

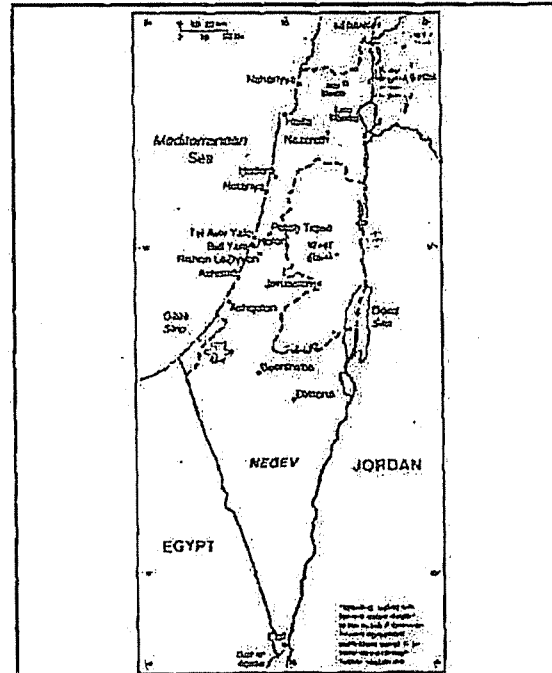
# (U) 2010 Gaza flotilla clash

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(SBU) According to Turkish press sources, at approximately 4:30 a.m. on 31 May 2010, the Israeli military allegedly landed soldiers on the deck of the Turkish flagged ship "Blue Marmara", while it was in international waters, between 69 and 70 miles from Israel's shore. The ship was part of the Turkish NGO Humanitarian Aid Foundation (IHH) flotilla attempting to reach Gaza and allegedly deliver humanitarian supplies. The latest press reports indicate that shots were fired on the ship and somewhere between 10 and 16 people were killed. Israel Prime Ministry Spokesman Gendelman said that there were firearms, knives and batons on the ship, and that fire was opened against the Israeli soldiers. Gendelman reported that between eight and ten soldiers were wounded, some in serious condition. [1]



## Contents

- 1 Background
- 2 International media coverage
- 3 Reactions
- 4 GAZA FLOTILLA REACTION: WEST BANK/GAZA/JERUSALEM. 31 MAY 2010.
  - 4.1 Gaza Reactions
  - 4.2 Gazans Will Still Try to Attend PIC
  - 4.3 Further Official Palestinian Reactions
  - 4.4 American Citizens
  - 4.5 Comment
- 5 GOI RESPONSE TO GAZA FLOTILLA INCIDENT. 31 MAY 2010
  - 5.1 Deputy Foreign Minister Brief
  - 5.2 Brief to Foreign Ambassadors
  - 5.3 MOD Brief
  - 5.4 J5 Brief
  - 5.5 Overall Security Situation
- 6 GAZA FLOTILLA MONITORING GROUP SITUATION REPORT #2. 31 MAY 2010
  - 6.1 STATUS OF AMERICAN

- Israel
- Portal:Israel
- Israel Bios
- JS Country Fact Sheet
- ESG 5 N2:Israel Products
- Politics of Israel
- Prime Minister Netanyahu

- Border Police
- Cabinet
- Corruption
- Districts
- Drug trafficking
- Economy
- Elections
- Foreign relations
- Gaza flotillas
- Human rights
- Military
- Mossad
- Organized crime
- Orthodox Movement
- Palestinian rocket attacks
- Political Islam
- Political parties

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11/9/2011

- CITIZENS
  - 6.2 UN SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION UPDATE
  - 6.3 U.S. STATEMENT TO UNSC
  - 6.4 QUARTET STATEMENT
  - 7 GAZA FLOTILLA MONITORING GROUP SITUATION REPORT #1. 31 MAY 2010
    - 7.1 STATUS OF AMERICAN CITIZENS INVOLVED
    - 7.2 TURKEY APPEALS TO THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL
    - 7.3 GAZA REACTION
  - 8 SitRep 4 on IHH Flotilla. 31 MAY 2010
  - 9 SitRep 3 on IHH Flotilla. 31 MAY 2010
  - 10 SitRep 2 on IHH Flotilla. 31 MAY 2010
  - 11 SitRep 1 on Humanitarian Aid Foundation Flotilla, 31 MAY 2010
  - 12 (S//REL TO USA, GBR) IS: NAVY POISED TO INTERCEPT FLOTILLA. 25 MAY 2010
  - 13 TURKEY WORKING TO STOP GAZA AID FLOTILLA, NOT HOPEFUL ABOUT SUCCESS. 21 MAY 2010
  - 14 IHH SHIP TO DEPART ISTANBUL FOR GAZA FLOTILLA ON MAY 22, U.S. CITIZENS MAY BOARD. 20 MAY 2010
    - 14.1 U.S. CITIZENS MAY JOIN FLOTILLA FROM TURKEY
    - 14.2 ONBOARD MEDIA TO REPORT FLOTILLA'S EFFORTS
    - 14.3 CARGO TO CONTAIN BUILDING MATERIAL, MEDICINE, MEDICAL EQUIPMENT
    - 14.4 COMMENT
  - 15 ISRAELI OFFICIALS PLAN TO BLOCK "FREE GAZA" FLOTILLA. 13 MAY 2010
  - 16 Chirp Feed (U)
  - 17 References

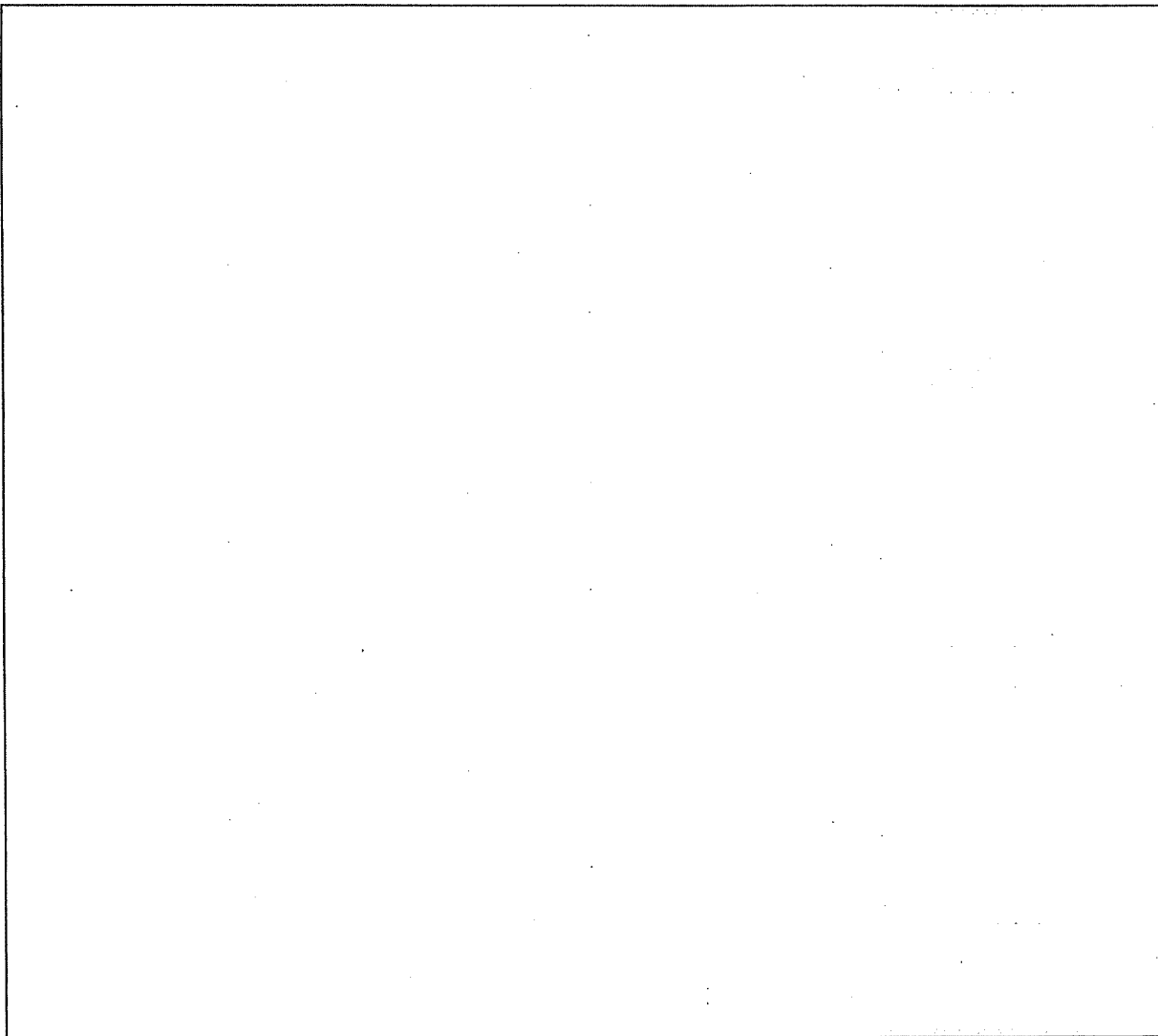
- Settlers
  - Terrorism
    - CT laws
  - UN Profile
  - Water scarcity
  - Middle East Peace Process
    - Palestinian Authority
    - West Bank
    - Fatah
    - Gaza
    - HAMAS
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### Background

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### **International media coverage**

*Main article: International media coverage of the Gaza flotilla clash*

### **Reactions**

*Main article: International reactions to the Gaza flotilla clash*

### **GAZA FLOTILLA REACTION: WEST BANK/GAZA/JERUSALEM. 31 MAY 2010**

(SBU) Protest activities rumbled on in the Gaza Strip in the aftermath of Israel's interdiction of the "Free Gaza" flotilla, but none took place on a large scale. [redacted] described an atmosphere of

B6

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uncertainty, apathy, and depression. One suggested that many Gazans resented what they saw as international gestures in support of Hamas, and that they saw the flotilla in that light. The Gazan delegation to the Palestine Investment Conference (PIC) in Bethlehem has, despite reservations given the current situation, decided to try to attend. [redacted] described President Abbas's determination not to let Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood capitalize on the current situation. Post has identified and located the Amcit described in refcel as having been injured while participating in a demonstration in the West Bank. [8]

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### Gaza Reactions

(SBU) [redacted] described calls for protests being made through all available forms of media in Gaza during the day on May 31. This included (Ham-controlled) radio and television stations as well as the loudspeaker systems of mosques. While some demonstrations were held by Hamas, there were no large rallies. A large demonstration is expected to be called tomorrow (June 1).

(SBU) Hamas earlier in the day on May 31 called for a three-day strike in the Palestinian Territories, but has not so far enforced it, even in Gaza. Some stores closed, but others remained open, according to Gaza-based contacts reached by phone. Contacts described merchants as waiting to see what direction prices of goods will take.

(SBU) Gaza-based contacts described the atmosphere in Gaza as very tense. One compared it to that at the beginning of Israeli combat operations against Hamas in December 2008. Another commented that there is no longer unity during moments of crisis. In the past, this contact said, Palestinians would come together to protest Israeli actions. Now, he said, many in Gaza are staying home, watching events develop on television, and wondering what will happen next.

(SBU) A few Gaza-based contacts suggested that the apparent lack of enthusiasm for protests reflected scant hope for the future in Gaza, especially regarding an international response to the current situation. Some conveyed a sense of letdown after Hamas had built up anticipation for the flotilla's arrival, with lanterns set up to welcome it to the port of Gaza.

(SBU) One Gaza-based contact, speaking to Post prior to the flotilla's interdiction, noted that while Gazans widely welcomed any attempts to lift the Israeli "siege" on Gaza, they saw initiatives like the "Free Gaza" flotilla as intended to support only Hamas and its beneficiaries. Many Gazans blamed Hamas for the ongoing immiseration of Gaza and the continued division of the Palestinian Territories, he said, and consequently resented international gestures of support for Hamas, like (as many saw it) the flotilla.

### Gazans Will Still Try to Attend PIC

(SBU) [redacted] reported that the Gaza delegation to the June 1-4 PIC was reconsidering its attendance. The contact described uncertainty as to whether the Erez crossing between Israel and the Gaza Strip would be open, what actions Hamas would take, and what the perception would be of Gazan business leaders running off to an international investment conference the day after the flotilla incident.

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8(SBU) [REDACTED] notified Post on the evening of May 31 that the 25-member committee formed to coordinate Gazan participation in the PIC finally agreed to participate in the PIC as originally planned.

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### Further Official Palestinian Reactions

(SBU) A senior Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) official told Post that President Abbas told a joint May 31 meeting of the PLO's Executive Committee and the Fatah Central Committee that the Palestinian Authority (PA) was reaching out to others -- including the USG, UN, and European Union -- for support. It was also doing the utmost to contain the situation so that the Palestinians could "stay the course." Abbas had noted strict instructions to PA security forces not to condone any violence by Palestinians or allow frictions with Israeli security forces in the West Bank, according to the senior PLO official.

(SBU) The senior PLO official said that President Abbas told meeting attendees the PA should work to ensure that the strike announced by Hamas for tomorrow (June 1) was not honored in the West Bank. In general, the senior PLO official said, Abbas and the PA were doing everything possible to deny Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood the opportunity to capitalize on the situation. That said, the PA could not block initiatives being pushed by others regarding the flotilla incident at the UN Security Council or the Arab League, the senior PLO official said. He added that Abbas had received a telephone call from Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan and President Gul, and had told them that he would see them in Istanbul as scheduled on his way to Washington next week.

(U) At a signing ceremony for the Northern Gaza Emergency Sewage Treatment project on the afternoon of May 31, Prime Minister Fayyad spoke briefly of the flotilla incident. Referring to it as a "tragedy," Fayyad said that even during "sad days, we must move forward."

### American Citizens

(SBU) Post has identified and located the Amcit described in refTel as having been injured while participating in a demonstration in the West Bank. The Amcit was one of approximately 70 demonstrators at the Qalandiya checkpoint protesting the interdiction of the flotilla on May 31. She was reportedly hit by a tear gas canister fired by Israel Defense Forces personnel, and subsequently taken to a hospital in Jerusalem. Conoffs will attempt to visit her on June 1.

### Comment

(SBU) Concerns that the interdiction of the flotilla might spark broad-based violent protests in East Jerusalem appear to have subsided somewhat, with Israeli news media reports during the evening of May 31 regarding the situation of Ra'ed Salah, head of the Islamic Movement in Israel-Northern Branch. According to the latest reports, Salah, a flotilla passenger, was not in fact seriously injured during the Israeli naval operation, as earlier reports alleged.

## GOI RESPONSE TO GAZA FLOTILLA INCIDENT. 31 MAY 2010

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11/9/2011

(SBU) During several May 31 press conferences and briefs to the diplomatic corps, Israeli officials stressed that the GOI was "sorry for any loss of life," but that responsibility for the Gaza flotilla incident lies entirely in the hands of the flotilla's organizers. According to GOI officials, the GOI made every attempt to persuade flotilla organizers to unload its cargo of humanitarian supplies in the Israeli port of Ashdod, wherein it would be sent to Gaza across land border crossings following IDF inspection. According to GOI and IDF officials, Gaza flotilla activists rejected all such overtures, clearly stating their intention to break the IDF's naval blockade. GOI officials claim that IDF commandos were met with "extreme violence" by activists on one of the six flotilla ships. The GOI claims IDF commandos had no choice but to "respond in kind" in self-defense. Casualty numbers remain subject to confirmation, but the Israeli MOD estimated 10 fatalities and 36 wounded, ten of which are Israeli commandos. IDF officials argue that under International Humanitarian Law the IDF can board any vessel intending to break its naval blockade, which is justified due to the GOI's ongoing armed conflict with Hamas. [9]

#### **Deputy Foreign Minister Brief**

(SBU) Deputy Foreign Minister Danny Ayalon held a press conference to register the GOI's early reaction in response to the IDF interdiction of the Gaza flotilla during the early morning hours of May 31. Ayalon said that the GOI was "sorry for any loss of life." He added, however, that the Gaza flotilla was not a humanitarian mission. Ayalon said the GOI offered to help transfer the flotilla's reported 10,000 tons of humanitarian supplies to the Gaza Strip through official land border crossings "but that Gaza flotilla activists had refused the offer. Instead, Ayalon indicated that Gaza flotilla officials said their intent was to "break the blockade" on Gaza "and was therefore not a humanitarian mission.

(SBU) Ayalon said that allowing the Gaza flotilla to reach Gaza would have set a precedent, opening a channel for the smuggling of weapons and other banned goods into Gaza. He said this ultimately would have caused "more bloodshed." Ayalon said the movement's organizers did not heed the IDF's calls to peacefully follow them to Ashdod. He said that at least two pistols that were fired at IDF commandos were found on board one of the ships, and that no sovereign country would have tolerated such violence.

(SBU) Ayalon called on all countries involved to do "everything in their power" to calm the situation and bring it to a peaceful end. He noted that the Turkish NGO IHH that organized the flotilla was well-known to maintain ties with Hamas, and was only interested in provoking a violent confrontation.

#### **Brief to Foreign Ambassadors**

(SBU) In a later brief to foreign ambassadors, MFA Director General Yossi Gal and IDF Director of Strategic Coordination COL Assaf Orion noted that the identification of dead and wounded Gaza flotilla participants would take some time. They noted that the MFA would reach out proactively to foreign embassies once identification of participants had been completed, although it was not clear how long the process of identification would take.

(SBU) Gal and COL Orion indicated that all fatalities/injuries occurred on board the ship "Mavi Marmara." COL Orion noted that activists armed with knives and metal bars on board the Marmara were prepared for IDF commandos. He said it was unclear if the activists were armed with guns in advance or took firearms from the IDF boarding party. COL Orion said one IDF commando was nearly beaten to death with a metal bar.

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(SBU) COL Orion said the interdiction took place in international waters. He said the GOI asserted the legal right to intercept the flotilla in international waters due to the military blockade in place as a result of the armed conflict between Israel and Hamas.

#### MOD Brief

(SBU) During a subsequent press conference, Defense Minister Barak said the GOI was "sorry about the results," but that responsibility lies solely in the hands of the Gaza flotilla organizers. He said that the GOI had asked the organizers to head to Ashdod and send its humanitarian supplies to Gaza following IDF security checks, but that such calls were rejected.

(SBU) Barak indicated that IDF commandos had been attacked during the takeover of one of the flotilla ships. During the incident, IDF commandos used anti-riot gear and live fire against the flotilla activists who had used violence.

(SBU) Barak said he had spoken to Turkish officials, as well as President Peres and Prime Minister Netanyahu, who is currently in Canada. Barak noted that there is no starvation or humanitarian crisis in Gaza. The area is controlled by Hamas, an organization Barak said was arming itself with rockets to harm and that have harmed Israel. He said it was for this reason that the GOI stands by its right to inspect any ships approaching Gaza.

(SBU) Barak said Israel will act with determination to protect its sovereignty. He described the Turkish NGO IHH that organized the flotilla as a "violent organization that has nothing to do with humanitarian aid" whose intended purpose was to break the blockade of Gaza. Barak called on all countries involved to remain calm, and for Arab states and Palestinians not to allow this incident to disrupt on-going proximity talks.

(SBU) IDF Chief of the General Staff LTG Ashkenazi stated that the IDF interdiction intended to thwart an attempt to bring contraband into Gaza. He said that the events that transpired on the IHH-owned Marmara were unique from events on the other five flotilla ships. LTG Ashkenazi said IDF commandos had been ordered to use restraint, but faced "extreme violence" as they boarded the Marmara. Some IDF commandos were wounded by gunshots and stabbings. Such violence necessitated self-defense " he noted that at least ten activists were killed, and several dozens wounded.

(SBU) IDF Navy Commander Vice Admiral Eliezer Marom added that IDF commandoes "had no choice but to respond in kind" to the violence they faced " the situation could have been worse if the IDF commandos had not acted with restraint. He noted that all wounded activists were treated by Israeli soldiers on board the Marmara, and airlifted to Israeli hospitals.

#### J5 Brief

(SBU) IDF J5 Strategic Division Chief Brigadier General Yossi Heymann indicated that the IDF operation was still on-going; two of the six flotilla ships had been brought to Ashdod, including the Challenger I. BG Heymann said that all other ships " including the Mavi Marmara -- would be brought into Ashdod later the evening of May 31. He said that 10-14 activists had been seriously killed or injured, with another 30 moderately wounded. BG Heymann noted that ten IDF commandos had been wounded including one with serious and one with moderate wounds.

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(SBU) BG Heymann said the interdiction occurred approximately 70 nautical miles from the coastline. Based on the laws of armed conflict, BG Heymann said a country party to a conflict may legally impose a naval blockade to prevent ships from entering or exiting its territory or territorial waters. He referenced the GOI's ongoing conflict with Hamas, and said International Law permits the capture of ships, either hostile or neutral, that seek to breach a naval blockade. BG Heymann said a maritime vessel may be boarded prior to entering the area under naval blockade if there are reasonable grounds to believe that the vessel intends to breach the blockade.

#### Overall Security Situation

(SBU) Israeli press reports that the Israeli Police and Prison Service were placed on the highest state of alert following news of the violent interdiction. Following a joint evaluation conducted by Internal Security Minister Yitzhak Aharonovitch and Police Commissioner Dudi Cohen, the Israeli police will block certain roads and routes, including the Wadi Ara and Temple Mount area. The Israeli NSC's Counterterrorism Bureau issued a warning to all Israeli citizens traveling in Turkey to remain in place and monitor developments instead of attempting to depart Turkey at this time.

## GAZA FLOTILLA MONITORING GROUP SITUATION REPORT #2. 31 MAY 2010

### STATUS OF AMERICAN CITIZENS

(SBU) Embassy Tel Aviv has not yet made contact with any of the AmCits, though the MFA should provide consular access the morning of June 1. [10]

(SBU) Only half of the passengers on the MAVI MARMARA were identified and some names were provided to the MFA.

(SBU) A former U.S. ambassador aboard one of the ships seized is reportedly fine and on his way home, likely to arrive in NYC on June 1, his wife said. Edward Peck, 81, of Chevy Chase, Md., was a former U.S. ambassador to Mauritania. (MGGZ01/Embassy Tel Aviv e-mail)

### UN SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION UPDATE

(SBU) USUN reports that a draft text is circulating amongst a small group - Lebanon, Turkey, and United States - but it was leaked by Turkey or Lebanon to the Israelis and Palestinians, complicating negotiations. Turkey wants a Presidential Statement. USUN seeks to negotiate the language in the text and SC consultations remain suspended. (MGGZ01/USUN e-mail)

### U.S. STATEMENT TO UNSC

(SBU) Deputy PermRep Wolff addressed an emergency session of the UNSC stating that the United States is "deeply disturbed by the recent violence and regrets the tragic loss of life and injuries suffered among those involved." Wolff noted that "we are working to ascertain the facts" and that the United States expects a "credible and transparent investigation." Wolff reiterated the United States is concerned

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about the situation in Gaza and we continue to engage with Israel to address the full range of humanitarian and recovery needs and this situation underscores need to move ahead with negotiations that can lead to a comprehensive peace in the region. (MGGZ01/USUN e-mail)

#### QUARTET STATEMENT

(SBU) Following a Quartet envoys' conference call and interagency concurrence, a draft statement was circulated for review. The Quartet plans to issue the statement after a second envoys' call scheduled for 0900 EDT June 1. The draft statement mirrors Deputy PermRep Wolff's earlier comments before the UNSC and also notes that the only viable solution to the conflict is negotiations between the parties toward realization of the two-state solution. (MGGZ01/SEMEP e-mail)

### GAZA FLOTILLA MONITORING GROUP SITUATION REPORT #1. 31 MAY 2010

#### STATUS OF AMERICAN CITIZENS INVOLVED

(SBU) Nine Amcits, including two journalists, were reportedly onboard the first two ships to dock in the Israeli port of Ashdod; three are scheduled to be deported from Ben Gurion Airport the morning of June 1. The remaining individuals are held at a detention facility near Beer Sheeva. The MFA will provide consular access to Amcits the morning of June 1. (Ops/Embassy Tel Aviv e-mail) [11]

(SBU) One Amcitt reportedly received minor injuries and was treated at Barzilai Hospital, but was not aboard the Turkish vessel, MAVI MARMARA, where confrontations with the IDF occurred. (Ops/Embassy Tel Aviv e-mail)

(SBU) The MFA presumes a number of unaccounted Amcits are on the MAVI MARMARA, which has yet to dock. (Ops/Embassy Tel Aviv e-mail)

(SBU) The dead have been taken to a forensic lab, but it may be several hours before they are identified. (Ops/Embassy Tel Aviv e-mail)

#### TURKEY APPEALS TO THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL

(SBU) Turkish Foreign Minister Davutoglu said Israel treated international aid workers as "combatants," and "the peace process has been suffocated by a single act of aggression." Turkey is seeking a UNSC Presidential Statement demanding: Israel apologize to countries and individuals harmed in the incident; an "urgent inquiry" be conducted by the UN; international legal action against those responsible; immediate repatriation of the dead and wounded; delivery of all ship cargo to Gaza; an end to the Gaza blockade. (Ops/Embassy Tel Aviv e-mail)

#### GAZA REACTION

(SBU) Hamas called for a three-day strike in the Palestinian Territories, but has not so far enforced it, even in Gaza. Embassy contacts suggest the apparent lack of enthusiasm for protests reflected scant hope for the future in Gaza, especially regarding the international response to the current situation.

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Others, however, saw initiatives like the "Free Gaza" flotilla as intended to support only Hamas and its beneficiaries. (Jerusalem 922)

### SitRep 4 on IHH Flotilla. 31 MAY 2010

(SBU) [REDACTED] told Post that its website carrying the U.S. statement regarding the intervention by the Israeli Military on the Humanitarian Aid Foundation (IHH) flotilla has received over 250,000 hits so far today. The statement, "The United States deeply regrets the loss of life and injuries sustained, and is currently working to understand the circumstances surrounding this tragedy" was run with other international condemnations of the intervention. [12]

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(SBU) Press reports of the protest in Istanbul's Taksim Square estimated the group numbered over 10,000. The group was prepared with printed banners telling Israel to leave the ships alone, and appeared well organized. Protestors burned Israeli flags and chanted anti-Israeli slogans.

(SBU) Post's RSO office received confirmation from the MFA that it sent a cable to all security posts in Turkey authorizing any needed additional security for both Israeli and U.S. installations. Post requested and received additional coverage in Ankara. The shouts of protestors could be heard from the Embassy compound.

(U) Anti-Israeli attacks may increase. According to Anatolia News Agency, a Turkish lawyer who is allegedly a member of IHH was charged with assaulting an Israeli athlete competing in the inaugural Cycling Tour of Trakya in Tekirdag on May 31. The assailant entered the race track to try to punch the cyclist but was stopped by the police after the cyclist managed to escape the first swing. There are seven Israeli cyclists competing in the tour. Turkish press reported the Government of Israel "has advised its citizens to avoid travel to Turkey and instructed those already there to keep a low profile and avoid crowded downtown areas."

### SitRep 3 on IHH Flotilla. 31 MAY 2010

(SBU) At 1500 Ambassador Jeffrey and other ambassadors from UN Security Council member states were briefed by the MFA regarding the intervention by the Israeli Military on the Humanitarian Aid Foundation (IHH) flotilla. Following this, the MFA briefed other groups of ambassadors from (1) the Organization of the Islamic Council member states, (2) EU member states, and (3) all other states. All member states received the same briefing. [13]

(SBU) The MFA confirmed that FM Davutoglu is going to New York with the purpose of addressing the UN Security Council today. The Ministry put particular emphasis on calling the intervention a "gross violation of international law," handing out maps to emphasize the location of the intervention. They placed the intervention at 64 nautical miles from the northeast corner of Israel's blockade area of Gaza, which covers 20 square nautical miles from the coastline. The Ministry stressed that it reserves its rights under international law, that this "grave" action should not go without a response, and that a response to the intervention is the responsibility of the entire international community.

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(SBU) The Ministry also stressed that Israel bears the responsibility for the intervention, which involved an attack on innocent civilians -- including women, children and the elderly -- who were on a humanitarian mission. While Turkey has withdrawn its Ambassador to Israel for consultations, its first priority is to determine the whereabouts and identity of the passengers who were killed or wounded in action, and it would like all of the passengers returned to Turkey as soon as possible. (Note: Withdrawing the ambassador for consultations is less dramatic than recalling him, and does not necessarily require a response from the GOI. End note.)

(SBU) The Ministry estimated that the Turkish registered ship that was boarded, the Mavi Marmaris, carried 560 passengers not counting the crew. The majority of those passengers (353) were Turks, though there were also citizens from 43 other nations including Algeria (33 passengers), Jordan (31), the U.K. (28), between 10-20 passengers from Malaysia, Indonesia, and Kuwait, respectively, and 3 U.S. citizens.

## SitRep 2 on IHH Flotilla. 31 MAY 2010

(SBU) In response to the intervention by the Israeli Military on the Humanitarian Aid Foundation (IHH) flotilla, the MFA announced it will recall its ambassador to Israel, Oguz Celikkol, and will cancel three military exercises it had planned with Israel. It will also recall the Turkish Youth National Soccer Team before it plays its scheduled match. The press reported that PM Erdogan cut his trip to Latin America short and will return to Turkey today, while FM Ahmet Davutoglu is on his way to New York to request that the UN Security Council meet in an emergency session to discuss the intervention today. Ambassador Jeffrey has been summoned to the MFA today, with other Security Council Ambassadors, to hear the GOT position on the emergency session. Acting Prime Minister Bulent Arinc said that the intervention will be a "black stain in human history," and urged Israel to lift the blockade against Gaza so that humanitarian aid may reach Gaza. Arinc equated the intervention in international waters with an act of piracy, although he ruled out sending Turkish naval forces to the region for the time being. President Gul condemned the attack, saying that Israel "deeply wounded" the international public's conscience. He urged Israeli officials to bring an end to the developments, and urged Turks to act with restraint. Turkish Grand National Assembly Speaker Mehmet Ali Sahin said that the parliament may issue a condemnation declaration. [14]

(SBU) Protests against the intervention continued. In Istanbul, a crowd of protesters that had been dispersed from the Israeli Consulate moved towards Taksim Square, in the city center. The media reported that the crowd was steadily building in size, to between 5,000-10,000 people. According to press reports, many of the protesters are carrying Turkish and Palestinian flags, are chanting slogans denouncing Israel, and are reciting prayers in Arabic. The media reports that 9 of the apparent 16 dead were Turkish, and that all of them were killed on one Turkish ship, has inflamed passions here. Press pictures of the intervention have shown Israeli soldiers pointing rifles next to Turkish flags.

(SBU) In Adana, a number of people gathered in front of the U.S. Consulate for a peaceful protest. The Consulate local guard force estimated there were 500-700 people while the Turkish National Police (TNP) estimated there were close to 4,000. The group laid a black wreath in front of the consulate, said

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the U.S. is an invading country, and dispersed. The TNP cooperated very well with security staff, and sent nearly all of their branch chiefs as well as the Security Director.

(SBU) Turkish press reported that because of the intervention Greece canceled an air force exercise with Israel and canceled the visit of the Greek Air Force Commander, planned for June 1. According to the press, the Greek MFA said they have not received any information about the welfare of the 34 Greeks that had joined the flotilla, and protests outside the Israeli Embassy in Athens were planned for May 31 and June 1.

## SitRep 1 on Humanitarian Aid Foundation Flotilla, 31 MAY 2010

(SBU) According to Turkish press sources, at approximately 4:30 a.m. on May 31, the Israeli military allegedly landed soldiers on the deck of the Turkish flagged ship "Blue Marmara", while it was in international waters, between 69 and 70 miles from Israel's shore. The ship was part of the Turkish NGO Humanitarian Aid Foundation (IHH) flotilla attempting to reach Gaza and allegedly deliver humanitarian supplies. The latest press reports indicate that shots were fired on the ship and somewhere between 10 and 16 people were killed. Israel Prime Ministry Spokesman Gendelman said that there were firearms, knives and batons on the ship, and that fire was opened against the Israeli soldiers. Gendelman reported that between eight and ten soldiers were wounded, some in serious condition. [15]

(SBU) So far the press has not identified any Americans among the victims. According to Al Jazeera TV, 9 of the dead are Turkish citizens. According to the Associated Press, IHH Official Omer Faruk Korkmaz reported that Israeli soldiers are taking the ship to Haifa. IHH Headquarters in Istanbul also reported that they have lost radio contact with the flotilla. The Turkish press reported that the Israeli military jammed the flotilla's radio communication starting at 3:30 a.m. Israeli television stations have reported that the wounded -- civilians and soldiers -- were transferred to hospitals in Ashkelon. Turkish television stations reported that preparations are underway to detain some civilians in prisons.

(SBU) Following the intervention, the Prime Ministry established a crisis task force to follow events after 7:00 a.m. Deputy PM Bulent Arinc, Interior Minister Besir Atalay, Prime Ministry Undersecretary Efgan Ala, and Turkish General Staff Operations Commander General Mehmet Eroz are following the issue. The Turkish MFA released a strong statement that condemned the attack and protested the use of force by the Israeli Defense Forces against the civilians on the flotilla, who were from many countries and wanted to transport humanitarian assistance to the people in Gaza. It pointed out that there were women and children among the passengers, and that they had received reports so far that the intervention had caused 2 deaths and more than 30 people to be injured. It said Israel has "once again clearly demonstrated that it does not value human lives and peaceful initiatives through targeting innocent civilians." Calling the intervention an "inhuman act," it said the incident, which took place on the high seas in a gross violation of international law, "might cause irreversible consequences in our relations." It said that the Embassy in Tel Aviv would conduct initiatives to protest the event, and that the incident is being "strongly protested" in Ankara, while an explanation from the Israeli Ambassador in Ankara has been demanded at the Ministry. It said the actions against civilians conducting peaceful activities -- whatever their motives -- were unacceptable and that Israel will have to bear the

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11/9/2011

consequences of the actions, which constitute a violation of international law. In closing the statement said "May God bestow His mercy upon those who lost their lives. We wish to express our condolences to the bereaved families of the deceased, and swift recovery to the wounded."

(SBU) MFA Undersecretary Feridun Sinirlioglu told the Ambassador that he personally could not understand how the intervention could have happened. He and others were working with the Israelis, he admitted, and they thought that they had a solution to keep everything under control. He stressed as well that there will be consequences to the intervention. He emphasized that Turks are outraged that the Israelis acted when the ships were 69 miles from Gaza, in international waters. He intimated that 'a solution' might have been possible, or at least more understanding, were the ships intercepted -- as he had thought they would be -- closer to Gaza. The Ambassador stressed the need to protect both U.S. and Israeli diplomatic establishments from crowds of protesters in Turkey, and urged caution on any action until all of the facts were in. Sinirlioglu in turn urged for us to ask Washington to say something critical about this operation, indicating that this would help, although the Ambassador did not respond to the request.

(SBU) Israel's Ambassador to Turkey, Gaby Levi, told the Ambassador that while he had been summoned to the MFA, his residence had been blockaded by protestors and so he was unable to move. He was "under siege" at his embassy. He anticipated "the worst" from the Turks, and that there will be diplomatic consequences to the intervention. The Turkish press reported that MFA Deputy U/S Unal Cevikoz spoke to Ambassador Levi for 20 minutes, and in addition to condemning the attack, he urged Israel to send the passengers and wounded to Turkey immediately. Cevikoz also reminded Levi that Turkey preserves all its rights stemming from international law. The Turkish press also reported that the visit of an Israeli tourist ship to Alanya port today was cancelled.

(SBU) There were protests in several cities Turkey against Israeli and U.S. installations. Media outlets reported that a large crowd of protestors gathered outside the Israeli Consulate in Istanbul starting at 5:00 a.m. The group had been very agitated but at the moment was calm, and had been contained by Turkish police, using water cannons and pepper gas. In Adana at approximately 1:45 a.m. a group of 30-40 protestors held a sit-in in front of the U.S. Consulate for half an hour, and another protest is expected.

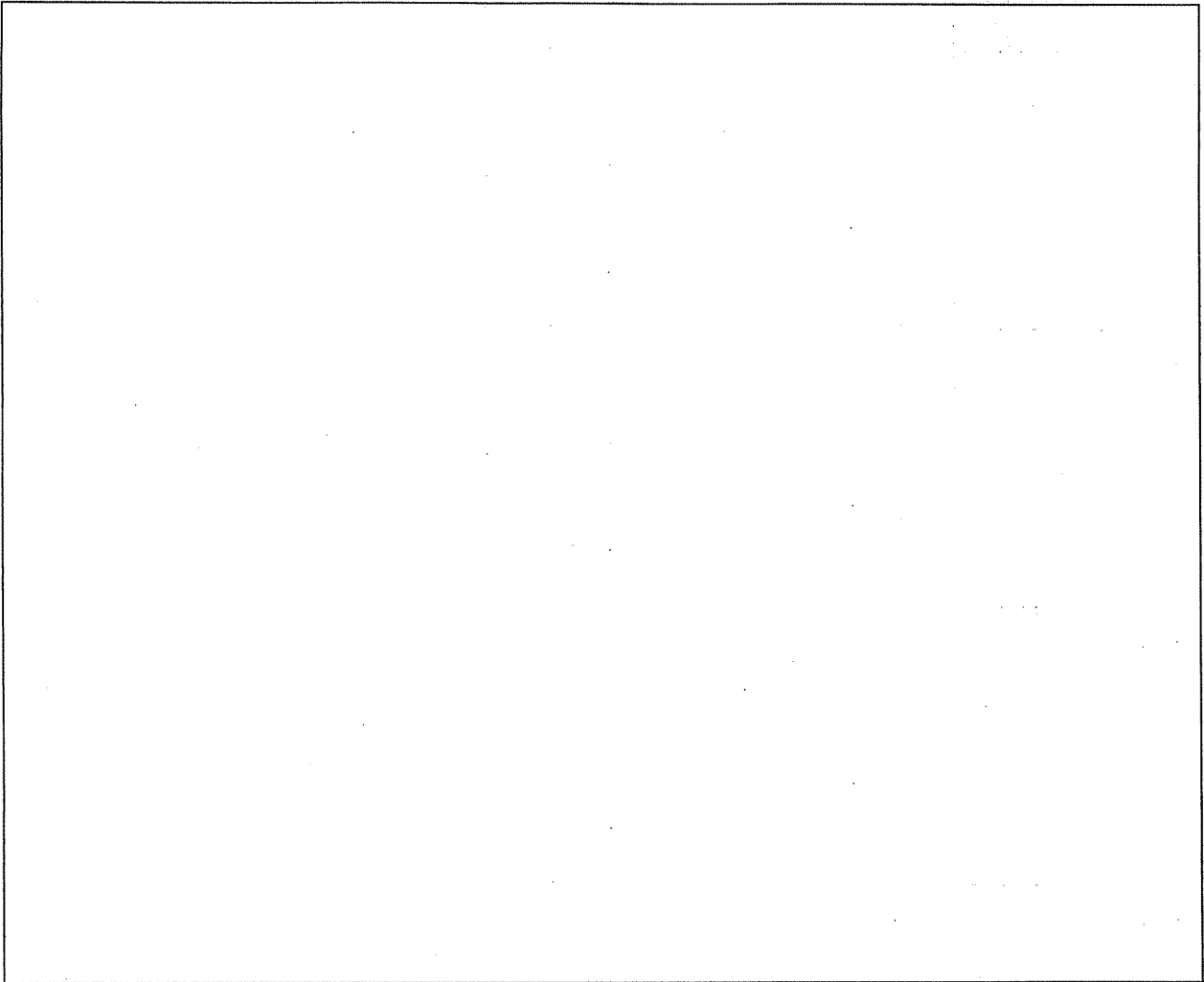
(SBU) Turkish media outlets report that Hamas called the operation "brutal", and urgently urged the UN to interfere, while Palestinian President Abbas termed the attack as "massacre" and declared three days of mourning.

(S)

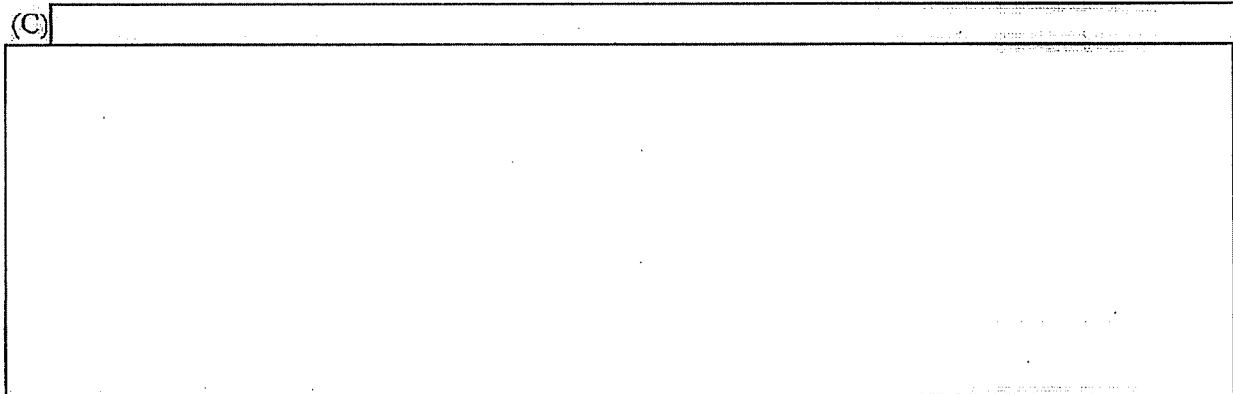
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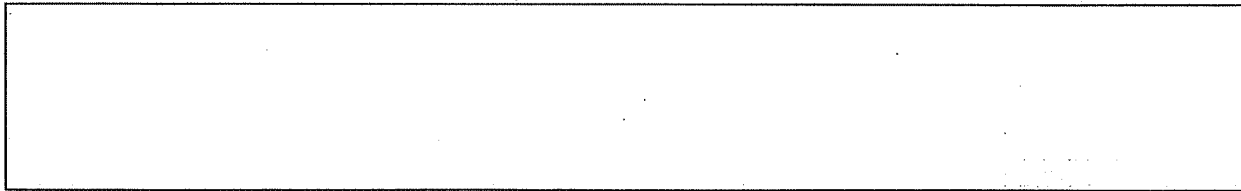


**TURKEY WORKING TO STOP GAZA AID FLOTILLA, NOT HOPEFUL ABOUT SUCCESS. 21 MAY 2010**

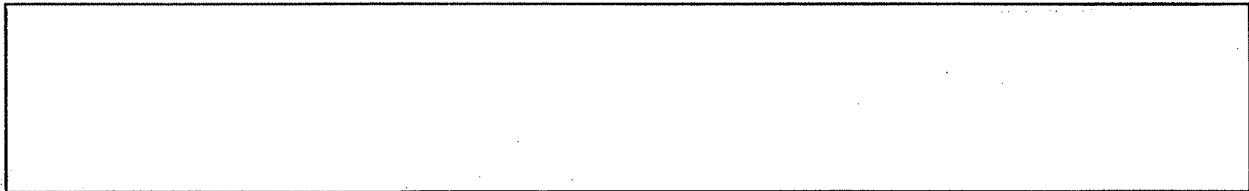


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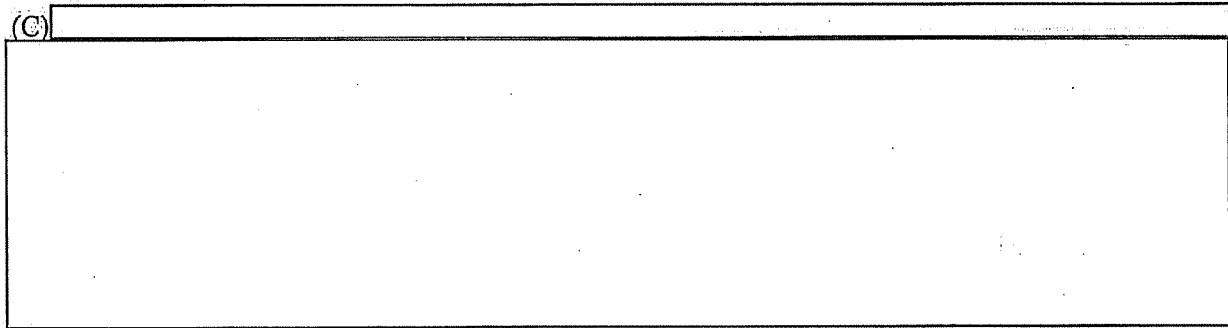
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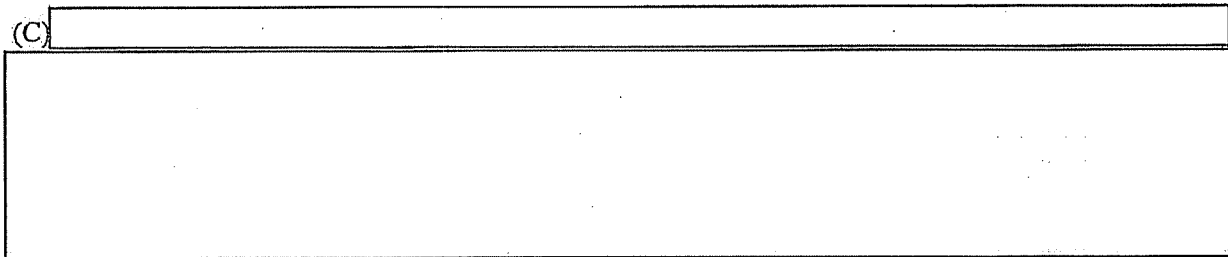
(SBU) Sinirlioglu told the Ambassador that the IHH flagship will depart Istanbul May 22 on a two-day voyage to the southern Turkish port city of Antalya, where it will board more passengers. From Antalya, it will proceed to a rally point off Cyprus, where it will form up the flotilla with ships sponsored by other European NGOs. From Cyprus, the flotilla will proceed towards the Gaza coast and its likely confrontation with the IDF.



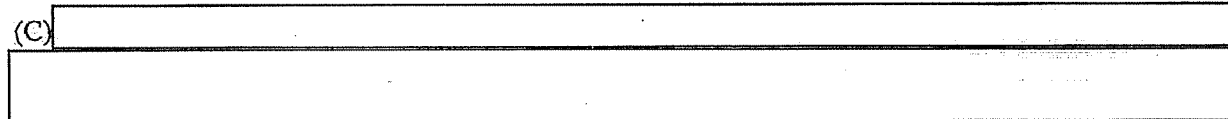
**IHH SHIP TO DEPART ISTANBUL FOR GAZA FLOTILLA ON MAY 22, U.S. CITIZENS MAY BOARD. 20 MAY 2010**



**U.S. CITIZENS MAY JOIN FLOTILLA FROM TURKEY**



**ONBOARD MEDIA TO REPORT FLOTILLA'S EFFORTS**



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B1

**CARGO TO CONTAIN BUILDING MATERIAL, MEDICINE, MEDICAL EQUIPMENT**

(C) [Redacted]

**COMMENT**

(C) [Redacted]

**ISRAELI OFFICIALS PLAN TO BLOCK "FREE GAZA" FLOTILLA. 13 MAY 2010**

(SBU) The self-proclaimed "Free Gaza Movement" is planning to run a flotilla of ships carrying humanitarian supplies to Gaza in an effort to "break the blockade" of Gaza (refuels). The group's website says that the "Freedom Flotilla" is the result of a collaboration between the Turkish human rights organization IHH, European Campaign to End the Siege of Gaza, the Perdana Global Peace Organization from Malaysia, the Greek and Swedish Ship to Gaza campaigns, and the International Coalition for Lifting the Siege on Gaza. The ships are tentatively scheduled to approach Gaza on or about May 25. [19]

(C) [Redacted]

## Chirp Feed (U)

- **matthew.c.boric:** Blog post on Ayman Al-Zawahiri (al-Qaida) audio message in response to Gaza Flotilla Clash: <http://www.intelink.sgov.gov/go/c4ZT5d> (August 19, 2010 15:21)
- **clarkp:** Did anyone else catch that there was only violence on one of the five interdicted ships in the #flotilla incident? (June 01, 2010 15:07)
- **bouttjp:** (U) Russian Foreign Ministry calls for impartial investigation of flotilla incident <http://www.intelink.sgov.gov/go/dTeJAF> (June 01, 2010 10:11)
- **bouttjp:** (SBU) Protest activities rumbled on in the Gaza Strip in the aftermath of the Gaza flotilla clash: <http://www.intelink.sgov.gov/go/qRyeg0> (June 01, 2010 10:08)

## References

1. ↑ (U//FOUO) Turkey: SitRep 1 on Humanitarian Aid Foundation Flotilla, 12:00 pm Turkey Time
2. ↑ Turkey's IHH To Send 'Freedom Flotilla' Aid Ships to Gaza Despite Israel, Istanbul Sunday's Zaman Online in English 09 May 10
3. ↑ AMCITS MAY JOIN CONVOY OF AID SHIPS TO GAZA, Embassy Ankara, 05-11-2010
4. ↑ Free Gaza Movement Plans Sixth Sailing to Gaza Strip, JIOCEUR Analysis Center, 04-08-2010
5. ↑ IHH SHIP TO DEPART ISTANBUL FOR GAZA FLOTILLA ON MAY 22, U.S. CITIZENS MAY BOARD, Embassy Ankara, 05-20-2010
6. ↑ IHH SHIP TO DEPART ISTANBUL FOR GAZA FLOTILLA ON MAY 22, U.S. CITIZENS MAY BOARD, Embassy Ankara, 05-20-2010
7. ↑ IHH SHIP TO DEPART ISTANBUL FOR GAZA FLOTILLA ON MAY 22, U.S. CITIZENS MAY BOARD, Embassy Ankara, 05-20-2010
8. ↑ GAZA FLOTILLA REACTION: WEST BANK/GAZA/JERUSALEM. 31 MAY 2010
9. ↑ GOI RESPONSE TO GAZA FLOTILLA INCIDENT. 31 MAY 2010
10. ↑ (U//FOUO) MGGZ01: GAZA FLOTILLA MONITORING GROUP SITUATION REPORT NO. 2
11. ↑ GAZA FLOTILLA MONITORING GROUP SITUATION REPORT #1. 31 MAY 2010
12. ↑ [SitRep 3 on IHH Flotilla. 31 MAY 2010 SitRep 4 on IHH Flotilla. 31 MAY 2010]
13. ↑ SitRep 3 on IHH Flotilla. 31 MAY 2010
14. ↑ [SitRep 1 on Humanitarian Aid Foundation Flotilla, 31 MAY 2010 SitRep 2 on IHH Flotilla. 31 MAY 2010]
15. ↑ SitRep 1 on Humanitarian Aid Foundation Flotilla, 31 MAY 2010
16. ↑ (S//REL TO USA, GBR) IS: NAVY POISED TO INTERCEPT FLOTILLA. MAY 2010
17. ↑ TURKEY WORKING TO STOP GAZA AID FLOTILLA, NOT HOPEFUL ABOUT SUCCESS. MAY 2010
18. ↑ IHH SHIP TO DEPART ISTANBUL FOR GAZA FLOTILLA ON MAY 22, U.S. CITIZENS MAY BOARD. MAY 2010
19. ↑ ISRAELI OFFICIALS PLAN TO BLOCK "FREE GAZA" FLOTILLA. MAY 2010

[1] [2] [3] [4]

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