



PERDANA LIBRARY
PERDANA LEADERSHIP FOUNDATION
NEWSPAPER CLIPPING

Newspaper	The Star
Date	2/6/2011

Gaza mission 'terrifying'

Journalists recall frightening ordeal when Israelis opened fire at aid ship

SEPANG: Two journalists who were on board the Malaysian aid ship *MV Finch* on the humanitarian mission to Palestine returned last night, saying it was the most terrifying experience in their lives.

Israeli naval boats had fired warning shots off Rafah as the ship was approaching the shore, forcing it to withdraw to Egyptian waters.

Bernama's Mohd Faizal Hassan, 28, said he was on the lower deck of the ship with *New Straits Times'* Iskandar Alang Bendahara, 36, and a volunteer from the Prime Minister's Department Mohd Radzillah Abdullah, 36, when the incident happened on May 16.

They were among 12 passengers on board the *MV Finch* which left Malaysia on May 3 to send sewage pipes to Gaza.

"On the day (of the shooting), we and two other volunteers, Jenny Graham from Ireland and Julie Levesque from Canada, were on the lower deck.



Eventful voyage: A file photo showing the *MV Finch* on a humanitarian mission to send sewage pipes to Gaza.

"We lay down and held on to each other when we heard the first shot. We left everything to God," Faizal said when met on arrival at the KL International Airport.

Mohd Faizal, who was involved in

the Malaysian humanitarian mission to Afghanistan with the armed forces in October last year and the aid mission to Japan in March, said it was terrifying because they did not know what was happening.

He said it was only after the ship entered Egyptian waters that they went to the upper deck and found that everybody was safe.

"We are fortunate that the Israeli soldiers did not come on board," he added.

For Iskandar, despite the tense and dangerous situation, he managed to gather enough courage to record the Israelis' action on video.

"I was able to record when the Israelis fired twice at our ship. We will show the video when others have returned home," he added.

The *MV Finch* was steered by Captain Abdul Jalil Mansor and assisted by four crew members including two Malaysians, Zainuddin Mohamad and Mohd Jaffery Ariffin. The two others are Indian nationals Sharma Chandan Shimla and Pal Satya Prakash.

The ship is still outside the port of El-Arish in Egypt and has yet to be given permission to berth by the Egyptian government. - Bernama