

# Israel Killed More Than 9, Threw Wounded Into Sea, Witnesses Say

By [Global Research](#)

Global Research, June 05, 2010

[Today's Zaman](#) 3 June 2010

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [Crimes against Humanity](#), [Law and Justice](#)

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*The head of Turkish charity the İHH, which organized the humanitarian aid flotilla to Gaza, said Israeli commandos shot an Indonesian doctor in the stomach and a photographer in the forehead*

Activists say some people who were initially on the flotilla are missing. They are also telling stories of horror, carnage and pure barbarism at the hands of Israeli officials. In a shocking account, Humanitarian Aid Foundation (İHH) President Bülent Yıldırım, who returned on Thursday, said a photographer, whose first name was Cevdet, was shot in the forehead by a soldier one meter away from him. "Our Cevdet [Kılıçlar], he is a press member. He has become a martyr. All he was doing was taking pictures. They smashed his skull into pieces. We soon made out that these were real bullets they were firing. Rubber bullets also kill because you shoot at very close range, between one-and-a-half and two meters."

Kevin Ovenden of Britain, an activist on the ship that arrived in İstanbul on Thursday, also said a man who had pointed a camera at the soldiers was shot directly through the forehead with live ammunition, with the exit wound blowing away back of his skull.

There were also claims that Israeli official reports on the number of people killed are untruthful. Yıldırım said, "Until now they have returned nine dead bodies, but our list is bigger. There are people missing." Speaking to journalists at Atatürk International Airport shortly after his return, Yıldırım said: "We saw 38 injured who were brought back to us by doctors after the attack. Now they are saying there are 21 people who have been injured." Yıldırım was on the main passenger ship, the Mavi Marmara, which the Israeli navy attacked at the start of its raid.

Another witness, Yücel Köse, who was on the ship Gazze repeated Yıldırım's allegations of missing people. "The Mavi Marmara was bombed right in front of our eyes. They threw the wounded into the water," he said. Köse said the soldiers were upset when some of their men were held by activists aboard the Mavi Marmara.

## Forensic Examination of Bodies

Turkey's Council of Forensic Medicine completed examining some of the bodies. The findings have not yet been announced. It will be a few weeks before the experts get back all the results, but initial statements from doctors confirm Yıldırım's account of the shootings at close range. According to İHH official Ömer Yağmur, who spoke to the doctors, 19-year-old Furkan Doğan was killed by four bullets to the head — all fired at close range — and one

bullet into his chest, also fired at close range. He said Doğan was studying at a private high school in Kayseri and hoped to become a doctor in the future.

The council also confirmed yesterday that eight of the nine bodies brought back from Israel belong to Turkish citizens. The ninth person was identified as a US citizen of Turkish origin. More than 500 activists who were brought to Turkey were examined on Thursday by 120 forensic medicine experts and their assistants.

#### 'They Poisoned our Food,' Claims Gaza Activist

İbrahim Musaji, a 26-year-old activist from England who was also on the Mavi Marmara, was asleep during the raid. He says he rushed to the deck immediately after being woken up by gunfire to see his friends lying in a pool of blood. He said the soldiers threatened to kill him if he attempted to help them. "They hate people, all they want was to shed Muslim blood." He also claimed that there was poison in the food fed to prisoners.

Recai Kaya, a representative of the Enderun Association, said one of the activists on the ship was shot by a soldier when they were returning one of the injured Israeli soldiers to the raiding force. Kaya said he was hit with a rifle butt when he tried to help an older man, who could not pull his pants back up after using the bathroom because he was handcuffed. "He was so embarrassed."

#### People Thrown Into the Sea

Activist İdris Şimşek, who also arrived on Thursday, claims that four wounded activists were thrown into the sea. Şimşek also stated that there was immense psychological pressure on the activists. Şimşek said they expected some harassment but had no inkling of what would happen, noting that they were not expecting an armed attack. He also mentioned that there were no weapons, including a small Swiss army knife that some foreign press organs claimed was on the ship. He stated, as many other activists have, that the person who was waving a white flag to surrender was shot by soldiers. He said that he saw many people lying in puddles of blood after the soldiers opened fire.

Erol Demir, another activist on the Mavi Marmara, said they had footage of the chaos and the carnage on the ship, emphasizing that the footage will show the real face of Israeli soldiers to the entire world. "They even shot those who surrendered. Many of our friends saw this. They told me that there were handcuffed people who were shot." All activists stated that Israeli helicopters sprayed cold seawater onto the ship for three hours.

Hakan Albayrak, a journalist from the Yeni Şafak daily who was also on the ship, said: "It was an outright massacre what Israel did out there. They attacked us in international waters. We protected our ship. We had no weapons. I think we lost more people."

Activist Özlem Şahin Ermiş said 60 soldiers took her hostage. The prisoners were harassed by violent attack dogs and some were badly bitten. She also noted that they were not fed any food or given anything to drink during their initial interrogation on the ship.

The İHH said the activists Çelebi Bozan, Osman Kurç and Aydın Ataç were definitely still missing. These individuals might still be in a hospital in Israel, İHH officials said. Meanwhile,

the full list of the names of the nine Turks whose corpses were sent to Turkey and their hometowns were announced as İbrahim Bilgen – Siirt, Ali Haydar Bengi – Diyarbakır, Cevdet Kılıçlar – İstanbul (İHH staff), Çetin Topçuoğlu – Adana (national taekwondo team member), Necdet Yıldırım – Malatya (İHH staff), Furkan Doğan – Kayseri, Fahri Yıldız – Adıyaman, Cengiz Songür – İzmir and Cengiz Akyüz – Hatay. Doğan was only 19. He was killed with four bullets to the head and one to the chest.

Ahmet Aydan Beker from Kayseri (critically injured), Mehmet Ali Zeybek of Diyarbakır (critically wounded and under arrest) and Uğur Süleyman Söylemez from İstanbul are being treated in Israeli hospitals.

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