

**ALLAH BLESSED EVERY SINGLE FLOTILLA  
PARTICIPANT WITH HIS UNIQUE GIFTS**

**Haya Al Shatti**

26 December 2010 / Istanbul, Turkey



Haya Al Shatti (1981) is from Kuwait, and works for a Kuwaiti real estate firm, Al Imtiaz Investment Company, as a treasury-manager. She has been involved in voluntary humanitarian aid activities, and joined previous land convoys to Gaza.

**Why did you join the Gaza Freedom Flotilla?**

I joined the land convoy of Viva Palestina, Lifeline 3, in December 2009, and had the opportunity to enter into Gaza to see the situation and the living conditions of people there. I decided to join the next ones, because I think we should do something for Gaza.

**Did you foresee an Israeli attack before setting off? As you know, the Israeli authorities state that they warned in advance that they would not allow the Flotilla to go through.**

I had thought that they might do something. They might surround the ships, they might take us to the Occupied Palestine, but they would never ever attack and use weapons to us; because they definitely knew that there were volunteers from all around the world, from different religions, and that we were unarmed civilians. So what happened actually was a big shock for me.

**Could you please compare the atmosphere on the *Mavi Mamara* before and after the Israeli attack?**

Before the attack – even an hour before – everything was in its place, everything was good and clean, and everybody was happy and strong. After the attack, about three hours later, the Israelis asked us to go to the upper deck. When I looked around, it was like another ship. They destroyed everything, and made sure that everything was not at its exact place. On the other hand, people were very calm and very much quiet; nobody was shouting or going crazy. To me this was very shocking, because I thought when people see weapons, the wounded people and the people dying, they would directly go crazy. But they didn't at all. This was all from Allah.

**Did you witness the Israeli attack? What were you doing at that time?**

I was on the basement during the attack with most of the women. When I went out of the cabin, I suddenly saw a person who was almost dying. I didn't know what was happening on the upper decks until that time although I was hearing the bullets. So it was a big shock for me.

**You were all taken captive on the ship and then forced to sail to Ashdod Port. Could you please tell us your story about what happened during that time? Did you experience or witness any torture or abuse, either psychological or physical?**



First of all, they are the big fat liars. They were lying all the time. When they asked us to leave the ship, they brought men wearing normal clothes who told us, “We are from the Interior Affairs of Israel. The army has left. Everything will be fine. You’ll just go down and drink some juice. Medicals will check you. Then you’ll go back home. That’s all.” When we went down, there was nothing, there wasn’t even any water in Ashdod Port... Also when I was on the investigation, they started to ask me questions in English, and it took one and a half hour. After the last half an hour, they brought a 65-year-old Israeli guy. He sat beside me and said, “I’m your friend,” and I responded, “I have no friends in this country.” He said, “I’m coming to help you,” and I responded, “I don’t need help.” He asked, “You speak Arabic very well, where did you learn?” and I said, “You speak Arabic very well, where did you learn? Don’t you know, I’m an Arab!” He asked, “Why are you so angry?” and I replied, “I’ve been under arrest for more than twenty-five hours. I’m hungry, I’m sick, I’m tired. I saw people dying in front of me, I saw wounded people. I want to go to Gaza, but you keep me here. And you ask me why I am angry!” He said, “Okay, you’ll go to jail now, and come back for questioning tomorrow morning.” I said, “I don’t mind, just send me now.” So they were lying all the time. After the investigation, they just asked each single person more and more questions. They were trying their best to get information from us by lying, from the beginning till the end.

**Could you please share with us the most striking events, tragic or surprising, that you experienced or witnessed on this journey, and will never forget throughout your life?**

AT THE END OF THE ATTACK, ALL ISRAELIS WERE ANGRY WITH THEIR OWN GOVERNMENT AND WERE IN A VERY EMBARRASSED SITUATION, AND THE LIES OF ISRAEL WERE UNDERSTOOD BY THE WHOLE WORLD HARMING ITS REPUTATION. THESE ARE TEN MILLION TIMES MORE IMPORTANT THAN DELIVERING AID TO GAZA.

The day before the attack, I was sitting on the deck, and the Turks were praying and making *dua* (supplication). I didn't know what kind of *dua* they were making, but I was sure it was a good thing. I heard one guy sitting beside me, and his voice was saying "ameen" (declaration of affirmation, verily) very very very deeply from inside. The next day when I went out of the cabin, I saw one guy dying in front of me. [He was İbrahim Bilgen, and was killed by the Israelis, taking him for Sheikh Raed Salah.] I just recalled the day before, and he was the one who said "ameen" from his heart. Only Allah chose him and gave him *shahadah* (martyrdom). Allah blessed each and every single person his gifts: to some of us *sabr* (patience), to some *shahadah*, to some *ecr* (reward). Maybe the Israelis wouldn't see the gifts, but we knew the gifts that Allah blessed us. That's why we were very comfortable, that's why we had *sakinah* (tranquillity, divine peace) in our hearts.

**Do you think the Freedom Flotilla was successful, and achieved its goals? Because some people think that nothing was achieved, and many people were killed and wounded in vain. What are the most important achievements of this Flotilla?**

Let's take it from the Israeli way of thinking. Even a house cannot be built only from one side, since from the other side somebody would come to knock down your walls. This is what's happening in Israel right now. The people of Israel are separated into two groups: One group strongly supports the attack on the Freedom Flotilla, and is very angry, because the activists that were taken captive on board were let free within two days, without even being taken them to the court or without being harmed. So this group of Israelis is very upset since they didn't want Israel to let the activists out. The other group did not agree on attacking the Freedom Flotilla as they thought that would damage the reputation and the image of Israel around

the world. Actually this is what really happened. At the end of the day, there was no Israeli happy with what happened, and this was the first time that all Israelis were angry with their own government and were in a very embarrassed situation. They didn't know what to do and how to act. Also they saw the action of the whole world against them. The lies of Israel were understood, and this is really harming them. This is ten million times more important than delivering aid to Gaza. That means the blockade will be lifted, and Palestine will be free soon *insha'Allah* (if God wills).



**Israel claims that there were “terrorists” on the ship. What do you think about about that?**

The people on the ship were from very different backgrounds. I don't think that terrorists can be gathered from different countries, different religions, different languages, different ages, and from the people all around the world. What Israel claims is something really weird. Of course there was nothing about terrorism on the ship; there were no such goals and no such means – like weapons. People came together only for one reason: because they are humans, and they refuse to see other humans being treated in a bad way. If the Israelis think that being a human means being a terrorist, then okay, we are the biggest terrorists ever! On the contrary, the Zionists can be anything else but not human whatsoever.

**What does the *Mavi Marmara* mean to you? Today you saw it again, how do you feel about it?**

I was all in tears. I don't know what to say. Just seeing the places where the *shaheeds* (martyrs) were killed, seeing the *shaheeds'* parents and families on board crying was so touching for me. I wish they would be with us on the *Mavi Marmara* today, but I'm sure they are in a much better place.