



**Intelligence and Terrorism  
Information Center**

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**IHH, which plays a central role in organizing the flotilla to the Gaza Strip, is a Turkish humanitarian relief fund with a radical Islamic anti-Western orientation. Besides its legitimate philanthropic activities, it supports radical Islamic networks, including Hamas, and at least in the past, even global jihad elements.**

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**Portrait of IHH**

1. Prominent among the coalition organizations participating in the aid flotilla scheduled to arrive in the Gaza Strip in the coming days is the Turkish IHH (**Insani Yardım Vakfı, IHH**, “humanitarian relief fund”). It is a radical Islamic organization which was established in 1992 and formally registered in Istanbul in 1995. It is headed by **Bülent Yıldırım**.



**IHH head Bülent Yıldırım (www.ihh.org.tr,  
April 7, 2010)**

2. IHH has a broad program of important activities in distressed areas. They include sending food and support to orphans, establishing educational institutions, hospitals and clinics, programs for vocational education, supplying medicines, building mosques and preventing the violation of human rights in various Islamic locations throughout the world. In recent years it has begun widening its activities to European countries, in part by establishing branches which bear its name.

3. In practice, besides its legitimate humanitarian activities, IHH supports radical Islamic terrorist networks. In **recent years it has prominently supported Hamas** (through the Union of Good). In addition, **the ITIC has reliable information that in the past IHH provided logistical support and funding to global jihad networks.**



IHH logo: The dove of peace appears at the lower right of the globe.

## **IHH Links To Hamas**

4. IHH's orientation is **radical-Islamic and anti-American**, and it is close to the **Muslim Brotherhood** (Hamas' parent movement). **IHH supports Hamas** and does not hide the connection between them. **Hamas also considers its links to IHH and Turkey to be extremely important**, and regards Turkey as a target audience for its propaganda network (Palestine-Information, Hamas' main website, has a Turkish version, and as of the end of 2009, the website of its military wing, the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, has also appeared in Turkish).

5. In recent years, especially since Hamas took over the Gaza Strip, IHH has supported Hamas' propaganda campaigns by organizing public support conferences in Turkey. At those conferences, which featured the participation of senior IHH figures, the heads of IHH expressed their support for Hamas and its strategy (including the armed struggle it favors), in defiance of the Palestinian Authority, Hamas' rival.

6. **IHH is a member of the Union of Good, an umbrella organization of more than 50 Islamic funds and foundations around the globe, which channels money into Hamas institutions in the Palestinian Authority-administered territories.** As a Union of Good member IHH has connections with other worldwide Islamic funds and foundations

which support Hamas. Among other things, the support includes initiating and conducting joint projects whose objectives are to bolster the de facto Hamas administration in the Gaza Strip and **Hamas' civilian infrastructure in Judea and Samaria, which also supports terrorism** (the infrastructure is under pressure from the Palestinian Authority security services). IHH, which has become an important factor in global fund-raising for Hamas, transfers significant amounts of money to Hamas institutions in Judea and Samaria, **including the Islamic Charitable Society in Hebron and the Al-Tadhamun Charitable Society in Nablus (Hamas' two central "charitable societies," both outlawed by Israel).**

7. **IHH operates widely throughout the Gaza Strip.** To promote its activities **it opened a branch there**, headed by **Muhammad Kaya**, who recently stated that IHH **intended to send other aid flotillas to the Gaza Strip** (See below). In January 2008 an IHH delegation met with **Ahmed Bahar**, a senior Hamas activist who is acting chairman of Hamas' council in the Gaza Strip. At the meeting the delegation revealed the extent of the aid it had given Hamas in the Gaza Strip during the preceding year and said it intended to double the sum in the future. **In January 2009 IHH head Bülent Yildirim met with Khaled Mashaal**, chairman of Hamas' political bureau in Damascus, and Mashaal thanked him for the support of his organization.



Bülent Yildirim and Khaled Mashaal (January 2009).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.spittoon.org/archives/4168> .



Bülent Yildirim meets Ismail Haniya and other important people in the Gaza Strip (January 7, 2010).<sup>3</sup>



Bülent Yildirim and de facto Hamas administration head Ismail Haniya (January 7, 2010).<sup>2</sup>

## Israel Outlaws IHH and Expels an IHH Activist

9. **Israel outlawed IHH because of its affiliation with the Union of Good and because it is an important factor in Hamas' global fund raising.** It was included in a decision made by Defense Minister Ehud Barak in 2008 which outlawed 36 associations which belonged to the Union of Good (IHH appeared as number 36 on the list<sup>4</sup>).

10. **In November 2009 IHH sent one of its activists, a man named Izzat Shahin, to Judea and Samaria to open an office** (in addition to its Gaza Strip office). Shahin started work supporting Hamas "charitable societies." He transferred tens of thousands of American dollars from IHH to the Islamic Charitable Society in Hebron and Al-Tadhamun in Nablus, two of Hamas' most important "charitable societies." His activities were thwarted by the Israeli security forces. In April 2010 he was detained for questioning on suspicion of involvement in financing terrorism and supporting Hamas, and was deported from Israel immediately after his interrogation in compliance with an official Turkish request.

<sup>2</sup> <http://hurryupharry.org/2010/04/14/oh-jesus>,

<http://www.velfecr.com/gazze-de-goz-yasartan-buyuk-bulusma-video-foto-1408-haberi.html>.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.velfecr.com/gazze-de-goz-yasartan-buyuk-bulusma-video-foto-1408-haberi.html> , January 7, 2010.

<sup>4</sup> For further information see the date bulletin The war on financing terrorism: Defense Minister Ehud Barak signed an order outlawing 36 global "Union of Good" Islamic funds which raise money for Hamas institutions in the Palestinian Authority-administered territories. The money supports Hamas in building a political alternative to the PA and maintain a terrorism-supporting system at [http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam\\_multimedia/English/eng\\_n/pdf/financing\\_0708e.pdf](http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/pdf/financing_0708e.pdf) . .

تاريخ العملية	عدد القتلى	الضحية	المكان	القاتل	الرقم
عملية استشهادية في مستوطنة أريئيل	22	مادما	نابلس	شادي محمد صدقي نصار	35
تمت تصفيته أثناء ذهابه للقيام بعملية استشهادية	24	بيت وزن	نابلس	محمد سعيد عبد الرحيم صلاح	36
أصيب بثلاث أعيرة نارية في القلب	30	نابلس	نابلس	حامد عزات سلمان عمران	37
عملية استشهادية في نتانيا	21	م. عسكر	نابلس	محمد عبد الحفيظ صبيح البطة	38
عملية استشهادية في نتانيا	22	م. العين	نابلس	شادي علي مطلق النحوي	39
عيار ناري في الكتف استقر في القلب	27	صرة	نابلس	محمد تيسر أحمد غام	40
قصف عند حاجز السلاح	27	كفر قلوب	نابلس	غام تيسر أحمد برهم	41

Part of a document seized by the IDF during Operation Defensive Shield (2002): A table prepared by the Union of Good containing the names of shaheeds who carried out mass-murder suicide bombing attacks in Israeli cities. It was used to arrange payments to the suicide bombers' families through the Hamas-affiliated Islamic "charitable society" Al-Tadhamun in Nablus. It is one of the charitable societies Izzat Shahin transferred money to after he was appointed IHH representative in Judea and Samaria in 2009.

## IHH's Links with the Global Jihad

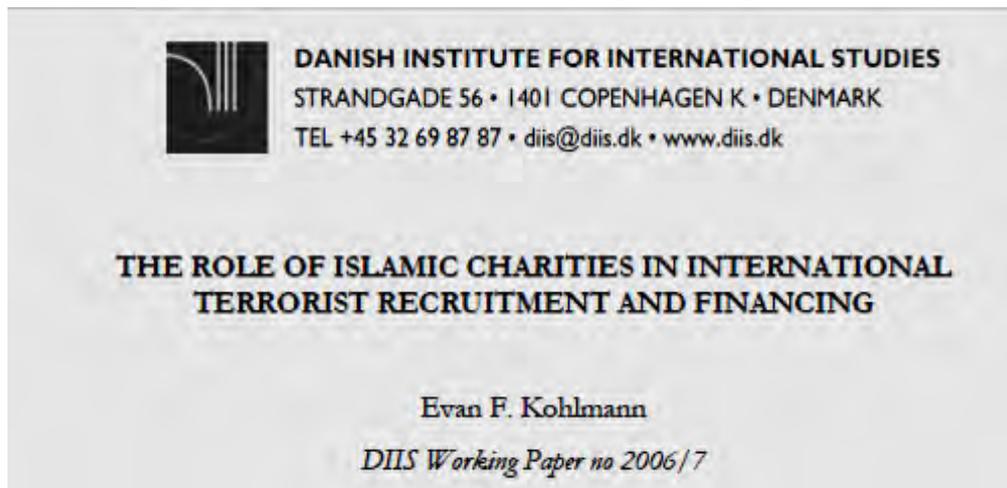
11. The ITIC has reliable information indicating that in the past IHH had links with global jihad and Islamic terrorist elements in the Middle East. As part of its connections with the global jihad it supported jihadist terrorist networks in Bosnia, Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and Chechnya.

12. That was manifested by **logistic support for the transfer of weapons and money**. This information verifies findings of a study conducted by a Danish research institute into IHH's past links with Al-Qaeda (See below).

13. We do not have updated information about current IHH links with global jihad elements, however, its activities in the past may indicate its nature.

## Danish Research Institute Exposes Past IHH Links with Al-Qaeda

14. In 2006 a Danish research institute called the **Danish Institute for International Studies** conducted a study which reported that in the past IHH had connections with Al-Qaeda and global jihad operatives.<sup>5</sup> The well-documented study was conducted by **Evan Kohlman**,<sup>6</sup> an American researcher who specializes in Al-Qaeda and related subjects. It deals with the involvement of Islamic charity funds and foundations in supporting terrorism. Pages 10-14 relate to IHH.



Title page of the Danish Institute's study.

15. According to the study, the Turkish authorities began investigating IHH at least in December 1997, after having received information that senior IHH figures had purchased automatic weapons from radical Islamic organizations. **The office of the organization in Istanbul was consequently raided and activists were arrested. During the raid the Turkish security forces found weapons, explosives, instructions for making IEDs and a flag with a jihad message.** An examination of the documents found in IHH office indicated that IHH members were planning to take part in **jihad activities in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Chechnya.**

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.diis.dk/graphics/Publications/WP2006/DIIS%20WP%202006-7.web.pdf>. The Danish institute which published the study is an independent institution which deals with interdisciplinary research about international issues, especially international conflicts. Its staff includes dozens of researchers, many of them with PhDs (<http://www.diis.dk/sw241.asp>).

<sup>6</sup> Evan Kohlman is American researcher specializing in terrorism who worked for the FBI and other American government organizations. He has a law degree and a degree in international politics and Islamic studies. In the past he interned in Washington for The Investigative Project, an anti-terrorism think-tank, and is currently head of NEFA, the Nine/Eleven Finding Answers Foundation. He served as an expert witness in the trials of several jihadist operatives in the United States, the Hague and Denmark, and is a senior terrorism commentator for NBC. He wrote a book about the jihad movement in Europe which was published in 2002 by the Oxford University Press and has published numerous articles about radical Islamic movements (From :[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evan\\_Kohlmann](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evan_Kohlmann) and [http://www.ie.edu/IE/site/php/en/school\\_communication\\_detail.php?id\\_new=111](http://www.ie.edu/IE/site/php/en/school_communication_detail.php?id_new=111))

16. **The study quotes a French intelligence report** stating that in the mid-1990s IHH leader, **Bülent Yildirim**, was directly involved in recruiting “veteran soldiers” to organize jihad activities. According to the French report, a number of operatives were sent by IHH into war zones in Islamic countries to gain combat experience. The report also stated that IHH transferred money, “caches of firearms, knives and pre-fabricated explosives” to Muslim fighters in those countries.

According to a French intelligence report, the terrorist infiltration of IHH extended to its most senior ranks. The report, written by famed counterterrorism magistrate Jean-Louis Bruguière, revealed that IHH President Bülent Yildirim had directly conspired in the mid-1990s to “recruit veteran soldiers in anticipation of the coming holy war [jihad]. In particular, some men were sent into war zones in Muslim countries in order to acquire combat experience.”<sup>46</sup> Furthermore, in the hopes of “obtaining political support from these countries, financial aid was transferred [on behalf of IHH], as well as caches of firearms, knives, and pre-fabricated explosives.”<sup>46</sup> An examination of IHH’s phone records in Istanbul showed repeated telephone calls in 1996 to an Al-Qaida guesthouse in Milan and various Algerian terrorist operatives active elsewhere in Europe – including the notorious Abu el-Ma’ali, who has been subsequently termed by U.S. officials as a “junior Osama Bin Laden.”<sup>47</sup>

Passage from the study quoting a French intelligence report. It deals with the involvement of IHH and its leader in global jihad activities during the 1990s.

17. The study also states that an examination of IHH’s telephone records in 1996 showed repeated calls in 1996 to an Al-Qaeda guest house in Milan and to Algerian terrorists operating in Europe (one of whom was notorious Al-Qaeda figure **Abu Ma’ali [Abd al-Qadr Mukhtari]**, who operated in Bosnia). IHH’s name was also mentioned during the trial of **Ahmed Ressam** held in the United States in 2000 (**Ressam was a senior Al-Qaeda operative active in Canada, who at the end of 1999 entered the United States in a car carrying 600 kilograms (1320 pounds) of explosives. He planned to carry out a mass-casualty attack at the Los Angeles International Airport on the eve of the millennium.**) The United States federal prosecutors called Jean-Louis Bruguière, a leading French investigating magistrate in charge of terrorism affairs, as an expert witness. **He testified that IHH had played an important role in Al-Qaeda’s planned attack. According to Bruguière, IHH served as a cover for Al-Qaeda and acquired forged documents, enlisted operatives and transferred weapons.**

The IHH is an NGO, but it was kind of a type of cover-up... in order to obtain forged documents and also to obtain different forms of infiltration for Mujahideen in combat. And also to go and gather[recruit] these Mujahideens. And finally, one of the last responsibilities that they had was also to be implicated or involved in weapons trafficking.<sup>46</sup>

Passage from the study dealing with IHH cover for the global jihad.

**18. According to the study, following the American invasion of Iraq in 2003, Bülent Yildirim and IHH played a key role in anti-Western incitement among Turkish Muslims.** At the end of 2000 IHH organized protests against the attempt to overthrow Saddam Hussein, during which Israeli and American flags were burned. In December 2004 IHH organized an anti-American march in Istanbul. During the march Bülent Yildirim told the Turkish Anatolia News Agency that the intelligence cooperation between the United States, Britain and Turkey had to stop, otherwise IHH would organize actions in front of every consulate, and if necessary organize 50,000 or 100,000 people in front of the American consulate. At a demonstration held in December 2004, anti-American slogans were shouted, including **“Murderer sent by the murderous United States, get out of the Middle East,”** and **“Long live the resistance.”**

freedom fighters who resisted the invasion... The American troops [turned back] the injured being transported to hospitals by shooting at the ambulances. The freedom fighters crashed one airplane and 18 helicopters... Iraqi authorities stated that the resistance of [Fallujah] created a high spirit among their people while causing chaos and confusion among the Americans... As for the search for a new flag by the transition government, the Iraqis are sending a clear and firm message by raising their old flag in every possible place such as the roofs and walls of their houses, cars and gas stations... All the Iraqis share one hope which is the departure of the invading Americans. The big bubble of anger that covers all parts of the country can explode any time.”<sup>53</sup> IHH has continued in its “efforts” in Iraq, at least as recently as the spring of 2005, when Bulent Yildirim announced the departure of two more truckloads “of humanitarian aid to Fallujah city of Iraq. In the coming days, we will send more aid.”<sup>54</sup> Yildirim failed to specify who exactly in the city of Fallujah would be the recipients of IHH’s contributions.

Passage from the study dealing with IHH’s anti-American activities in Iraq.

## The Central Role of IHH in the Aid Flotilla Sailing to the Gaza Strip

19. IHH is prominent among the many pro-Palestinian organizations in Turkey participating in the aid flotilla, which will reach the Gaza Strip in the coming days. **Its participation is part of the massive aid it gives Hamas and its desire to make propaganda capital for Hamas and itself.**

20. **To that end IHH purchased three ships (of the nine in the flotilla):** a passenger ship named the Mavi Marmaris and two cargo ships (one named "Gaza"). The **Mavi Marmaris** left Istanbul on May 22 en route to Antalya, where **500 passengers** were expected to board it. The three ships will sail from Turkey to Cyprus to join the others, and from there they will sail together to the Gaza Strip (where they are apparently expected to arrive on the morning of May 29). In addition, in recent months IHH aided the de facto Hamas administration's ministries of transportation and of public works by carrying out various projects in the Gaza harbor to prepare it to receive the ships (*Filastin Al-Yawm*, April 19, 2010).



The flotilla's route to the Gaza Strip. The red line refers to the Rachel Corrie, sailing from Ireland.<sup>7</sup>

21. On April 7, 2010, IHH head Bülent Yıldırım told a press conference in Istanbul that the flotilla would be a **"test" for Israel**. He said that **should Israel oppose the flotilla it would be considered "a declaration of war" on the countries whose activists arrived on board the ships** (IHH website, April 7, 2010). In a fiery speech given at the launching of the Mavi Marmaris on May 23, he said to Israel, **"Handle this crisis well. If you prevent [the flotilla from reaching the Gaza Strip] you will remain isolated in the world and harm yourselves"** (IHH website in Turkish, May 23, 2010). On May 21 Muhammad Kaya, head of IHH's branch office in the Gaza Strip, said there was a **plan to**

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.ihh.org.tr>.

send flotillas to the Gaza Strip every month (Al-Jazeera-Info website, arabianawareness.com, May 21, 2010).



The ceremony marking the departure of the Mavi Marmaris from Istanbul, organized by IHH. In the first row, second from the right, is Ra'ed Salah, head of the northern faction of the Islamic Movement in Israel. Fourth from the left is Kazem Sawalha, a Hamas activist affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood, who found refuge in Britain. He was one of the chief organizers of the previous aid convoys (LifeLine) to the Gaza Strip (IHH website, May 23, 2010).



The rally in Turkey accompanied preparations for the ship's departure. The participants are holding Turkish, Palestinian and Hamas flags, and flags of organizations affiliated with Hamas and radical Islam (the shahadah is inscribed on the green flag) ( IHH website, May 23, 2010).