

Video: Israelis Fired on Activists Before Boarding Ship

By [Stephen C. Webster](#)

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

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

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Update: [Turkey will reportedly send military escort with future Gaza aid boats](#)

In what could be a serious blow to Israel's narrative on the killing of at least nine humanitarian activists making their way to Gaza through international waters, raw video by an Al Jazeera producer, who was filming during the raid, appears to provide evidence that the IDF opened fire on the flotilla even before boarding it.

Israeli forces assert they came under attack by the pro-Palestine civilian group, and [video released by the IDF](#) appears to show one soldier being tossed overboard amid a scuffle with unidentified individuals wielding melee weapons, like clubs and chairs.

However, in raw video captured by an Al Jazeera producer and published to YouTube late Monday, two journalists provide a play-by-play of the harrowing event as pops and cracks echo in the background. Even before the Israeli forces were aboard, one says, they were pelting the boat with tear gas and stun grenades, injuring numerous people.

Then he confirms the first death, saying the individual was killed by "munitions," but not specifying whether it was a bullet or something else. Then he confirms that Israeli forces were boarding the ship.

Another of the reporters featured in the video works for the Iranian network Press TV. "We are being hit by tear gas, stun grenades, we have navy ships on either side, helicopters overhead," he said. "We are being attacked from every single side. This is in international waters, not Israeli waters, not in the 68-mile exclusion zone. We are being attacked in international waters completely illegally."

"The organizers are telling me now, they are raising a white flag — they are raising a white flag to the Israeli army," the Al Jazeera reporter said. "This is after one person has been killed; a civilian has been killed by munition. That number could be more ... Despite the white flag being raised, despite the white flag being raised, the Israeli army is still shooting, still firing live munitions."

Early reports put the number of victims between nine and 19, with dozens injured. (Update: Figures from major wire services put the number at 10, but it may yet change.) The actual number has not yet been confirmed, as the IDF took all the Gaza aid flotilla participants into custody. Numerous victims were reported to be from Turkey. Palestinian leadership called

the incident a “war crime.” Israeli ally Turkey also pledged their regional neighbor will “face the consequences” for the killings and reportedly planned to [send military escort](#) with a future Gaza aid flotilla.

“At least four Israeli soldiers were wounded in the operation, some from gunfire, according to the military,” [The New York Times added](#).

“Our soldiers had to defend themselves, to defend their lives,” Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu reportedly said. Other Israeli officials have called the charity organization responsible a group of “extremist supporters of terror.” The IDF also alleged that weapons were found on board and that activists opened fire first, calling the the resulting violence a result of “provocation.”

However, if these reporters’ immediate accounting of the events proves accurate, the truth of Israel’s claim that they opened fire in self defense would seem to be in doubt.

Portions of the raw video were [featured by Al Jazeera and AFP](#), although the beginning segment and the most clear allegations that Israel opened fire before boarding were not included in their entirety.

This video was published to YouTube by user [WilliamTomg](#) on May 31, 2010.

The action sparked protests around the world within hours.

In Turkey crowds took to the streets in several cities to vent fury after the storming of a Turkish passenger boat in the flotilla that left at least nine dead, most of them believed to be Turkish nationals.

“Damn Israel!”, “A tooth for a tooth, an eye for an eye, revenge, revenge!” yelled protesters in Istanbul where about 10,000 people converged on the central Taksim square after marching from the Israeli consulate.

“Turkish soldiers to Gaza,” shouted some, as others torched Israeli flags.

“I call on the government to expel the Israeli consul... And if necessary, we are ready for war,” Seref Mangal, 40, told AFP. A banner carried by the crowd read: “Close down the Zionist embassy.”

In the capital Ankara about 1,000 people gathered outside the residence of Israeli ambassador Gabby Levy and shouted “Damn the Zionist murderers!” and “Israel will drown in the blood of the martyrs!”.

They threw eggs and plastic bottles into the garden of the residency. Reports said demonstrations were held in dozens of cities across the country.

In London more than 1,000 people — some of whom had friends on the ships carrying aid to blockaded Gaza — protested outside the residence of British Prime Minister David Cameron and the Israeli embassy.

Chanting “Free Palestine” and brandishing the Palestinian flag and banners condemning Israeli “war crimes”, activists blocked a major route through the capital. Hundreds of police stood guard outside the embassy.

“We have close friends on the boat on which people were killed and we are here waiting for news,” said Kate Hudson, the chairwoman of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament.

In Paris about 500 people joined a noisy protest near the Israeli embassy, waving Palestinian flags and shouting “Palestine will survive, Palestine will conquer”.

Scuffles broke out when a dozen rival protestors waving Israeli flags approached, prompting police to fire tear gas, but calm was soon restored. Another 1,300 people rallied in the city of Lille.

Greek police used tear gas to force back around 1,500 protesters outside the Israeli embassy in Athens, while another 2,000 people rallied in the northern city of Thessaloniki.

In Lebanon thousands of Palestinian refugees and activists waving Palestinian flags and banners marched in the country’s 12 refugee camps.

“Where is the international community? Where are human rights?” they chanted in the Al-Bass camp in the southern coastal city of Tyre.

In Beirut hundreds gathered in the city centre called on Israeli embassies in the Arab world to be shut down and for Israeli ambassadors to be expelled.

At a demonstration of about 3,000 people at the Beddawi camp in the northern city of Tripoli, anger also turned on Israel’s traditional ally, the United States.

“God is great and America is the greatest evil,” they chanted. “Give us weapons, give us weapons and send us on to Gaza.”

There were even demonstrations inside Israel, where hundreds of protestors flooded the streets of the northern Arab city of Nazareth as Israeli police raised the level of alert across the country and deployed reinforcements.

More than 2,000 people in Amman protested what Jordan’s Information Minister Nabil Sharif dubbed a “heinous crime”.

Demonstrators included Islamist opposition leaders and carried banners that read “We Will not Surrender” and “Break Gaza Blockade.” They also demanded that Jordan shut down the Jewish state’s embassy and expel the Israeli ambassador.

In Iran’s capital Tehran, dozens of people pelted stones at the UN office chanting: “This savage regime of Israel must be wiped out.”

They burnt the Israeli flag and tore up pictures of US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

In Pakistan politicians, lawmakers and journalists staged a peaceful protest in Islamabad, denouncing the killings and calling on the United Nations and the United States to intervene.

Hundreds of Bosnians marched through Sarajevo, brandishing Palestinian flags. “We wanted to raise our voice to denounce a new attempt at genocide in modern times,” one of the

organisers, Edvin Cudic, told Srna news agency.

Around 200 people demonstrated outside the UN's European headquarters in Geneva demanding an inquiry into the raid, while in the Netherlands 400 rallied outside the Israeli embassy in The Hague.

There were also protests in Egypt while in Kuwait activists were planning rallies.

After Israeli PM Netanyahu canceled a planned meeting with President Obama, the White House stressed the importance of "learning all the facts" before jumping to conclusions.

With AFP.

Updated from an original version.

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