



The Meir Amit Intelligence and  
Terrorism Information Center

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## The use of nonviolent tactics is planned for the upcoming flotilla to the Gaza Strip. In effect, it is liable to be translated into hard violence directed against the IDF

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### Overview

1. The organizers of Freedom Flotilla 2 **have repeatedly emphasized its purportedly humanitarian character and their commitment to respond to expected "Israeli violence" with civil resistance and nonviolence.**<sup>1</sup> Their aim is to create a positive image for the flotilla and counter Israeli statements about the violent nature and radical Islamic affiliation of several *Mavi Marmara* participants. It is also an attempt to soften the West's memory of the violent confrontation prepared by the operatives aboard the *Mavi Marmara*.<sup>2</sup> In reality, **they are making preparations for a response to a scenario of an Israeli takeover of the ships and the passengers' detention.**

2. **Huwaida Arraf, a prominent activist in the Free Gaza Movement (FGM)**<sup>3</sup> **umbrella network, plays a central role in organizing the flotilla. She recently said that there would be no weapons** which could be used against anyone aboard any one of the flotilla ships, but that **they were training people in the use of "different tactics", "to keep the soldiers off our boat nonviolently"** (Israel Channel 10 TV, June 15, 2011).

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<sup>1</sup> "Our ships are attempting to overcome Israeli violence and oppression **through civil resistance and non-violent direct action**" [ITIC emphasis] (From a letter to an ECESG participant posted on the ECESG website).

<sup>2</sup> According to reports, in an effort to minimize the connection between radical Islam and IHH and the *Mavi Marmara*, as opposed to last year, there will be both Turkish and non-Turkish activists aboard the ship (Eurasianet.org website).

<sup>3</sup> **The Free Gaza Movement, FGM**, is an umbrella network based in the United States which plays an important role in the flotilla campaign and the upcoming flotilla.

In addition, **Eurasianet**, a New York-based information and analysis institution, recently reported that **the flotilla activists' training included passive resistance exercises**, and even elaborated on some them (See below).

3. The anti-Israeli networks in Western countries participating in the flotilla, such as the FGM and the International Solidarity Movement (ISM), **have adopted and implemented the tactics of passive resistance within what they call "direct action."**

4. Some of the tactics which may be used by the activists aboard the ships include:

- 1) **Barricading themselves in the various wheelhouses and engine rooms** (considered strategic locations) to make it difficult for the IDF to take over the ship.
- 2) **Resisting removal through "going limp."**
- 3) **Bringing VIPs onto the upper deck** to serve as human shields.
- 4) **Throwing objects** at Israeli Navy boats as they approach the ships, or at IDF soldiers.
- 5) **Physical confrontation with IDF soldiers** aboard the ships, **using cold weapons** (there were firearms aboard the *Mavi Marmara*, although the flotilla organizers deny it).
- 6) **Spreading barbed wire and other obstacles on the decks** to make it difficult for IDF soldiers to board the ships.
- 7) **Verbal abuse** directed at IDF soldiers and the State of Israel.
- 8) **Causing difficulties for Israel after operatives have been detained** (non-cooperation, refusing deportation, using legal tools and the media).

## **Report of Nonviolent Resistance Training**

5. According to a report posted June 13 on the Eurasianet.org website, **the flotilla activists received training in passive resistance exercises with which to oppose the IDF.** They included "linking arms and sitting around the captain's wheelhouse to obstruct its taking, sitting on top of deck covers to block access to the cabins below, and resisting removal through 'going limp.'"

6. According to the report, one flotilla organizer "conceded that 'however much training you give some people, when it comes down to [a fight], **they will not be able to control themselves**' [ITIC emphasis].

The screenshot shows the Eurasianet.org website interface. At the top, the logo 'EURASIANET.org' is displayed in white on a dark blue background, with 'english' and 'русский' below it. A navigation bar contains links for MAIN, REGIONS, HOT TOPICS, MULTIMEDIA, VOICES, FEATURES, and ABOUT. The main content area features the article title 'Turkey: Making Waves with the Mavi Marmara' in a large, bold font. To the right of the title are links for 'Print version' and 'ShareThis'. Below the title, the article is dated 'June 8, 2011 - 2:26pm' and attributed to 'Jason Athanasiadis'. A list of tags includes 'Israel', 'Turkey', 'Eurasianet's Weekly Digest', and 'Turkish-Israeli relations'. The article text begins with: 'Preparations for the Mavi Marmara's departure appear intended to minimize any suggestion that the ship is linked to Islamic extremism. In an effort to avoid last year's perception that Turkish radicals made up the bulk of the Mavi Marmara's passengers, Turks and foreign activists will be mixed together on this voyage.' A second paragraph states: 'And, in a nod to the occasional success of nonviolent tactics during the Arab Spring, all activists participating in the flotilla are receiving nonviolence training. Training includes passive resistance exercises such as linking arms and sitting around the captain's wheelhouse to obstruct its taking, sitting on top of deck covers to block access to the cabins below, and resisting removal through "going limp."' A final paragraph notes: 'One organizer conceded, though, that "however much training you give some people, when it comes down to [a fight], they will not be able to control themselves.'

The Eurasianet posting regarding passive resistance training [ITIC underline]

## Passive Resistance Tactics Used in the Recent Flotilla (May 2010)

7. Networks such as the FGM and the ISM, whose activists participate in the flotillas, **rely on the use of passive resistance** (as part of what they call "direct action"). Their activists have **gained a great deal of experience by taking part in various anti-Israeli activities** (obstructing IDF activities in the Palestinian Authority-administered territories and participating in previous flotillas and convoys). **Some of them are expected to participate in the upcoming flotilla** aboard American and other ships.

8. **Before the previous flotilla, the FGM** (and other organizations) **prepared their activists to use passive resistance tactics against IDF soldiers, and they were employed aboard the ships:**

1) During the *Mavi Marmara* flotilla an FGM document detailing preparations for the voyage was found. **It listed the various tactics to be used to prevent the IDF from taking over the ship.** They included placing sharp objects on the deck, having **activists barricade themselves in the wheelhouse and engine room**, making the wheelhouse "impenetrable" by replacing the windows with reinforced glass,

replacing the doors with steel doors and adding locks, **bringing VIPs on deck** on the assumption that their presence would deter the IDF soldiers, and surrounding the ship with poles 1.5 meters (4.9 feet) long.<sup>4</sup>

2) **Such tactics were employed against the IDF during the previous flotilla by the other five ships, not just the *Mavi Marmara*.** IDF soldiers testified that they met with various levels of physical violence and verbal abuse. Aboard the **FGM's *Challenger***, for example, the activists tried to repel the soldiers by shoving them, they barricaded themselves in specific cabins and some of them ran riot. Aboard the **ECESG's *Sfendoni*** (Boat 8000), **various objects were thrown** at approaching IDF Navy vessels, **attempts were made to abduct soldiers, soldiers were shoved down flights of stairs between decks, there were close physical encounters** with dozens of activists **and an attempt was made by activists to barricade themselves on the bridge.** The ship **also tried to evade the IDF Navy in a way that endangered the Israeli boats.**<sup>5</sup>

9. The aforementioned "nonviolent" tactics were far milder than the organized violence employed by IHH aboard the *Mavi Marmara*. However, they did not correspond to the instructions the FGM gave its activists, or to the public statements given by the FGM (and other organizations which participated in the flotilla), which unequivocally forbade the use of violence, verbal or physical. The term *nonviolent resistance*, which also appears in connection with the upcoming flotilla, is broadly interpreted by the various organizations and their activists, some of whom are eager to confront the IDF, as manifested by the previous flotilla.

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<sup>4</sup> For further information see the June 26, 2010 ITIC bulletin, [Inside documents of the Free Gaza movement seized in the recent flotilla expose considerable discrepancies between its strategy and tactics and its public stance.](#)

<sup>5</sup> For further information see the January 23, 2011 ITIC bulletin, "Detailed testimony from IDF officers and soldiers, supported by documentation, reveals for the first time the aggressive, brutal fighting carried out by IHH operatives and their accomplices against Israeli forces aboard the Mavi Marmara" at [http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam\\_multimedia/English/eng\\_n/pdf/ipc\\_e162.pdf](http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/pdf/ipc_e162.pdf).