

**THEY SHOT ME AND THEN
FORCED ME TO WALK!**

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Surya Fachrizal Aprianus Ginting (1982) is an Indonesian journalist working at *Hidayatullah Media Group*. He was severely wounded during the Israeli attack on the *Mavi Marmara*.

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TURKISH VOLUNTEER TO HELP, SUDDENLY SOMETHING LIKE
AN IRON HAMMER STRUCK MY STOMACH. THE BULLET
HIT MY RIGHT UPPER CHEST, BROKE MY EIGHTH RIB, CUT
THROUGH MY LUNG AND LIVER, TORE MY DIAPHRAGM FOR
ABOUT 10 CM, AND STOPPED AT MY PELVIC BONE.

During the Israeli attack on the *Mavi Marmara*, you got wounded by a commando fire. Could you please tell us your story about how you got wounded?

Dawn was still dark. The atmosphere on the *Mavi Marmara* ship was chaotic and terrifying. Israeli commando helicopters were on top of us. The sound of grenades and the smoke of tear gas were everywhere. The bullets from automatic firearms were seeking for prey.

I saw a Turkish volunteer [either Cengiz Songür or Cengiz Akyüz¹] trying to enter the cabin at the companion way of the fifth deck [bridge deck]. The distance between us was only about five or six metres. We were on the porch, left of the ship. Before reaching the door, suddenly he fell down on his back. I decided to help him since nobody came for help; but before I was able to reach that man, suddenly something like an iron hammer struck the right side of my stomach. It was very painful. I fell down in a lying position, and suddenly breathing became very difficult.

Allhamdulillah, all praise to Allah, the other volunteers quickly rushed me and the Turkish man into the small lobby near the press-room. Then I was laid down, my life jacket was removed. The doctor cut off my t-shirt and founded a gunshot wound on my upper right chest. Seeing me gasping for breath, the doctor put an oxygen mask on my mouth. I was quite relieved, but the pain in my stomach even more intensified.

Soon I was put on a stretcher and taken down to the wider lobby on the third deck in front of the information room. The smell of blood was very strong since the room was already crowded with the victims and the people who were trying to help them.

Finally after infusion was installed, I was lifted up and placed in a dining room chair in a hall full of hundreds of male volunteers.

¹ Cengiz Songür and Cengiz Akyüz were shot similarly, at the same place, one after the other by the Israeli soldiers, and they became martyrs.



Surya being transported from Israel to Amman, the capital of Jordan

Thanks to the oxygen mask I felt a little better, though I was still short of breath. On the other hand, the pain in the right abdomen was greatly reduced. Maybe the doctor, perhaps Doctor Arief Rachman from the MER-C (the Medical Emergency Rescue Committee), had already given me a painkiller.

After the Israelis took control of the ship, as a wounded, what did you experience and witness?

After the Israeli soldiers fully controlled the ship, they took all the wounded activists with them, including me. Haneen Zoabi, a member of *Knesset* [the Israeli parliament] representing Arab-Palestinian people, asked the soldiers not to transport all the wounded activists since many of them were seriously wounded.

An Israeli soldier told me to stand and walk. After looking at my situation briefly, that masked Israeli soldier said, “Yes, you can walk. Stand up and walk up the stairs. I will help you to stand.” I could not say anything at that time. After helping me to stand, he told me to walk out of the door. I felt very weak so I walked very slowly. The soldier behind me only helped me by holding the infusion bottle, with his rifle pointing at my back.

I walked from the dining chairs where I was laid [on the third deck] to the sixth deck of the ship. I climbed up some ladders. I was truly alone. All the rooms I passed on the ship had been emptied of the volunteers. Only the Israeli soldiers were passing by. Along the

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way I saw a very messy situation. Electronic equipment and mattresses were scattered, and blood was splattered everywhere. You could see traces of fights all over the place. Worst of all, a vertical ladder which connected the fifth deck to the sixth deck was full of bloodstains. I was forced to climb the ladder upright. It was extremely difficult.

At the roof of the sixth deck, I saw about ten people who were seriously wounded like me. Most of them seemed to be Turkish. Because of the strong wind coming from the helicopter above us, I grabbed my infusion bottle fearing that it might fly the bottle off the ship.

Once my turn came, I was tied and pulled upward into the helicopter. In the helicopter, I was treated by a bespectacled Israeli paramedic. He examined my wound, even cut off a few sections of the wound in attempt to find the bullet. However, he did not find the bullet and closed the wound up.

In the helicopter, I saw that heart indicator of someone who, was wounded, read a straight line, with no signal. I thought he was already dead.

Then two people from a medical team (one had glasses, another was bald; and both were Caucasians) injected something, and cut my right ribs as if they detected an internal bleeding. I felt the blood gushed from the incision. After that they inserted a tube into it to drain the blood out. Later I was told the blood that was drained out of my body reached 1000cc.

Then you were taken to a hospital in Israel. Could you please talk about your medical treatment process?

Within about twenty minutes the helicopter landed on a helipad in an open plain. There were hardly any buildings in the vicinity, and helicopters or other aircraft were also not visible. I was then transported by ambulance. In the ambulance, I asked the name of that place to the bald paramedic who accompanied me. He replied, "Haifa."

After ten minutes, we arrived at a hospital where I met several other patients, mostly volunteers from Turkey. I was checked from table to table. As soon as I had CT scan, they directly took me to the surgery. They handed me two sheets of documents to be signed. I asked, "Is this [surgery] really necessary?" One of them replied, "Yes, we need to know whether the bullet injured or cut your intestine." After I signed the documents, they said, "We are going to anaesthetise you before doing the surgery." Seconds later, I could not remember anything.

An hour later, I woke up on a bed, and realised there were so many tubes all over my body. I also found 30 cm of stitches on my abdomen. From my medical report which was prepared by an Israeli doctor in Rambam Medical Center in Haifa, Occupied Palestine, the bullet hit my right upper chest, broke my eighth rib, cut through my lung and liver, tore my diaphragm for about 10 cm and stopped at my right pelvic bone.

I stayed at Rambam Medical Centre from 31 May to 6 June. On Sunday, 6 June, I was transported from Haifa to Amman/Jordan with a bullet still in my right pelvic bone. The bullet was taken out of my body three weeks after the incident on 23 June in Central Military Hospital, Gatot Soebroto, Jakarta, Indonesia. *Alhamdulillah*, there are no permanent damage on my body. All of my organs are normally functioning right now, including my right lung.

Lastly, did you witness any torture or abuse on the ship?

I saw the Israeli army using K9 dogs to intimidate the activists. Also they forced the wounded activists to walk and climb the stairs with rifle pointing at their backs.