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Kidnapped by Israel, forsaken by Britain

By [Jamal Elshayyal](#) in [Middle East](#) on June 6th, 2010

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Photo by EPA

Firstly I must apologise for taking so long to update my blog. The events of the past few days have been hectic to say the least, and I am still trying to come to grips with many of the things that have happened.

It was this time last week that I was on the top deck of the *Mavi Marmara*, and first spotted Israeli warships at a distance, as they approached the humanitarian flotilla. Little did I know how deadly and bloody the events that soon unfolded would be.

What I will write in this entry is fact, every letter of it, none of it is opinion, none of it is analysis, I will leave that to you, the reader.

After spotting the warships at a distance, (at roughly 11pm) the organisers called for passengers to wear their life vests and remain indoors as they monitored the situation. The naval warships together with helicopters remained at a distance for several hours.

At 2am local time the organisers informed me that they had re-routed the ship, as far away from Israel as possible, as deep into international waters as they could. They did not want a confrontation with the Israeli military, at least not by night.

Just after 4am local time, the Israeli military attacked the ship, in international waters. It was an unprovoked attack. Tear gas was used, sound grenades were launched, and rubber coated steel bullets were fired from almost every direction.

Dozens of speed boats carrying about 15-20 masked Israeli soldiers, armed to the teeth surrounded the *Mavi Marmara* which was carrying 600 or so unarmed civilians. Two helicopters at a time hovered above the vessel. Commandos on board the choppers joined the firing, using live ammunition, before any of the soldiers had descended onto the ship.

Two unarmed civilians were killed just metres away from me. Dozens of unarmed civilians were injured right before my eyes.

One Israeli soldier, armed with a large automatic gun and a side pistol, was overpowered by several passengers. They disarmed him. They did not use his weapons or fire them; instead they threw

his weapons over board and into the sea.

After what seemed at the time as roughly 30 minutes, passengers on board the ship raised a white flag. The Israeli army continued to fire live ammunition. The ships organisers made a loud speaker announcement saying they have surrendered the ship. The Israeli army continued to fire live ammunition.

I was the last person to leave the top deck.

Below, inside the sleeping quarters, all the passengers had gathered. There was shock, anger, fear, hurt, chaos.

Doctors ran in all directions trying to treat the wounded, blood was on the floor, tears ran down people's faces, cries of pain and mourning could be heard everywhere. Death was in the air.

Three critically injured civilians were being treated on the ground in the reception area of the ship. Their clothes soaked in blood. Passengers stood by watching in shock, some read out verses of the Qur'an to calm them, doctors worked desperately to save them.

Several announcements were made on the loud speakers in Hebrew, Arabic and English - "This is a message to the Israeli army, we have surrendered. We are unarmed. We have critically injured people. Please come and take them. We will not attack."

There was no response.

One of the passengers, a member of the Israeli Parliament, wrote a sign in Hebrew, reading the exact same thing; she held it together with a white flag and approached the windows where the Israeli soldiers were standing outside. They pointed their laser guided guns to her head, ordering her to go away.

A British citizen tried the same sign - this time holding a British Flag and taking the sign to a different set of windows and different set of soldiers. They responded in the same manner.

Three hours later, all three of the injured were pronounced dead. The Israeli soldiers who refused to allow them treatment succeeded where their colleagues had earlier failed when they targeted these three men with bullets.

At around 8am the Israeli army entered the sleeping quarters. They handcuffed the passengers. I was thrown onto the ground, my hands tied behind my back, I couldn't move an inch.

I was taken to the top deck where the other passengers were, forced to sit on my knees under the burning sun.

One passenger had his hands tied so tight his wrists were all sorts of colours. When he requested that the cuffs be loosened, an Israeli soldier tightened them even more. He let out a scream that sent chills down my body.

I requested to go to the bathroom, I was prevented. Instead the Israeli soldier told me to urinate where I was and in my own clothes. Three or four hours later I was allowed to go.

I was then marched, together with the other passengers, back to the sleeping quarters. The place was ransacked, its image like that of the aftermath of an earthquake.

I remained on the ship, seated, without any food or drink, barring three sips of water, for more than 24 hours. Throughout this time, Israeli soldiers had their guns pointed at us. Their hands on the trigger. For more than 24 hours.

I was then taken off the ship at Ashdod where I was asked to sign a deportation order. It claimed that I had entered Israel illegally and

agreed to be deported. I told the officer that I, in fact, had not entered Israel but that the Israeli army had kidnapped me from international waters and brought me to Israel against my will; therefore I could not sign this document.

My passport was taken from me. I was told that I would go to jail.

Only then were my hands freed, I spent more than 24 hours with my hands cuffed behind my back, with nothing to eat, and barely anything to drink.

Upon arrival at the prison I was put in a cell with three other passengers. The cell was roughly 12ft by 9ft.

I spent more than 24 hours in jail. I was not allowed to make a single phone call.

The British consulate did not come and see me. I did not see a lawyer.

There was no hot water for a shower.

The only meal was frozen bread and some potatoes.

The only reason I believe I was released was because the Turkish prisoners refused to leave until and unless the other nationalities (those whose consulates had not come and released them) were set free.

I was taken to Ben Gurion airport. When I asked for my passport, the Israeli official presented me with a piece of paper and said "congratulations this is your new passport". I replied "you must be joking, you have my passport". The Israeli official's response: "sue me".

There I was asked again to sign a deportation order. Again I refused.

I was put on a plane headed to Istanbul.

Masked Israeli soldiers and commandos took me from international waters.

Uniformed Israeli officials locked me behind bars.

The British government did not lift a finger to help me, till this day I have not seen or heard from a British official.

The Israeli government stole my passport.

The Israeli government stole my lap top, two cameras, 3 phones, \$1500 and all my possessions.

My government, the British government has not even acknowledged my existence.

I was kidnapped by Israel. I was forsaken by my country.

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Elizabeth [20 hours ago](#)

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For everything that's happened you have my deepest sympathy, and my admiration for coming through such an ordeal with the presence of mind to report with clarity and honesty.

Sadly, you weren't the only victim betrayed by their country. A Turkish-American citizen was killed on board the Mavi Marmara and so far not a peep from the US government.

We are all betrayed.

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Perry [20 hours ago](#)

[kmansfield and 43 more liked this](#)

Jamal is every ordinary man's hero... Whatever those Israeli apologists try to write, in these and other comments, will not alter overwhelming perception that Israel is a terrorist state. Al Jazeera's coverage of this Israeli fiasco was praiseworthy. Israelis have hard time accepting that they do no longer have a monopoly on news and information worldwide.

(Edited by a moderator)

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Faz [18 hours ago](#)

[kmansfield and 32 more liked this](#)

This story further illustrates the injustice and double standard that we have here in UK. Shame on you David Cameron

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**FREEDOM** [20 hours ago](#)

36 people liked this.

Your bravery is duely commended. I believe that Israel reacted to the Flotilla the way it did out of fear. Fear that the world would no longer stand by and watch as they slowly and mercilessly killed the people of Gaza. Fear that liberation for the people of Gaza is near and fear that these brave people would succeed in their mission. Unfortunately for them, although they did not reach Gaza, they further opened the eyes of the world to the inhumane crisis inflicted on our fellow brothers and sisters in Gaza.

Now that they haven't succeeded in silencing the Flotilla, the only way that they can save face, after showing their murderous nature to the world, is to discredit those on board and label them terrorists.

But the only thing they have accomplished is labelling themselves as terrorists.

(Edited by a moderator)

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**Dr John R Ward Kt** [20 hours ago](#) [kmansfield and 32 more liked this](#)

despite the raid itself and all that came with it, the point here in this report is not really the struggle for his survival but the way in which he has been treated by his country after the events. read the front cover of your british passports, they are and will always remain the property of not the british government but HM The Queen. i feel nothing but shame and guilt over the way you were treated by a what is supposed to be a civilised state, in the aftermath of this terrible affair, after all the footage and reports it is hard to come to a non-biasd conclusion. however, what should be taken into account is the fear that i personally feel from our own governments and their total in-action towards what can only be described as genocide. history has a funny way of repeating itself. i lower my head in shame and fear of what is to come in the very near future.

Like

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**Edward Power** [18 hours ago](#)

27 people liked this.

Perhaps, Mr. Warmwater, the 600 hundred activist believed that they had strength in numbers and that Israel wouldn't do anything so patently stupid as attack them in the presence of witnesses. Perhaps they also thought that their passports, status as citizens of allied or friendly countries and sailing under the Turkish flag might offer protection. They were sadly mistaken. Israel has now become a pariah state, a rogue nation, and has joined Burma, North Korea, Zimbabwe in the Gallery of Goons. The legendary IDF, whose stunning victories in 1967 and 1973, hasn't defeated another conventional army since that time. After decades of morale sapping occupation duties and two defeats at the hands of Hezbollah, their leadership and discipline is broken. No amount of Public Relations spinning is going to put a positive face on this. They will investigate themselves, and find themselves free of wrongdoing, but even the Israeli population won't swallow this. Israel, as a country, is long past its best before date. It is time it joined Rhodesia and white ruled South Africa on the scrapheap of history.

Like

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**A Nizami** [20 hours ago](#)

30 people liked this.

The 600 humanitarians want to send aid to Gaza. They want to go to Gaza. Not to Israel. So how come Israel attack them in International waters?

Like

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Ruai Apai [1 day ago](#)

38 people liked this.

Zionist are inhuman. They are the enemy oh the human race. They should be sent to Mars.

Like

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Charles [1 day ago](#)

 [kmansfield and 34 more liked this](#)

On behalf of Britain I want to apologize to you jamal, but sadly I have no power to do so. Please understand that a great many British people do feel ashamed when our Government behaves this way.

As for the Israelies, they should surely have learned something from their own trials and tribulations, but it seems clear that they have not.

Like

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Saladdin [20 hours ago](#)

18 people liked this.

Typical for the west!
If muslim Europeans are killed it's okey!
But if christian Europeans are killed it's crime!

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Reactions



bhijjawi 13 hours ago

 From [Twitter](#) via [BackType](#)

RE: Those that use their 4th most powerful army in the world to kill and maim women, children and elderly, uproot tree... <http://disq.us/dp5u9>



bhijjawi 14 hours ago

 From [Twitter](#) via [BackType](#)

RE: @ajenglish Israel is what Israel has always been. What do we expect from a nation built on lies, deception, hate a... <http://disq.us/dp5nk>



SaaadM 23 hours ago

 From [Twitter](#) via [BackType](#)

RE: @ajenglish This is the true face of israel. Terrorist State. Well done jamal and all the 600 people onboard who sh... <http://disq.us/dp3wf>