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## Terrorism

### Insani Yardim Vakfi (IHH)

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Insani Yardim Vakfi (Humanitarian Relief Fund in Turkish, or IHH), an Istanbul-based Islamic charity with links to Hamas, was one of the key organizers of the "[Freedom Flotilla](#)," a convoy of ships en route to Gaza that was intercepted by the Israeli Navy on May 31, 2010.

One of the ships that the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) intercepted was a Turkish vessel called the Mavi Marmara, which Turkish authorities reportedly sold to IHH. During the operation, people aboard the ship attacked the IDF inspectors with knives, clubs, and metal rods, requiring them to use their weapons in self-defense. The confrontation resulted in nine deaths and injuries on both sides. At a funeral for IHH members who were killed, supporters wrapped themselves in Palestinian and Hezbollah flags and reportedly chanted, "Damn Israel" and "All the people here are ready for martyrdom in the fight against Israel."

IHH previously participated in former British parliamentarian George Galloway's December 2009 [Viva Palestina](#) campaign, which seeks to send aid convoys to Gaza. Galloway is currently organizing another convoy for later this year in partnership with IHH.

Long before the group raised its public image as one of the main supporters of the Gaza-bound flotilla, IHH emerged as a significant fundraiser for the terrorist group [Hamas](#). According to Israel's Government Press Office, not only has IHH provided funding directly to Hamas, but the group also provides money to Hamas institutions in Gaza and the West Bank, including at least two organizations – the Islamic Charity Organization in Hebron and the Al-tadamun Benevolent Society in Nablus – which have both been outlawed in Israel because of terrorist ties.

IHH is an affiliate of another group outlawed in Israel, the [Union of Good \(UG\)](#), an umbrella organization created by Hamas and banned in Israel in 2002. In July 2008, Israel also banned IHH, along with 35 other Islamic charities worldwide, for their ties to Union of Good (UG). Four months later, UG was designated as a terrorist organization by the U.S. Treasury Department.

IHH has also apparently supported the militant wing of the Palestinian Al-Ahrar Movement in Gaza, a group of former Fatah operatives that advocate for armed struggle against Israel. According to Al-Ahrar's Web site, IHH Deputy Director, Yavuz Dede, congratulated the group via a video conference call during a conference in July 2010.

IHH's involvement with Hamas extends outside of the Palestinian Territories to Turkey, where the group has organized several public conferences to demonstrate its support for Hamas. At these conferences, the heads of IHH have expressed their support for Hamas, including its armed warfare on civilians. In January 2010, Bülent Yildirim, the head of IHH, met with Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Gaza, and Haniyeh thanked him for the support from IHH.

In addition to its connection to Hamas, one IHH official and participant on the Mavi Marmara, Osman Atalay, was reportedly a former member of the Bosnian Army's 7th Muslim Brigade, which served as an umbrella group for hundreds of foreign Muslim warriors. French counter-terrorism officials further allege that IHH helped Islamic militants move in and out of Afghanistan and Bosnia in the 1990s.

IHH has also provided logistical support for global terror plots, according to Israeli intelligence sources. For example, according to sworn testimony in the April 2001 Western District of Washington court case against Ahmed Ressam (who was convicted of plotting the December 31, 1999, attack targeting Los Angeles International Airport), IHH played an "important role" in terrorist operations. As French counterterrorism magistrate Jean-Louis Bruguier testified: "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."

IHH has also been linked to several U.S.-based Islamic charities, including Success Foundation and the International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO), whose Philippines and Indonesia branches were designated as a terrorist organization by the U.S. Treasury Department in 2006 because of links to Al Qaeda. Several documents seized in 2002 from the offices of Success Foundation detail donations from U.S. charities to IHH. These include \$35,000 from the International Relief Organization (also known as The North American branch of the International Islamic Relief Organization) for "relief and charity work as instructed by Success Foundation" in January 2000; \$90,000 from the Success Foundation for "relief and charity work" in May 2000; and an official receipt acknowledging \$70,000 from Success Foundation to IHH for "humanitarian aid to the Chechen refugees in Georgia and Azerbaijan" in January 2001.

IHH was established in 1995 and registered in Istanbul for the purpose of providing aid to Islamic groups around the world, particularly to Bosnian and Chechen Muslims. According to a 2006 report published by the Danish Institute for International Studies, the group was investigated by Turkish authorities in 1997, when sources reportedly revealed that leaders of IHH were purchasing automatic weapons from Islamic militant groups. After the investigation, Turkish authorities reportedly concluded that "detained members of IHH were going to fight in Afghanistan, Bosnia, and Chechnya."

Despite investigations by Turkish authorities, the Turkish government reportedly has links to IHH. At least ten diplomats reportedly considered boarding the Mavi Marmara when it set sail for Gaza, but did not end up going in the end. After their confrontation with the IDF, IHH leaders were welcomed home by Turkish officials, including by deputy prime minister Bulent Arinc. While Turkish officials deny any ties, a number of IHH board members have reported close links to the AK Party, the Turkish political party currently in power.

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