

July 12<sup>h</sup>, 2010 - 17:00

**Maj. Gen. (Res.) Eiland Presents the Chief of the General Staff  
with the Conclusions of his Examination Team**

The IDF Chief of the General Staff, Lt. Gen. Gabi Ashkenazi, received the conclusions reached by a team of experts, headed by Maj. Gen. (Res.) Giora Eiland, tasked with examining the incidents that took place at sea on May 31<sup>st</sup> 2010.

Maj. Gen. Eiland presented the team's findings and conclusions to the Chief of the General Staff as well as to officers from the General Staff and from other IDF branches and directorates who were involved in the preparations and in the actual boarding of the flotilla. The core of the report was presented the Minister of Defense of Israel as well.

The team was appointed by the Chief of the General Staff to examine the deployment towards the flotilla, the chosen course of action and other possible alternatives, advance preparations, and the operation's implementation.

The team included eight officers and their examination focused on intelligence, Naval command, the naval commando unit responsible for carrying out the operation, the Israel Air Force, media relations, technological alternatives, medical aspects and legal counsel and international law.

The examination presented various lessons on a broad, systemic level, not only as regards this specific operation (stopping the flotilla).

In terms of the intelligence effort, the team concluded that not all possible intelligence gathering methods were fully implemented and that the coordination between Navy Intelligence and the Israel Defense Intelligence was insufficient. At the same time, the team emphasized that it is not certain that an optimal intelligence effort would create a complete intelligence picture. The team also pointed out that the anticipated level of violence used against the forces was underestimated.

In terms of situation assessments towards the flotilla, the team clarified that the operation relied excessively on a single course of action, albeit a probable one, while no alternative courses of action were prepared for the event of more dangerous scenarios.

Regarding technological alternatives, the team determined that on the day of the incident, decision makers were not presented with alternative operational courses of action other than a full boarding of the flotilla. The team emphasized the fact that as far as is currently known, no country in the world holds the ability to stop a vessel at sea in a non hostile manner. Therefore statements made on this matter following the incident are unfounded and irresponsible. At the same time, the team determined that alternative courses of action could have existed had the process of preparation begun enough time in advance, and recommended to accelerate the process of examining alternative methods.

The expert team determined that regarding media relations, the preparations made in advance were good. However, the release of press statements and visual materials was delayed due to the need to maintain reliability, the obligation to notify the families of the critically injured soldiers and the long authorization process at the levels above the IDF Spokesperson Unit. The team noted with favor the work of the IDF spokesperson following the incident and emphasized the need for better coordination between the IDF, the foreign ministry and other foreign affairs institutions.

In terms of commanding over the operation, the team determines that the location of the commanders during the incident and the presence of the Commander of the Israel Navy at sea during the operation, was proper and fit with the Chief of the General Staff's view regarding the role of commanders at the front lines of IDF activity. His presence proved effective in terms of the decision making process, saving lives and more. The team praised the Israel Navy combat protocols, the preparations of the Naval Commando Unit, the Navy Command, the Electronic Warfare Formation and the medical evacuation.

The team determined that the Navy Commando soldiers operated properly, with professionalism, bravery and resourcefulness and that the commanders exhibited correct decision making. The report further determines that the use of live fire was justified and that the entire operation is estimable.

The team noted with favor the various stages of medical evacuation of the injured by air and by sea, including the injured passengers of the Mavi Marmara. In addition the team pointed out the serious attitude with which the General Staff and the Israel Navy approached the matter, as expressed in the preparations.

Maj. Gen. (Res.) Eiland noted with favor the degree of cooperation and transparency exhibited by those involved in the examination at all levels. In the summary of the examination Maj. Gen. Eiland determined that the issue should be viewed with perspective, being that the damage caused to Israel is not as severe as it seemed following the incident. In addition, he said that there's a tendency to draw general conclusions based on a single incident and that "the fact that the IDF examines itself and others do not, results in that only the errors of the IDF are publicized", according to Maj. Gen. Eiland.