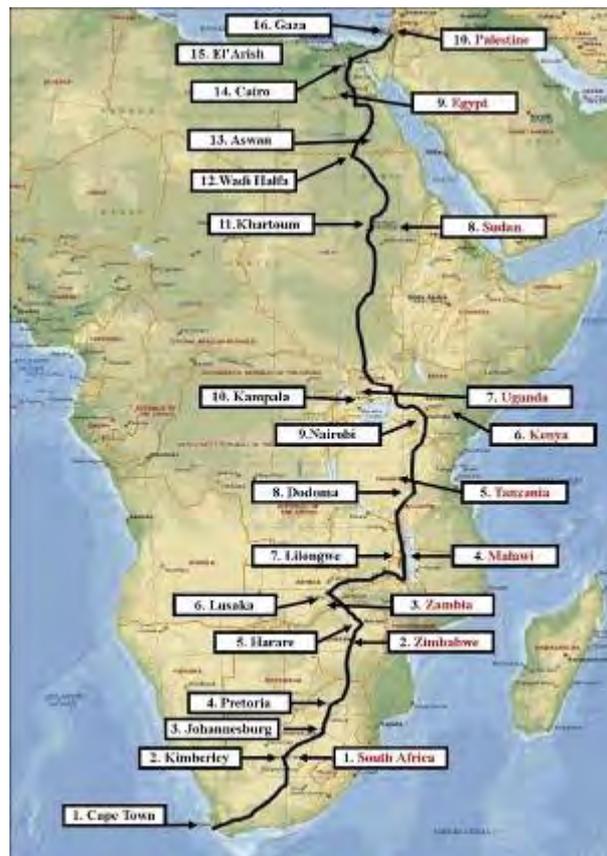




The Meir Amit Intelligence and
Terrorism Information Center

May 1, 2011

An aid convoy to the Gaza Strip is being organized in South Africa by two anti-Israeli Islamic organizations. It is expected to leave at the end of June and cross the African continent. The organizers were in contact with Hamas and IHH, apparently coordinating the convoy with them.



Overland route from Cape Town to the Gaza Strip
(Picture from the promotional booklet issued by the
two organizations behind the convoy)

Overview

1. **At the end of February 2011 preparations began in South Africa for an aid convoy to the Gaza Strip. The initiative was taken by two Muslim organizations operating in South Africa, the Al-Quds Foundation and the Muslim Judicial Council (MJC).** They have been joined by other Muslim organizations, radio stations, charity foundations and Muslim schools, colleges and universities in South Africa.

2. **The convoy is supposed to reach the Gaza Strip overland, while its material humanitarian assistance is expected to be sent by sea.** It plans to set out from Cape Town **during the last week of June 2011** and pass through Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi, Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Sudan and Egypt, and from there to the Gaza Strip (See map on first page). **Its humanitarian assistance will arrive by sea at an Egyptian port** (in all likelihood El-Arish), where it will be collected by the convoy.

3. **Two blatantly anti-Israeli Islamic organizations are behind the convoy:**

1) **The Muslim Judicial Council (MJC)**, a member of the Union of Good¹ (designated as a terrorism-supporting organization and outlawed by Israel and the United States), **which unites dozens of Islamic organizations, funds and foundations to transfer money to Hamas.**

2) **The Al-Quds Foundation**, the South African branch of the Al-Quds International Institute, an Arab-Muslim organization head by sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi which promotes the so-called Arab identity of Jerusalem.

4. **One of the most prominent figures organizing the convoy is Maulana Ihsaan Hendricks, MJC president and Al-Quds Foundation director. Ismail Haniya, head of the de facto Hamas administration in the Gaza Strip, gave Hendricks his blessing for the dispatch of the convoy. In addition, in January 2011 Maulana Ihsaan Hendricks met with senior IHH figures in Istanbul, who pledged their support to the convoy.**

¹ For a list of the South African organizations belonging to the Union of Good, see the February 2005 ITIC bulletin "The Union of Good: an umbrella organization comprised of more than 50 Islamic charitable funds and foundations worldwide..." at http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia//ENGLISH/MARKETING%20TERRORISM/PDF/FEB22_05.PDF.



Seated at right, Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi (one of the Muslim Brotherhood's highest religious authorities, and the religious inspiration for Hamas) on a visit to the offices of the Al-Quds Foundation in Johannesburg, at a meeting with Maulana Ihsaan Hendricks. The meeting was held during Al-Qardawi's visit to South Africa in April 2010 (Picture from the Al-Quds Foundation website).

5. According to statements issued by the convoy, its objectives are to increase African public awareness of the condition of the Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip, send the message of Islam and provide humanitarian assistance to the residents of the Gaza Strip. **However, in reality, the organizers' objectives are to defame Israel, contribute to the campaign to isolate it, create awareness for the Palestinian cause in South Africa and other African countries, and to demonstrate support for the Hamas administration in the Gaza Strip.**



Anti-Israeli banner on the Muslim Judicial Council website. The MJC is an anti-Israeli pro-Hamas organization, one of the two organizing the convoy.

6. **This will be the first convoy from Africa** (so far, flotillas and convoys have been sent to the Gaza Strip from Western and Asian countries). In our assessment, from the point of view of the convoy's organizers, **it has important propaganda value within the international campaign to delegitimize Israel. That is because of the South African nature of the convoy, which contributes to the campaign's efforts to brand Israel as an "apartheid country."** Hamas is apparently also aware of that possibility, and as far

as we know, Ismail Haniya and IHH members have encouraged anti-Israeli organizations in South Africa to dispatch the convoy.

7. Of note are the following:

1) **Timing:** The convoy is supposed to leave Cape Town at the end of June 2011 and reach the Gaza Strip for the Muslim holy month of Ramadan (August). If the time table does not change, the convoy will pass through Africa **at about the same time as the ships of the Freedom Fleet 2 flotilla** leave Europe (if it does in fact leave as planned). **That will provide the convoy with additional media coverage.**

2) **Passage through Sudan:** The convoy is supposed to **pass through Sudan and from there to proceed to Egypt and the Gaza Strip.** While we have no definite information, it is entirely possible that as the convoy passes through Sudan extremist elements will join it, or it may be exploited by Hamas to smuggle weapons and/or operatives into the Gaza Strip, exploiting the network of Hamas' supporters in Sudan.

Announcement for Africa 1 Aid Convoy (Picture from the Al-Quds Foundation website, one of the two organizations behind the convoy)

Organizing the convoy

8. In the last few months the website of the Al-Quds Foundation has issued a call for participants for the **Africa 1 Aid Convoy**. According to the site, the convoy is the result of collaboration between two South African Muslim organizations: the **Al-Quds Foundation** and the **Muslim Judicial Council (MJC)**. The convoy is planned to leave Cape Town at the end of June and travel overland to reach the Gaza Strip by August, during the Muslim holy

month of Ramadan. The organizers are asking South Africans, **especially Muslim communities**, for their support.

9. According to the convoy's promotional booklet, participation is open to all Africans. However, **a specific appeal is made to doctors, lawyers, clerics, media personnel, drivers, writers, parliamentarians and law enforcement personnel** to join. The organizers note that although many people have expressed a desire to participate, **the exact composition of the convoy will be dictated by Palestinian demands**. An appeal has also been made to the communities of the various African countries to host the convoy participants.

10. According to its website, the convoy will be organized in three stages:

- 1) **First**, a media campaign in South Africa to create awareness of the convoy and its objectives.
- 2) **Second**, the convoy will travel through South Africa before it proceeds to other African countries.
- 3) **Third**, the convoy will travel through the countries noted on its way to the Gaza Strip.

11. **As far as the humanitarian assistance for the Gaza Strip is concerned**, so far the items mentioned include ambulances, generators, medical supplies, water purification equipment, cars, writing materials, educational material, school bags. The organizers have noted their awareness of the logistical difficulties in bringing humanitarian assistance from South Africa to the Gaza Strip. Thus the intention is not for the overland convoy to actually bring the assistance with it through Africa. Rather, **it will be sent by sea to a port closer to the Gaza Strip** (possibly El-Arish), and **the convoy will collect it in Egypt and from there enter Gaza**.

Convoy organizer Maulana Ihsaan Hendricks and his contacts with Hamas



Maulana Ihsaan Hendricks

12. **The most prominent figure organizing the convoy is Maulana Ihsaan Hendricks, MJC president and Al-Quds Foundation director.** His name heads the list of its contact persons issued by the convoy's organizers. Second in importance is **Maulana Ahmed Muhammed**, active in the suburbs of Johannesburg and apparently second in command.

13. The idea to send the convoy was proposed in 2010. The pledge to send support to the Gaza Strip was first given (at a Cape Town march held in 2010 to show solidarity with the Palestinians) by Sheikh Ebrahim Gabriels, who formerly headed the Al-Quds Foundation. The pledge was reinforced when a **delegation of Hamas figures from the Gaza Strip visited South Africa and brought a letter from Ismail Haniya, head of the de facto Hamas administration.** According to the letter, convoys had already reached the Gaza Strip from all over the globe, but not from South Africa.

14. **In July 2010 a South African delegation headed by Maulana Ihsaan Hendricks visited the Gaza Strip as part of the Miles of Smiles convoy.**² While in the Gaza Strip he met with Ismail Haniya, who gave his blessing to the idea of an African convoy for solidarity with the Palestinian people (alquds.za.net website). On January 26, 2011, a delegation headed by Maulana Ihsaan Hendricks met with South Africa's deputy foreign minister, who authorized the initiative and suggested meeting in March to discuss the issue.



Maulana Ihsaan Hendricks at the Rafah crossing on his way to the Gaza Strip (Picture from the Al-Quds website)

15. **Maulana Ihsaan Hendricks's senior position in the Al-Quds Foundation made it possible for him to participate in Al-Quds International Institute conferences** in Arab-Muslim countries and meet with individuals and representatives of organizations participating in flotillas and convoys to the Gaza Strip. In January 2011 he attended a

² Miles of Smiles was a European convoy which entered the Gaza Strip via the Rafah crossing once its ships had been unloaded in El-Arish. The convoy was composed of 43 activists who brought ambulances and humanitarian assistance (Al-Quds Al-Arabi, August 6, 2010).

conference in Turkey and received the blessing of the Turkish IHH for the African convoy, as well as a pledge of practical support (See below). In March 2011 he **headed a delegation** of the South African Jerusalem Foundation to a conference in Sudan where the idea received additional support. In Sudan the delegation made administrative and logistical arrangements for the convoy's passage from Sudan to Egypt and for the transport of the humanitarian assistance by sea.

Convoy leaders meet with IHH

16. In January 2011 a delegation of the South African Jerusalem Foundation participated in the Al-Quds International Institute's annual convention, held in Istanbul. Two senior Al-Quds International figures, Maulana Ihsaan Hendricks and Maulana Ahmed Muhammed, exploited their stay in Istanbul to meet with senior figures of IHH, the Turkish organization which plays an important role in sending flotillas to the Gaza Strip. **The two visited IHH headquarters, where they raised the idea of an African convoy.** During the visit, which was reported by the Al-Quds Foundation website as "strategic," IHH pledged its full support to the African convoy (alquds.za.net website).



Maulana Ihsaan Hendricks (right) and Maulana Ahmed Muhammed (left) on a visit to IHH headquarters. The ship is the *Mavi Marmara* (Picture from the alquds.za.net website)

Preparations in South Africa for dispatching the convoy

17. During the last few months the organizers have begun making preparations to dispatch the convoy. They posted a list on the convoy's website of contact personnel with telephone numbers, including the two heads, administrators, doctors, a media group, a logistics group, a women's forum and contact personnel in various African countries.

18. Their activities have been the following:

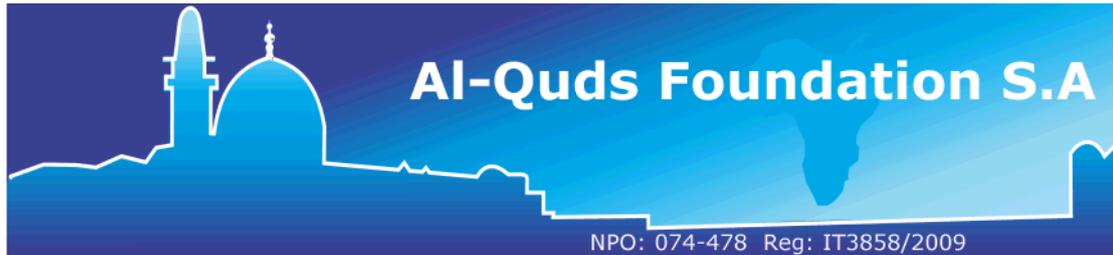
- 1) **Joining Facebook:** In February the Al-Quds Foundation joined Facebook with updates for interested parties. They also posted bank account numbers for contributors, to be deposited for the Al-Quds Foundation at the ABSA bank, branch number 4072902123. Contributors are urged to note that the money is a donation.
- 2) **Broadcasting:** As of February 9, 2011, there are broadcasts devoted to the convoy on the Islam International radio station and the Al-Ansar channel in Durban. The broadcasts appeal for participants for the convoy. One of the main broadcasters is convoy head **Maulana Ihsaan Hendricks**.
- 3) **Internet updates:** Convoy updates are posted on the Al-Quds Foundation website. Some of them are accessible only to subscribers and others are open to the general public.
- 4) **Workshop for women:** On February 5, 2011, there was a workshop for women to help organize the convoy. Donations were also collected. Women interested in joining the workshop were asked to contact an activist named Shinaz Farad. Breakfasts were organized to support the convoy and attended by 500 women.
- 5) **Collecting contributions and equipment:** Convoy activists collect contributions and equipment throughout South Africa.

Appendix

Organizations and bodies behind the convoy

The two main organizations

The AI-Quds Foundation



AI-Quds Foundation website heading

1. **The AI-Quds Foundation was established in South Africa five years ago.** Its director is **Maulana Ihsaan Hendricks**. It is a branch of the **AI-Quds International Institute**, an independent civilian organization of Arab Muslims founded ten years ago and headed by sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi.
2. **Its main objective**, according to its website, is **to protect Jerusalem by preserving its Arab identity and its Muslim and Christian holy places**. Every year the Institute carries out various projects designed to achieve its objective, such as organizing conferences, symposiums, research forums, courses about the city and "Palestine," distributing pamphlets and flyers with information about the so-called "challenges" facing Jerusalem, past, present and future.
3. **The AI-Quds International Institute is headed by a board of directors of 150 Arabs and Muslims from various countries. Its central body is the legislative council, which dictates policy and makes decisions. A smaller board of trustees is elected by the board of directors and is responsible for promoting the Institute's objectives and coordinating the activities it organizes. The chairman of the international board of trustees is Dr. Outbi al-Mahdi.** The secretariat general manages the organization's daily activities and has various departments, including manpower, contributions, communications, research and public relations.
4. On March 6-7, 2011, the AI-Quds International Institute held its eighth annual conference in Khartoum, with Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir in attendance. Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi may also have attended. Delegates from 28 countries participated, as did

representatives from NGOs. Khaled Mashaal, head of Hamas political bureau, also attended, as did senior Hamas figure Mahmoud al-Zahar and a Hezbollah representative (Alquds-online.org website).

The Muslim Judicial Council (MJC)



Muslim Judicial Council website heading

5. The MJC is a well-established Muslim organization in South Africa, having been founded by 62 individuals in Cape Town in 1945. **Its president is Maulana Ihsaan Hendricks.** He was preceded as president by sheikh Ebrahim Gabriels. Today he is head of the UUCSA (The United Ulema Council of South Africa), an umbrella organization of all the Muslim organizations in South Africa.

6. The MJC's official objectives are to train Muslim clerics, to defend the Muslim way of life and to preserve Muslim identity and Muslims' rights as a minority. It also promotes Islamic values, especially those related to marriage, the family, children, women and youths. Some of its members have served as ministers and members of the South African Parliament. The organization's main office is in Cape Town. **The MJC is a member of the Union of Good, and sheikh Ebrahim Gabriels is a member of its board of trustees.**

Other organizations participating in the convoy

7. We do not have much information about the other organizations participating in the convoy. An examination of the list which appears on the website indicates that some of them are radio stations which broadcast to the South African Muslim community. Others are various Muslim educational institutions.

Palestinian Solidarity Group



Palestinian Solidarity Group emblem

8. The Palestinian Solidarity Group is an anti-Israeli organization established in Cape Town in 2000 whose objectives are **to promote the Palestinian cause in South Africa and brand Israel as an "apartheid state."** Its members are mostly politicians, trade union activists, cultural figures and former anti-apartheid activists. The organization equates Israel with apartheid South Africa, calls for the "end of the Israeli occupation," **the return of the Palestinian refugees** and the establish of a democratic, secular Palestinian state (i.e., the elimination of the State of Israel).

Channel Islam International



Channel Islam International emblem

9. A South African Islamic channel (with a branch in Britain) which broadcasts in English to Muslim listeners around the globe. Its works with Muslim clerics throughout the Arab world to set up a timetable of Islamic broadcasts relevant to the African market. It is known as a pioneer in satellite radio broadcasting. Its website has information about the convoy. **It is the convoy's official media partner according to signed agreement.**

The Voice of the Cape



The emblem of The Voice of the Cape

10. Another Muslim channel broadcasting from Cape Town



Cartoon from the Voice of the Cape website

Jamiat UI-Ulama



Jamiat ul-Ulama website heading

11. The council of Muslim theologians in South Africa. The organization was founded in 1923 to provide for the religious needs of Muslims. Today it has six active branches and regional representatives in six of South Africa's nine provinces.

Radio Islam



Radio Islam emblem

12. Radio Islam was founded in 1993 and licensed in 1997. Its objective is to promote Islamic values in South Africa and abroad. Most of its broadcasts are in English. According to its website, it has 100,000 listeners.

Al Ansaar Foundation



Al-Ansaar Foundation website heading

13. The organization was founded in 1993 by a group of Muslim businessmen to promote Islamic values. It has a radio station, a communications center and a publishing house.



Al-Ansaar's organizational structure, according to its website

Central Islamic Trust

14. The organization was founded in 1958. It is considered one of the oldest organizations serving the Muslim community in South Africa. Its objective is to provide social services for Muslims in South Africa, including burial services, Islamic education, charity, religion and scholarships.