



**The Meir Amit Intelligence and  
Terrorism Information Center**

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**IHH, which plays a central role in organizing the upcoming flotilla to the Gaza Strip, joined Turkish Islamist organizations in denouncing Osama bin Laden's killing by America. IHH leader Bülent Yıldırım again expressed readiness to sacrifice shaheeds to achieve the flotilla's objective, calling on Israel not to attack the ships.**



Turkish Islamist organizations at a press conference convened at the Reşadiye Hotel in Istanbul to denounce the killing of Osama bin Laden. An IHH representative denounced "American terrorism," saying that killing bin Laden was clearly an illegal act (Photo from the verfecr.com website). The banner reads "We condemn American terrorism." Third from the left is identified as Osman Atalay, the IHH representative who denounced the United States.

## Overview

1. **The Turkish IHH**, which plays a central role in organizing the upcoming flotilla to the Gaza Strip (Freedom Flotilla 2), **joined other Turkish Islamist organizations in denouncing the killing of Osama bin Laden by the Americans**. On May 5 **the organizations convened a press conference at a hotel in an Istanbul suburb and issued a joint statement denouncing the United States**. Osman Atalay, the IHH representative (who participated in the *Mavi Marmara* flotilla) said that killing bin Laden had been clearly illegal, and called for the condemnation of "American terrorism."
2. **The denouncement was another illustration of IHH's radical anti-American anti-Western Islamic ideology**, previously expressed in statements made by Bülent Yildirim and by the support IHH provided in the past for global jihad networks.
3. Bülent Yildirim **continues his defiant, provocative statements regarding the flotilla** planned for the end of June.<sup>1</sup> On May 11 he told the Islamist Turkish TV Channel 5 that **IHH would not hesitate to sacrifice shaheeds to achieve the flotilla's objective**, since justice was on its side. He called on Israel to "act wisely," **warning Israel not to attack the flotilla** because that would entangle it with all the countries of the world. He pledged to increase the humanitarian assistance his organization sends to the Gaza Strip, and boasted that his time, with the contributions collected by IHH, the assistance would amount to \$100 million (compared with \$10 million last time).

## Reactions of Turkish Islamist organizations to the killing of Osama bin Laden

4. On May 5, 2011, a number of organizations met at the Reşadiye Hotel in the Fatih suburb of Istanbul and **issued a joint statement denouncing the "American terrorist attack" on Osama bin Laden**.<sup>2</sup> Among the organizations were **IHH and Mazlumder, an Islamist Turkish organization whose operatives participated in the *Mavi Marmara* flotilla**.<sup>3</sup> **The statement also denounced Turkish public figures, among them President Abdullah Gül, for justifying the American attack on bin Laden**.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For further examples, see the April 4, 2011 ITIC bulletin, "Bülent Yildirim, leader of the Turkish organization IHH, said in another fiery speech that "We are not afraid to die as shaheeds" and would continue 'until we complete our journey to Al-Aqsa mosque'" at [http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam\\_multimedia/English/eng\\_n/pdf/ipc\\_e184.pdf](http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/pdf/ipc_e184.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> [www.velfecr.com](http://www.velfecr.com)

<sup>3</sup> Mazlumder ("Organization of Human Rights and Solidarity for Oppressed People") was established in 1991 and **is considered the strongest and best organized human rights organization in Turkey**, as well as **a front for an extremist Muslim organization**. Under previous governments its activities were traced and it was subject to searches, its branches were closed and it was indicted by the office of the Turkish attorney general. Five of its operatives were aboard the *Mavi Marmara*.

<sup>4</sup> Turkish President Abdullah Gül, visiting Salzburg, Austria, said that Muslims living in the West were suffering from the perception that evolved after the September 2001 attacks, that Islam nurtured terrorism. Terrorism, he said, did not benefit Muslims, rather the opposite was true, it was isolating them and destroying their lives. He praised the killing of bin Laden, saying that his death should serve as a warning to the terrorist leaders (Hürriyet and Today'saman websites).

5. After the joint announcement, representatives of the various Islamist organizations gave speeches. Among them was **IHH representative Osman Atalay**, who deals with IHH propaganda and who participated in the *Mavi Marmara* flotilla.<sup>5</sup>

6. **Atalay strongly attacked the United States in his speech, accusing it of killing thousands of Iraqi and Pakistani civilians.** He claimed that millions of people were killed in Iraq, that the United States used chemical weapons in Fallujah and broke international law. **He said the killing of bin Laden had been clearly illegal and that "American terrorism" had to be condemned.**



Osman Atalay

7. The IHH denouncement of Osama bin Laden's killing is another illustration of **the radical anti-Western Islamist orientation of the organization, which in the past provided support for the global jihad.** It was expressed in a speech given by Bülent Yildirim two months before the departure of the *Mavi Marmara*, in which he described Israel's so-called "attack" on the Gaza Strip as **part of the West and other countries' overall attack on the Muslim world** (Rasthaber website, March 31, 2010):

1) "Let us examine," he said, "all the wars in the world: **the United States is killing Muslims.** Where? In Afghanistan. **NATO forces are killing Muslims.** Where? In Chechnya. **China is killing Muslims.** Where? In northern Turkistan. **Israel is killing Muslims.** Where? In Palestine [sic]" (He went on to accuse Thailand, the Philippines and India of operating against Muslims).

2) "**A Muslim,**" he continued, "**cannot be defeated by oppressors and infidels...The day we agree to be the slaves of the west [is the day] we taste defeat.** That is the situation in Iraq, Afghanistan and Chechnya, but with the help of

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<sup>5</sup> Osman Atalay, born 1963, is responsible for IHH publications and writes articles for the organization. He joined the *Mavi Marmara* at the port of Antalya.

Allah, we will not permit it in Palestine...If the owners of Al-Quds are Muslims, control of the world will be in Muslim hands."<sup>6</sup>

### **Bülent Yildirim interviewed by a Turkish Islamist TV channel<sup>7</sup>**

8. On May 11 IHH leader Bülent Yildirim **gave a defiant interview** to Turkey's Channel 5 TV (an Islamist-oriented station), describing the preparations for the next flotilla to the Gaza Strip.



**IHH leader Bülent Yildirim in a Channel 5 telephone interview. The picture was taken during the Mavi Marmara flotilla (hasturktv.com website)**

9. **The main points he made were the following:**

- 1) Three days previously [i.e., on May 8] registration for the flotilla began. The goal was a million potential candidates, from whom a limited number would be chosen. Yildirim said that **"we are not afraid,"** and **"even if we sacrifice shaheeds for this cause, we will have justice on our side."**
- 2) He said that so far **15 ships would participate in the flotilla.** The *Mavi Marmara* (which IHH was planning to send again) **was currently in a shipyard, having been overhauled** because of the great damage Israel inflicted on it.
- 3) He said that **activists from the United States and Europe** would participate in the flotilla, so that "the problem would no longer be between Turkey and Israel." **Members of Arab parliaments,** he added, would also join the flotilla, and even representatives from Israel television channels. He claimed that **Jews from around the globe** wanted to join the flotilla to show that **"the actions of the Zionists do great harm to all the Jews in the world."**

<sup>6</sup> For further information, see the September 5, 2010 ITIC bulletin, " In a speech given by IHH leader Bulent Yildirim two months prior to the Marmara flotilla, he presented a radical Islamic ideology with anti-Western and anti-Israeli motifs" at [http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam\\_multimedia/English/eng\\_n/pdf/ipc\\_e123.pdf](http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/pdf/ipc_e123.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> According to Turkey's Channel 5 TV website.

4) He emphasized that "We want to send the message to Israel that we are coming!" he called on Israel "to act wisely," and **warned it not to attack the flotilla**. He said that this time all the countries in the world would stand against Israel and, he said, that could benefit the Palestinians (he noted that Israel had a large opposition which disagreed with the policies of the government, hinting that an "attack" on the flotilla might create internal problems for Israel).

5) He claimed that after the events of the *Mavi Marmara*, **contributions to IHH increased**, making it possible for the organization to enlarge the humanitarian assistance it sends [to the Gaza Strip]: "If in the past we sent assistance worth \$10 million, **with the support of the contributors, this time we will send assistance [will be worth] \$100 million.**

6) Bülent Yildirim ended by **warning Israel not to dare to harm Palestine**, adding that "everyone on the side of Palestine grows and becomes more powerful, while you [Israel] get smaller."