting sensitive information, as we can stay for a long time in one place,” said a flotilla officer.

The submarines could be used if Iran continues its programme to produce a nuclear bomb. “The 1,500km range of the submarines’ cruise missiles can reach any target in Iran,” said a navy officer.

Apparently responding to the Israeli activity, an Iranian admiral said: “Anyone who wishes to do an evil act in the Persian Gulf will receive a forceful response from us.”

Israel’s urgent need to deter the Iran-Syria-Hezbollah alliance was demonstrated last month. Ehud Barak, the defence minister, was said to have shown President Barack Obama classified satellite images of a convoy of ballistic missiles leaving Syria on the way to Hezbollah in Lebanon. (emphasis added)

While these naval deployments were underway in the Persian Gulf, Israel was also involved in war games in the Mediterranean. The war game codenamed “MINOAS 2010” was carried

out at a Greek air base in Souda Bay, on the island of Crete.

Also, in the wake of the decision directed against Israel's nuclear weapons under the auspices of the NPT, the White House reaffirmed not only its support to Israel, but also to Israel's nuclear weapons capabilities. The statement issued one day before the raid on the flotilla points to US support of "Israel's strategic and deterrence capabilities, which also include the launching of a pre-emptive nuclear attack on Iran:

"a senior political source in Jerusalem said Sunday that Israel received guarantees from U.S. President Barack Obama that the U.S. would maintain and improve Israel's strategic and deterrence capabilities.

According to the source, "Obama gave [Prime Minister Benjamin] Netanyahu unequivocal guarantees that include a substantial upgrade in Israel-U.S. relations."

Obama promised that no decision taken during the recent 189-nation conference to review and strengthen the 40-year-old Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty "would be allowed to harm Israel's vital interests," the sources said. [Obama promised to bolster Israel's strategic capabilities, Jerusalem officials say - Haaretz Daily Newspaper](#)

The presence of Obama's Chief of Staff Rahm Emanuel in Tel Aviv undoubtedly played a role in the timing of this Sunday May 30th statement as well as the concurrent strike on the Freedom Flotilla. The Obama administration had given the green light to the deadly raids in international waters.

The killing of unarmed civilians was part of the mandate of the Israeli naval commando. It was an integral part of the logic of Dagan's "Operation Justified Vengeance", which presents Israel as the victim rather than the perpetrator and uses civilian deaths "on both sides" to justify a process of military escalation.

The action by the IDF has triggered a wave of indignation throughout the Middle East. It will no doubt also trigger a response by Palestinian resistance forces, including possible suicide bomb attacks inside Israel, which could then be used by Israel as a pretext and justification for the launching a broader military operation.

Iran is being portrayed in Western media reports as supportive of Hamas and the Freedom Flotilla is said to be backed by a tacit Hamas-Iran alliance. Realities are turned upside down. Israel is the victim. In the words of Benjamin Netanyahu: "Our soldiers had to defend themselves to defend their lives." In the words of Netanyahu at a press briefing in Ottawa:

"Soldiers had boarded the vessel to check for any rockets, missiles or explosives headed for Gaza to be used for attacks on Israel, he said. They were mobbed, they were clubbed, they were beaten, stabbed, there was even a report of gunfire, and our soldiers had to defend themselves, defend their lives or else they would have been killed," he said Monday during a visit with Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

Netanyahu added: "Regrettably in the exchange at least 10 people died. We regret this loss of life. We regret any of the violence that was there. I would like to wish speedy recovery to the wounded, including four of our own soldiers." ([Quoted in the Toronto Star, May 31, 2010](#)) (emphasis added)

Meanwhile, a White House spokesman has confirmed that the United States “deeply regrets the loss of life and injuries sustained”. But the action by Israel has not been condemned by the Obama administration: The administration is “currently working to understand the circumstances surrounding this tragedy.” (See [The Associated Press: Obama administration concerned about Gaza incident](#))

For further details on Operation Cast Lead and Operation Justified Vengeance, see

[Michel Chossudovsky, The Invasion of Gaza: “Operation Cast Lead”, Part of a Broader Israeli Military-Intelligence Agenda](#), Global Research, January 2009.

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