



CNN Turk

<http://video.cnnturk.com/2010/programlar/9/28/27-09>

They appeared in between the minutes 36-57



http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5ju3AAe6-3hF9Nlvh3Df8Ux_CPJzAD9IH0K000?docId=D9IH0K000

Israeli's media campaign in Turkey

By CHRISTOPHER TORCHIA (AP) – 4 days ago

ISTANBUL — A brief visit by an Israeli hospital official was meant to counter tensions over new efforts to break the Gaza blockade, and help to revive damaged ties between Turkey and Israel, both close U.S. allies.

But the cool reception from Turkish media indicated the relationship is a long way from repair, four months after Israel's deadly raid on a Turkish aid ship.

"It's still raw here," said Eli Ovits of The Israel Project, a non-profit group based in Washington that organized the trip to coincide with the arrival in Turkey of a Gaza-bound road convoy from London.

On Tuesday, in another case, the Israeli military said it took control of a boat carrying nine Jewish activists heading toward the Gaza Strip, encountering no resistance as they escorted it to shore.

Turkey, seeking the role of mediator in Middle East peace efforts, had sought to capitalize on its unique position as a predominantly Muslim ally of Israel and a friend to its traditional foes in the region. But relations hit a low when nine Turkish activists, including a dual Turkish-American citizen, were killed in May 31 clashes with naval commandos who boarded an international flotilla heading for Gaza.

Turkey seeks an apology and compensation for the families of the slain men, conditions that Israel has said it will not meet. The U.N. Human Rights Council is investigating.

With the governments at an impasse, Lea Malul, spokeswoman for the Barzilai Medical Center in Ashkelon, an area near Gaza that is prone to rocket attacks by Hamas militants, tried her hand as a private citizen. She held a dozen interviews Monday to counter negative perceptions about Israel, saying the hospital treats Israelis and Palestinians alike, and that Israeli civilian security was in peril.

"Nobody in the world would accept living under these kinds of conditions," Malul said in a meeting room of a highrise hotel. At one point, she heard the dim wail of a siren in the street below and said it took her an instant to realize she didn't have to run for cover.

"We're trying to break down the stereotypes and start a dialogue," Ovits said. While "people aren't necessarily willing to even have a different perspective at the moment," he said, the Turkish journalists were generally willing to listen and some expressed sympathy.

The Israel Project says it is not government-linked, though it has tight relations with the government, frequently sponsoring meetings for foreign journalists in Israel with top Cabinet officials. There was a sense among Turkish journalists, however, that they were being fed the Israeli government line by a hospital official who was ostensibly on a private visit.

"She was very aggressive in the way she spoke to me and I didn't like it at all. That's the reason I started to suspect the truthfulness of the information she gave me," Mustafa Yilmaz, a writer for Today's Zaman newspaper, said Tuesday.

"I challenged her during the interview, but she sometimes referred to some verses in the Torah, trying to make a foundation for her argument."

The fact that the Israelis could visit Turkey and meet major media groups — an impossibility in most of the Middle East — was a sign of routine contact between the two countries, which share daily air connections and growing trade. Ovits and Malul, however, said some journalists told them that some of their statements could not be published because they did not conform with the Turkish government line.

Turkish media, a cacophony of views on most issues, have been uniformly critical of Israel over the flotilla incident.

By contrast, on Tuesday, a 50-vehicle convoy led by former British lawmaker George Galloway and bound for Gaza drove through Istanbul; some activists waved Palestinian, Turkish and peace flags. The group visited the cemetery where some of the Turkish activists killed by the Israeli commandos were buried, and prayed for them.

Despite the stream of interviews with the Israelis, coverage of their visit was sparse. The English-language Hurriyet Daily News quoted Malul as saying that aid convoys to Gaza were hurting peace prospects because of their support for Hamas, which does not recognize Israel.

Sami Kohen, former editor of Milliyet newspaper and a columnist on foreign policy, said Malul told him about her hospital's work during a telephone conversation. He maintained that the opinions of Israelis, especially moderate ones, should be heard in Turkey.

"The media should be more objective. It should give space to other views as well," he said. Though right now, he said, "no one is ready to hear the other words."

The New York Times

AP piece in the NYT

http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2010/09/28/world/europe/AP-EU-Turkey-Israel.html?_r=1&emc=eta1



<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=aid-convoys-disturb-peace-in-the-gaza-strip-israeli-expert-says-2010-09-27>

Aid convoys blamed for lingering Gaza misery (Hurriyet Daily News)

Monday, September 27, 2010

ERISA DAUTAJ ŞERNERDEM

ISTANBUL - Hürriyet Daily News



Lea Malul (R), public affairs director of a medical center in Ashkelon. DAILY NEWS photo, Hasan ALTINIŞIK

The ongoing dispatching of convoys of humanitarian aid to the blockaded Gaza Strip is counterproductive to achieving peace in the region, a representative of a medical center in the area has said.

“By bringing in so-called aid, the convoys are supporting Hamas; they are supporting extreme groups that want to show that Israel is not doing enough for the people of Gaza,” Lea Malul, the public-affairs director of a medical center in Ashkelon and a representative of The Israel Project, told the Hürriyet Daily News & Economic Review in a Monday interview.

Speaking as the “Viva Palestina,” an aid convoy carrying medical equipment, medicine and food to Palestine arrived in Istanbul en route to Gaza – which it is expected to reach in mid-October – Malul came to Turkey as part of a TIP effort to explain the situation in Gaza to the Turkish media. Emphasizing the longstanding relationship between the two countries, Malul called for Turkish and Israeli people to unite for peace in the region

Malul, who is 46 and has four children, has worked for more than 10 years in the Barzilai Medical Center in Ashkelon, under 10 kilometers from the Gaza Strip’s northern border and 56 kilometers from Tel Aviv. The center offers medical services to the city’s 500,000 inhabitants as well as injured and ill people from the Gaza Strip.

“The medical center where I am working is unique,” she said, explaining that it not only served all patients, regardless of their nationality or ethnicity, but was also exposed every day to the risk of a rocket attack.

Noting that Israelis and Palestinians used to live peacefully and move freely across the border, Malul said the situation had deteriorated and added that she and her family had had difficulty remaining in contact with their Palestinian friends.

UN report is ‘one-sided’

Malul defined as “one-sided” a recent U.N. probe that said Israeli military forces had violated human-rights law and international humanitarian law with their deadly May 31 attack on a Gaza-bound aid flotilla.

“I will only rely on the results of the investigations by the Israeli authorities,” she said, adding that the U.N. Human Rights Council’s report was unreliable because the organization had showed its bias by not investigating the case of an Israeli soldier kept prisoner by Hamas for four years.

She further said the threat of weapons smuggling by the flotilla left Israel with no other choice but to intervene.

Still, Malul said she was optimistic that a solution for peace and stability between Israel and Palestine would soon be achieved.

“At the end of the day, [both peoples] understand what we want; we want a quiet life, we want to raise our children and bring them to school in a quiet way,” she said

TODAY'S ZAMAN

<http://www.todayszaman.com/tz-web/news-222977-100-ngo-in-pre-emptive-lobbying-against-gaza-convoys.html>

NGO in pre-emptive lobbying against Gaza convoys

An Israeli NGO was on a tour of the Turkish media on Monday telling reporters that more aid convoys to Gaza, which has been under an Israeli blockade for three years, will not help find a solution to the region’s problems.



In what appeared to be a lobbying campaign against further blockade-busting attempts, as two convoys are already on their way to the coastal strip, the NGO, The Israel Project (TIP), brought Lea Malul, public affairs director at the Barzilai Medical Center located in Ashqelon, 12 kilometers to the northeast of Gaza, to Istanbul. In an emotionally charged presentation, Malul drew attention to the situation in Israeli cities surrounding Gaza that are in the range of mortar fired from inside Gaza.

Speaking in an interview with Today's Zaman, Malul narrated her experiences over the past decade, including when 21 injured civilians were brought to her center for treatment following an Israeli commando raid on the Mavi Marmara -- one of the ships in an international aid flotilla that was trying to break the blockade of Gaza. Eight Turks and one Turkish-American were killed in the May 31 raid, while dozens received non-fatal injuries, causing outrage in Turkey and bringing Turkish-Israeli relations to a record low.

"They came to our center cursing at us in the emergency unit. This is something I never faced," she said, adding that the injured would not agree to be treated by a Palestinian doctor. When asked why she thought this might have happened -- what made them angry to the point of refusing medical treatment -- she said she "could not tell."

Israeli naval forces on Tuesday intercepted a catamaran carrying nine Jewish activists toward the Gaza Strip. In another initiative, the Gaza-bound Viva Palestina 5 aid convoy, consisting of about 400 vehicles carrying humanitarian aid, crossed the Turkish-Greek border on Monday, receiving a warm welcome from Turkish supporters. Part of the aid convoy departed from London on Sept. 18, and more vehicles joined it from countries along the way.

Israel's May 31 raid drew international condemnation, and a UN Human Rights Council report recently said the attack on peace activists was brutal and disproportionate. The Israeli Foreign Ministry, however, said last week that the commission prepared the report had "a biased, politicized, and extremist approach."

Asked to comment on the UN report, Malul said she did not like to hear about it or the other human rights organizations that criticized Israel for the deadly attack and also for the blockade on Gaza unless they speak up for Gilad Shalit, an Israeli soldier held captive at the hands of Hamas since 2006, as well.

She added that she accepted only the Israeli government's investigation into the May incident. When reminded that the current situation seemed like almost the entire world is at odds with Israel over the matter, she said they had "a big war to fight" and that it is their "story for the last 3,000 years."

Responding Today's Zaman's questions, Malul also commented on how a country that is so famous for its lobbying groups around the world and primarily in the US cannot afford to have an impact on even a single international human rights organization. She said "they are trying very hard on it but no success yet."
