



The Meir Amit Intelligence and  
Terrorism Information Center

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**So far 23 organizations are expected to participate in the upcoming flotilla to the Gaza Strip, similar to the heterogeneous coalition which organized the Mavi Marmara flotilla. Its three core organizations are IHH (Turkey), the ECESG (Europe) and the FGM (America), affiliated with radical Islam, primarily the Muslim Brotherhood, and/or the radical left. The others are global anti-Israeli organizations, some of them human- and social-rights groups.**



The renovated *Mavi Marmara*, which will again be the IHH flagship (IHH website, May 22, 2011). Five hundred passengers, from Turkey and other countries, are expected to participate.

## Overview

1. The IHH website recently posted a provisional list of 23 organizations which have signed up for Freedom Flotilla 2. An examination indicates a considerable similarity between these organizations and those participated in the *Mavi Marmara* flotilla.<sup>1</sup>

2. Like the previous flotilla, its preparations are being led by three organizations and umbrella networks with organizational capabilities and financial resources, and in one instance (IHH) with governmental capabilities. So far the core organizations have demonstrated persistence and determination to launch the flotilla (preparations have been ongoing for a year), despite logistic and political difficulties.<sup>2</sup>



Freedom Flotilla 2 logo (derryfriendsofpalestine.org website)

3. The most prominent organization and the one leading the preparations for the upcoming flotilla is IHH, an anti-Israeli, anti-West, Islamist Turkish organization. Its strategic partners are two umbrella networks: the European Campaign to End the Siege on Gaza (ECESG, a European network based in Britain whose organizations and

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<sup>1</sup> The comparison was made on the basis of the list of *Mavi Marmara* passengers as it appeared in the September 26 ITIC bulletin "Conspicuous among the passengers and organizations aboard the Mavi Marmara were Turkish and Arab Islamic extremists led by IHH. They were joined by extremist European left activists and volunteers who answered the call to help the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and were not partners in IHH's violent plans" at [http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam\\_multimedia/English/eng\\_n/pdf/ipc\\_e127.pdf](http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/pdf/ipc_e127.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> The main difficulty is raising large sums of money to buy ships. There are also political difficulties arising from the international community's reservations regarding the flotilla (among them the United States, the UN, the Europe and Western countries including France, Spain, Denmark, Holland and Canada). A senior ECESG figure stated on May 29 that preparations for the flotilla will continue despite requests from the UN General Secretary to the various countries involved to prevent the flotilla from sailing.

activists have ideological ties to the Muslim Brotherhood), and **the Free Gaza Movement** (FGM, a network based within the extreme leftist camp in the United States).

4. **These three core organizations, IHH, ECESG and FGM, determine policy and strategies for the upcoming flotilla** (as they did for the *Mavi Marmara*). **That is done through a steering committee set up to organize the flotilla, which holds occasional coordination meetings** attended by senior activists of the three core and other anti-Israeli organizations. **To date meetings have been held in Athens, Paris, Amsterdam, Madrid and Rome.**



The members of the steering committee meeting in Rome  
(Picture from the flotilla website, February 24, 2011).

5. **In addition to the three core organizations, the list contains the names of networks and organizations from Western Europe** (the most prominent country is Britain), **Scandinavia, North America and Asia**. The local networks from various countries which joined the flotilla are **directed and coordinated** by the core organizations. Most of their activities deal with logistics, such as raising funds, enlisting and briefing volunteers who will sail with the flotilla, and preparing the media and propaganda groundwork. In most cases, the costs involved are prohibitively high, keeping the local networks from buying their own ships. Some of them **have formed ad hoc associations, sometimes of organizations from a number of countries, to pool resources to buy a ship**. Some of them preferred not to act independently and plan **to join the vessels of other organizations** (IHH's *Mavi Marmara*, for example).

6. **Ideologically, the current flotilla, like the previous one, is composed of a heterogeneous coalition with inter-organizational collaboration among its members:** at one end of the ideological spectrum there are organizations and activists who are blatantly radical **Islamists** (IHH and other Turkish Islamist organizations, organizations and activists affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood, and sometimes also with Hamas in Europe). At the other end are **networks, organizations and activists affiliated with the radical left in the United States and Europe.**

7. In some instances, the organizations and activists are involved in the campaign to delegitimize Israel (boycotts, hate propaganda, etc.). They have been joined by human rights organizations and organizations with political-social agendas. Among them are Jewish individuals and small groups **not necessarily sharing the same ideology or radical Islamic/extreme leftist agenda, but willing to participate in anti-Israeli activity because they are critical of Israel's policies on the Palestinian issue.**

8. **The organizations preparing the upcoming flotilla learned lessons from the previous one.** The most important, they feel, is **the need to create difficulties for Israel and to ensure that Israel cannot prevent them from reaching the Gaza Strip.** The lesson is being applied in various ways: **increasing the numbers of vessels** (they aspire to between 13 and 15) **and activists** (there will be 500 aboard the *Mavi Marmara* alone, and according to Bülent Yildirim, there will be a total of 1,500); and **the participation of well-known figures** (politicians, cultural figures and media personnel), **especially from Western European and North American countries with which Israel has good relations.** **Jews and perhaps even Israelis are being enlisted** to increase the flotilla's legitimacy and attract the media. In addition, **there are apparently plans to use defiance and passive resistance to make it difficult for Israel to take over the ships,** which are liable to deteriorate into the sort of violence seen during the previous flotilla. Moreover, the organizers are planning to make it difficult for Israel to deal with flotilla participants who are detained.

9. **In our assessment IHH again plays a central role in organizing the flotilla. The *Mavi Marmara* will again be its flagship.** As far as is known, it will carry **activists from IHH** and other Turkish Islamist organizations, media personnel and, in our assessment, **Arab-Muslim activists from other countries, including those who participated in previous flotillas and convoys and gained experience in confrontations with the IDF and the security forces of Arab countries.** IHH leader Bülent Yildirim has stated that he is willing to sacrifice "shaheeds" for the sake of the flotilla, thus **it is highly likely that the conduct of the *Mavi Marmara* passengers will be provocative and the level of violence there will be higher than aboard the other vessels.**

10. **The list of the organizations on the IHH website (in English, Turkish and Arabic) does not so far contain names from the Arab-Muslim world, nor of the Islamist Turkish IHH-affiliated organizations which participated in the *Mavi Marmara* flotilla. That is true despite the fact that Arab delegations are making preparations to join the flotilla and the Jordanian committee for the flotilla (composed in large part of members of the Muslim Brotherhood) even said it might use Arab funds to**

**purchase a ship.**<sup>3</sup> In our assessment Arab-Muslim names do not appear because the organizers are afraid that the names of extreme Islamist organizations **might damage their attempts to represent the flotilla as on a "peace" and "human rights" mission, and make it difficult for them to allay the concerns of the international community regarding a repetition of violence. The names of Israeli organizations or activists expected to participate also do not appear.**

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<sup>3</sup> According to the announcement of the Jordanian committee organizing the local delegation, it will contribute 20% of the cost of purchasing a ship, estimated at € 1,600,000 (Al-Sabil, the Muslim Brotherhood organ in Jordan, May 23, 2011).

# Appendix

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## **Analysis of the list of organizations participating in the flotilla (Based on the list appearing on the IHH website)**

### **Overview**

1. The following conclusions can be drawn from an analysis of the list of organizations which appeared on the IHH website:

1) Most of the delegations are **groups organized ad-hoc or umbrella networks organized specifically for the flotilla**. A considerable percentage of them and their activists routinely participate in anti-Israeli activities in their own countries as **part of the campaign to delegitimize Israel**.

2) Some of the networks are **connected to the core organizations behind the flotilla, especially the FGM and the ECESG**. There are also **independent groups and activists** who joined the core organizations.

3) Most of the organizations' websites so far **do not mention the names of the activists** involved in preparations for the flotilla. In our assessment their intention is to make it difficult to prevent the flotilla from being launched. Where names are mentioned, **some of them are identified as having sailed aboard the *Mavi Marmara* or as having participated in other flotillas and convoys**.

4) **The organizations' websites are strikingly similar**, for example concerning the **behavior of flotilla participants**. In our assessment they are following instructions from the steering committee.

5) **A considerable effort is being made in many countries to enlist politicians, well-known figures and media personnel for participation in the flotilla**. The organizers apparently think their presence will increase solidarity for the flotilla and ensure it receives broad coverage. **They may also feel that the participation of celebrities will moderate the IDF's response and make it difficult for Israel to halt the flotilla**.

6) Some of the organizers **are still raising funds to purchase ships, and in our assessment in certain instances have run into difficulties**. According to IHH and ECESG spokesmen, they seek to launch a flotilla of between 13 and 15 ships. Groups

which do not intend to purchase ships have been **allotted room on existing vessels, primarily aboard the *Mavi Marmara***.

2. The following are profiles of the three core organizations, and information about the other networks and organizations from around the globe, as posted on the IHH website at the end of May.

## Profiles of the Three Core Organizations<sup>4</sup>

### IHH (Insani Yardım Vakfi)



1. **IHH (The Foundation for Human Rights and Freedoms and Humanitarian Relief)**: IHH is a Turkish organization with a **radical Islamic orientation**, founded in 1992 during the war in Bosnia. **In the past it was openly jihadist and supported Al-Qaeda and the global jihad**, especially in the Bosnian and Chechen arenas (where it provided logistic support, and transferred funds and fighters).

2. The organization is headed by an Istanbul lawyer named **Bülent Yildirim**. His worldview is **anti-West, anti-Israeli and anti-Semitic** (themes which often appear in his incendiary speeches). **He has close ties to Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan** and the upper echelons of the Turkish government. Bülent Yildirim (and the IHH leadership) were **aboard the *Mavi Marmara* and organized and directed the violent confrontation of IHH operatives with the IDF**.



IHH leader Bülent Yildirim  
(IHH website, April 7, 2011)

<sup>4</sup> Information about all three core organizations can be found in bulletins posted on the ITIC website during the past year.

### 3. IHH activity is divided into three spheres:

1) **Humanitarian activity:** The organization conducts legitimate humanitarian activity in distressed areas around the world, **especially where Muslim populations are concerned**, including shipments of food, education, the construction of mosques, etc. After its operatives' involvement in the fighting aboard the *Mavi Marmara*, and because it fears the United States will designate it as a terrorist organization, **IHH has been working overtime to reinforce its image as a humanitarian organization** (sending shipments of humanitarian assistance to Pakistan, Japan, Bahrain, Tunisia and recently, to Libya).

2) **Jihadist activity:** IHH subscribes to a radical Islamic, anti-Israeli, anti-West ideology. **In the past it provided support for Al-Qaeda and the global jihad** in countries such as Afghanistan, Bosnia and Chechnya. **It was also involved in terrorist activities in the United States** (the so-called Millennium Attack at the Los Angeles Airport, Christmas 2000). **Clear indications of its jihadist past and its anti-West orientation are apparent in some of the public statements made by its senior figures**, especially Bülent Yildirim.

3) **The campaign to delegitimize Israel:** During the past year **IHH's importance in the campaign has grown**, as have the support of the Turkish government and **IHH's close collaboration with other Turkish Islamist organizations**. IHH led the *Mavi Marmara* flotilla, which ended with a violent confrontation between its operatives and IDF soldiers, and supplied three ships. IHH also has an important position in the current flotilla (Freedom Flotilla 2), for which it is providing two ships (the *Mavi Marmara* and a cargo vessel). The organization also participated in various anti-Israeli propaganda activities, such as the May 15 Nakba Day events, and dispatched aid convoys to the Gaza Strip.

4. **Support for Hamas:** During the past two years **IHH's relations with Hamas have become closer**. In November 2009 it sent a representative to Judea and Samaria to coordinate the transfer of funds to Hamas institutions; he was deported by Israel. Another IHH representative, **Mehmet Kaya**, is based in the Gaza Strip and liaises with Hamas. IHH leader Bülent Yildirim has met with senior Hamas figures several times, including Khaled Mashaal and Ismail Haniya. **IHH provides the following support for Hamas:**

1) **Economic support for the de facto Hamas administration in the Gaza Strip:** Represented as humanitarian assistance, in reality **it is practical, political and propaganda support for the de facto Hamas administration**. The assistance IHH committed itself to providing to the Gaza Strip after Operation Cast Lead **amounted**



to about €50 million. IHH has, among other things, **donated money to the families of martyrs ("shaheeds") in the Gaza Strip and supported Hamas' educational system**, which brainwashes the younger generation with Hamas' radical Islamic ideology. **During preparations for the upcoming flotilla, Bülent Yildirim stated that IHH would transfer assistance worth \$100 million to Hamas.**

2) **Political-propaganda support for Hamas:** IHH is waging a **political-propaganda campaign in Turkey and abroad to enlist support for Hamas, and participates in anti-Israeli "consciousness-raising" events.** The political-propaganda themes employed by IHH and its affiliated organizations are **anti-Israeli** (and sometimes anti-Semitic) **and anti-West**, and in line with Hamas' fundamental extremist position. For example, IHH and its Islamist confederates sent a delegation to Jordan to participate in the Nakba Day (May 15) events there, and, with Palestinian and Jordanian demonstrators, the Turks confronted the Jordanian security forces. The delegation carried a banner of pictures of the nine operatives killed aboard the *Mavi Marmara*, and its leader, a Turkish Islamist, declared that in the future "[we] will reach the heart of Palestine and celebrate our victory in the free Al-Quds mosque."<sup>5</sup>



The Turkish delegation leads the march to the Allenby Bridge, followed by Palestinian and Jordanian activists. The banner they carry has the pictures of the nine operatives killed aboard the *Mavi Marmara*. When the march was stopped at a Jordanian security force roadblock a violent confrontation broke out (Velfecr website, May 19, 2011). The banner reads "The flag of our shaheeds is flown around the world."

5. A striking characteristic the anti-Israeli "consciousness raising activities" **is the readiness of operatives from IHH and its affiliated Turkish organizations to use violence, despite the fact that IHH represents itself as a peace and human rights organization. They have directed their violence against IDF soldiers** (the events aboard the *Mavi Marmara*) **and the security forces of various Arab countries:**

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<sup>5</sup> For further information, see the May 29, 2011 ITIC bulletin, " A Turkish Islamist delegation, which in our assessment included IHH activists, was involved in violent clashes with Jordanian security forces near Allenby Bridge on Nakba Day" at [http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam\\_multimedia/English/eng\\_n/pdf/ipc\\_e195.pdf](http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/pdf/ipc_e195.pdf).

1) **The confrontation with the Egypt security forces during the Viva Palestina convoy, January 2010:** About 40 IHH activists were involved in violent confrontations with the Egyptian security forces, which imposed limitations on the entrance of the George Galloway's Viva Palestina convoy into the Gaza Strip. During the confrontations 55 convoy members were injured, 40 of them belonging to IHH. **The IHH operatives planned to take Egyptian security force personnel hostage** (a tactic repeated aboard the *Mavi Marmara*).

2) **The confrontation with the IDF aboard the *Mavi Marmara*: On the night of May 31, 2010,** IHH operatives violently attacked the IDF soldiers who boarded the ship. The attack was premeditated (and had been hidden from the other members of the coalition and from the *Mavi Marmara's* captain). Preparations for it included dividing the operatives into fighting teams, equipping them with standard and improvised weapons, conducting briefings, distributing electronic communications equipment, setting up a media room, and more. According to statements from IDF soldiers who participated in the fighting, they found themselves faced with dozens of well-trained fighters who were centrally directed and operating according to a pre-prepared plan, whose **objective was to harm the soldiers and prevent them at any cost from boarding the ship**. The confrontation ended with the deaths of nine Turkish operatives; 53 were wounded. Eight IDF soldiers were wounded, three of them seriously to critically.

3) **The confrontation with the Jordanian security forces during the Nakba Day events, May 15, 2011:** A delegation of 28 Islamists from Turkey, among them IHH activists, participated in the events which took place in Jordan to mark Nakba Day. **Six of them had sailed with the *Mavi Marmara*, and the delegation carried a large banner with pictures of the operatives killed aboard the ship.** The Turkish delegation led a procession of 500 Palestinians and Jordanians who marched from Karameh to the Allenby Bridge, calling themselves "the return march." The protestors refused to follow the instructions of the Jordanian security forces and confronted them. During the confrontation one protestor was killed and several dozen were wounded. Among the wounded were members of the Turkish delegation.

6. **The IHH again has an important position** in the upcoming flotilla (Freedom Flotilla 2). Its media campaign has **a number of prominent themes and objectives:**

1) **Deterring Israel by giving incendiary speeches emphasizing IHH's readiness to sacrifice operatives ["shaheeds"] to achieve its goals and warning that a "surprise" is in store for Israel** (possibly a plane or an overland convoy). Bülent Yildirim has also warned that should Israel attempt to halt the flotilla, it

**will remain on the high seas for a long period of time** (participants have been asked to allot at least three weeks to the flotilla). During that time, according to Bülent Yildirim, protest activities will be put into motion which will isolate Israel around the globe. **The Turkish foreign minister supported Bülent Yildirim's deterrent statement by saying that Turkey would "give the necessary response to any repeated act of provocation by Israel on the high seas."**

2) **Allaying the international community's concerns about a repetition of the *Mavi Marmara* violence:** Bülent Yildirim has repeatedly stated that the flotilla participants would not have even "a penknife," a statement also made during the preparations for the confrontation aboard the *Mavi Marmara*. A senior IHH figure said that the organization would be willing to have its cargo inspected by UN or European observers (during the *Mavi Marmara* flotilla, the Turkish authorities emphasized that the passengers' luggage had been inspected as they boarded ship in Istanbul, while in reality large quantities of weapons and military equipment were brought on board).

3) **Claiming the IHH is "independent" and that the Turkish government cannot interfere in the flotilla:** On May 20 Bülent Yildirim held a press conference where he again claimed that IHH was an "independent" organization, and that **the Turkish government did not interfere in its affairs**. Davutoglu, the Turkish foreign minister, repeated the claim. **In reality, IHH and its flotilla campaign receive political, propaganda and logistic support from the Turkish government**, although that is not publicized. The Turkish foreign minister gave media support to IHH's warning to Israel, and the flotilla's sailing date was even delayed by internal Turkish considerations (until after the date of the Turkish elections).

## **The European Campaign to End the Siege on Gaza (ECESG)<sup>6</sup>**




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<sup>6</sup> For further information about the ECESG, see the date ITIC bulletin, [The European Campaign to End the Siege on Gaza \(ECESG\) is an anti-Israel, pro-Hamas umbrella organization which participated in the Mavi Marmara flotilla.](#)

7. **The European Campaign to End the Siege on Gaza (ECESG): The ECESG is an anti-Israeli pro-Hamas umbrella network operating in Europe, based in Britain.** It usually collaborates with other similar umbrella organizations and networks involved in the convoy and flotilla campaign (including IHH, FGM and Viva Palestina). The ECESG had a central role in organizing the previous flotilla, which ended with the violent confrontation aboard the *Mavi Marmara*. Since then the ECESG has dealt with **promoting the upgraded Freedom Flotilla 2 and "consciousness-raising projects" such as sending a plane to the Gaza Strip.**

8. **The ECESG was established in 2007** to lift completely the so-called Israeli "siege" of the Gaza Strip. However, its **stated aim**, which has won it support among human rights activists and organizations in the West, **hides its undeclared political objectives, which include strengthening the de facto Hamas administration in the Gaza Strip and making it difficult for Israel (and Egypt) to provide effective oversight of the smuggling of weapons and terrorist operatives into the Gaza Strip, both by land and sea.** While the ECESG promotes aid to Hamas in the Gaza Strip, its website and the statements of its senior figures make no mention of similar aid to the Palestinian Authority in Judea and Samaria.

9. **Organizationally, the ECESG is an umbrella network for dozens of pro-Palestinian, pro-Hamas networks and organizations operating in various European countries. Some of them actually exist** and conduct extensive anti-Israeli activity. **Others, however, either exist only on paper or are negligible.** The ECESG also includes many non-affiliated activists in **Britain, Scotland and Ireland, as well as green party and ecological activists.** Some of the local networks and organizations participating in the upcoming flotilla are affiliated with the ECESG.

10. **Ideologically, the ECESG is heterogeneous and includes activists who are Islamist, leftist** (primarily extreme leftist) or belong to human rights organizations, trade union members and even ecological activists. However, an analysis of the ECESG and its tactics indicates that **its motivating core is composed, in our assessment, of activists and organizations ideologically affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas** (although the ECESG is careful not to publicly admit it). **The ECESG's common denominator is its strong opposition to the State of Israel, and in certain instances, the rejection of the legitimacy of its existence as an independent Jewish state.**

11. **The image the ECESG attempts to create is of a pan-European network based in Belgium** (its head office is in Brussels). However, an examination of its activities and the modus operandi of its senior activists indicates that **it is headed by a number of**

**individuals of Palestinian origin, some of them from the Gaza Strip, most of them living and working in London. Some of the most prominent figures are:**

1) **Amin Abu Rashad:** A Lebanese-born **Palestinian**, holder of a Dutch passport. **Ideologically affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood and organizations linked to it in Holland and in Europe.** One of the founders and senior officials of the ECESG, he participated in organizing convoys and flotilla, including the *Mavi Marmara* flotilla (although he sailed aboard the *Sfendon*). **Previously he belonged to the Dutch chapter of the Al-Aqsa Foundation, a member organization in the Union of Good, which transfers funds to Hamas.** After he left the Al-Aqsa Foundation **he became head of a local pro-Hamas organization called the PPMS** (Palestinian Platform for Human Rights and Solidarity). **The PPMS was established in 2005 and is affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood;** it is considered the most active organization of its type in Holland.

2) **Dr. Arafat Madi Mahmoud Shukri:** Born in the village of Atil in the Tulkarm district, today a British subject, father of three. Did his doctoral thesis on the Palestinian refugees and wrote a book about the status of refugees in Islam. **Today is ECESG chairman and has been one of its activists for three years; is also executive director of the Palestinian Return Centre (PRC) in Britain.** In May 2010, on the eve of the *Mavi Marmara* flotilla, he met with Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan, heading a delegation of the ECESG, the PRC and a number of other European organizations visiting Turkey at the time. At the meeting he said that Turkey had an important role in lifting the Israeli "siege" of the Gaza Strip. **In recent months he has been active in organizing Freedom Flotilla 2,** in collaboration with IHH and other organizations involved in waging the campaign to delegitimize Israel.

3) **Rami Saleh Ismail Abdo:** Born in the Rimal section of Gaza City in 1977. Currently resides in Manchester, England. In May 2009 was ECESG coordinator for a convoy of several dozen trucks sent to the Gaza Strip. **ECESG spokesman for the upcoming flotilla.**

## Free Gaza Movement (FGM)<sup>7</sup>



12. **The Free Gaza Movement (FGM) is an umbrella network of the American radical left which specializes in organizing flotillas.** It played an important role in IHH's *Mavi Marmara* flotilla and **currently plays an important role in the Freedom Flotilla 2.** It provided the previous flotilla with two yachts, the *Challenger 1* and *Challenger 2* (both of which were found to have technical problems) and the cargo ship *Rachel Corrie* (which arrived late).

13. **The FGM was established in 2006 by three senior activists of the International Solidarity Movement (ISM), an umbrella network of the American radical left which specializes in conducting protest activities in the Palestinian territories.** The three, who are still part of the ISM's leadership, are **Huwaida Arraf** (an American with an Israeli Arab father and a Palestinian mother), her husband, **Adam Shapiro** (American, Jewish) and **Greta Berlin** (an American). **Another activist who was a cofounder of both the ISM and FGM is Paul Larudee** (an American), who left the FGM after quarrels and established a West Coast organization called the **Free Palestine Movement (FPM)**, which also specializes in organizing flotillas to the Gaza Strip.

14. **The FGM is a network rather than a hierarchical organization.** As of June 2010, according to its website, it had branches in 28 countries, 11 in Europe, five in North America (four in the United States and one in Canada), and one in Israel (which the website refers to as "Palestine 1948"). Some of the organizations and networks participating in the upcoming flotilla are affiliated with the FGM.

15. **The most important FGM and ISM activist is Huwaida Arraf, who has an important role in the flotilla campaign.** She is Christian and was born in Detroit in 1976 to an Israeli Arab father and a mother from the Palestinian village of Beit Sahour (east of Bethlehem). She holds a law degree from the American University in Washington (2007), where her major fields of study were human rights and international law. In 2001 she founded the ISM with her husband, Adam Shapiro, and in 2006 was a cofounder of the FGM. She is hostile to Israel and rejects its right to exist. In January 2002, at the height of the Palestinian suicide bombing terrorism, she and Adam Shapiro wrote an article which appeared

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<sup>7</sup> For further information about the FGM, see the June 27, 2010 ITIC bulletin, " Internal documents of the Free Gaza movement seized in the recent flotilla expose considerable discrepancies between its strategy and tactics and its public stance " at [http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam\\_multimedia/English/eng\\_n/html/jpc\\_e0101.htm](http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/html/jpc_e0101.htm).

on the ISM website. It was in response to an article in the online Palestine Chronicle, and said that "...No...successful nonviolent movement was able to achieve what it did without a concurrent violent movement..."<sup>8</sup>

16. In 2006, with a group of senior ISM activists, Huwaida Arraf established the FGM. In 2008 she participated in an FGM flotilla to the Gaza Strip. She was one of the central organizers of the *Mavi Marmara* flotilla, and participated in it. She attended a preparatory meeting of the coalition in Istanbul chaired by the IHH deputy leader, where pre-flotilla arrangements were coordinated. For the voyage itself she boarded the *Challenger 2*, one of the vessels sent by the FGM. **Videos seized by the IDF show her as the moving spirit, organizer and leader of the activists aboard the ship.** A technical problem forced the ship to drop anchor in Cyprus, and Huwaida Arraf and several other activists then boarded the *Mavi Marmara*.



Huwaida Arraf (left) giving instructions of activists aboard the *Challenger 2*

17. Internal FGM documents seized aboard the *Mavi Marmara* deal with the FGM's strategy and the briefings received by its activists before the flotilla. A comparison of the documents and the organization's stated positions exposes serious discrepancies and on occasion contradictions between them:

- 1) **With reference to legal issues: An FGM briefing indicated that the organization was fully aware of the problematic legal issues involved in transferring assistance to the de facto Hamas administration in the Gaza Strip, especially with regard to countries like the United States, where Hamas has been outlawed.** Reading between the lines, it is apparent that while the organization declares its assistance is meant for the Palestinian population in the Gaza Strip, **the FGM is aware it is really assisting the de facto Hamas administration.** Thus in the pre-flotilla legal briefing **activists were warned not to make any statement or carry out any action that might be interpreted as**

<sup>8</sup> <http://netwmd.com/anti-ism/ISM%20by%20any%20means.htm>.

**providing "material assistance" to Hamas**, thus keeping them from incriminating themselves in the United States and other countries (the organization has representatives in the United States who raise funds for it).

2) **With reference to political issues**: As a response to the problems involved with the designation of Hamas as a terrorist organization, activists were told that the **FGM had publicly declared it did not have a political agenda** (the organization is registered as a **human rights project**, the definition that appeared on its website), and that it was committed to "nonviolent humanitarian assistance." However, an **internal FGM document** found aboard the *Mavi Marmara* defined the flotilla's objectives as clearly political rather than humanitarian (they were defined as creating media coverage of the so-called Israeli "siege" of the Gaza Strip and goading foreign governments to take steps to punish Israel. Transferring humanitarian assistance to the Gaza Strip was not mentioned as an objective.).

3) **With reference to preparations for possible scenarios during the flotilla**: The FGM put together "defense" scenarios for the flotilla, **based on the assumption that the IDF would not be able to stop the ships without using force**. The scenarios described responsive tactics which would prevent the IDF from taking over the ships. **They included placing sharp objects on deck and having activists barricade themselves in the wheelhouse and engine room**. While such tactics are less aggressive than the organized violence employed by IHH, they are not compatible with the instructions the FGM gave its activists, which unequivocally forbade them to use either physical or verbal violence. Thus it would seem that the term *nonviolent resistance* as it appeared in the instructions given by the human rights organizations participating in the flotilla were **broadly interpreted by various organizations and activists eager to confront the IDF soldiers**.

## Using Tactics of Nonviolent Resistance

18. **The instructions the ISM has given its activists** for the upcoming flotilla can provide an indication of the type of action planned by organizations such as the FGM. The Northern California ISM branch posted an announcement on its website indicating **preparations for the extensive use of non-violent resistance, should Israel detain its activists**. The tactics, determined by agreement with the flotilla's steering committee, include extreme lack of cooperation throughout the period of detention in Israel and refusal to be deported until a number of conditions are met.<sup>9</sup>

19. **Two comments regarding the instructions**:

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<sup>9</sup> Nonviolent Resistor Application for 2011 Gaza Freedom Flotilla", [Norcalism.org/flotilla.html](http://Norcalism.org/flotilla.html)



1) The ISM (and in our assessment similar networks) customarily use slogans like **"nonviolent resistance," which are familiar and acceptable to Western ears.** However, the *Mavi Marmara* affair and the ISM's modus operandi in the territories have shown that **the interpretation of "nonviolent" can be broad.** The various anti-Israeli organizations which belong to the ISM and similar frameworks are often eager to confront the Israeli and Arab security forces and to employ soft violence against them

2) ISM and similar organizations **give top priority to trained activists who have participated in events at the frictions points in the territories, especially those who were detained and deported by Israel.** The organizations planning to participate in the upcoming flotilla have as passengers **activists who were aboard the *Mavi Marmara* and joined convoys to the Gaza Strip.** Some of them therefore are experienced in the use of passive resistance and the tactics of soft violence.

20. The FGM passengers aboard the *Challenger* in the *Mavi Marmara* flotilla **employed both physical and verbal violence against the IDF soldiers, although to a lesser degree than the IHH operatives aboard the *Mavi Marmara*.** IDF soldiers reported that the *Challenger* **carried out evasive tactics** and forced the Israeli Navy to chase it for a considerable distance before it was stopped. **When the soldiers boarded they were met with physical and verbal violence, and passengers attempted to shove the soldiers while some of the activists barricaded themselves in certain cabins.**

## Organizations and Networks Joining the Three Core Organizations (The Situation to Date)

### European Organizations and Networks

#### Britain: Britain2Gaza<sup>10</sup>



Britain 2 Gaza

<sup>10</sup> The link on the IHH website connects to the Viva Palestina homepage, not to Britain2Gaza despite the fact that Viva Palestina does not appear on the list of the 23 participating organizations. Viva Palestina is a British-based pro-Hamas organization headed by George Galloway. It specializes in sending aid convoys to the Gaza Strip.

21. Britain is the European hub of the campaign to delegitimize Israel. **The British delegation was the largest European delegation in the *Mavi Marmara* flotilla.** There were 28 **British subjects aboard, about half of them Muslims.** Ideologically some of them were Islamists, while others belonged to the radical left.

22. According to our information and the IHH website, a large delegation is being formed in Britain for the upcoming flotilla, its members belonging to **five anti-Israeli British organizations** affiliated with the extremist Islam or the radical left. The organizations have as members Hamas activists who found asylum in Britain, and some of them are involved in the flotilla campaign. The organizations are The British Muslim Initiative, The Palestine Solidarity Campaign, The Friends of Al-Aqsa, The Palestinian Forum in Britain, and the Stop the War Coalition. According to Ismail Patel, Friends of Al-Aqsa chairman, more than 30 British subjects will participate in the upcoming flotilla (Friends of Al-Aqsa website, May 30, 2011).

23. The organizations are:

1) **The British Muslim Initiative (BMI):** The BMI is a radical Islamic organization, **affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood in Britain.** It was established in 2006 by, among others, **Muhammad Sawalha, a Hamas operative who lives in Britain and is one of the organizers of the flotilla campaign, and Dr. Azzam Tamimi,** a prominent Muslim Brotherhood activist in Britain.



2) **The Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC):** The PSC is an anti-Israeli organization which **heads the British campaign to boycott Israel (BDS),** and is active in spreading anti-Israeli propaganda. Its members include native British subjects as well as Muslims and Palestinians who live in Britain. PSC activists were aboard the *Mavi Marmara*. The organization's head office is in London and its activities are carried out by volunteers (several thousand, according to its claims). **The PSC chairman is Hugh Lenning, an extreme leftist, who is also the deputy secretary general of the Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS),** the fifth largest trade union in Britain.



PSC activists demonstrate for a boycott of the "fruits of apartheid." The demonstration was held in front of a Tesco supermarket.



From the PSC newsletter: a call to boycott Israeli goods, even those not produced in the territories, such as dates and avocados grown in northern Israel (Picture courtesy of Israel Channel 10 TV, August 25, 2010).

3) **The Friends of Al-Aqsa:** The Friends of Al-Aqsa is a pro-Palestinian British organization based in Leicester, about 100 kilometers (60 miles) north of London. The city has a large Muslim community. The organization is headed by **Ismail Adhem Patel**, a British subject, apparently of Palestinian origin, who participated in the *Mavi Marmara* flotilla. He also holds senior positions in the BMI and the Stop the War Coalition.



4) **The Palestinian Forum in Britain:** The organization's ideology and political agenda are **Islamist**. The organization's spokesman is **Zaher al-Birawi**, a Hamas activist living in Britain who is also the spokesman of George Galloway's Viva Palestina and chairman of the board of directors of the Palestinian Return Centre (PRC, a British organization affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas, whose main activity is

based on inculcating the appeal for the Palestinians' so-called "right of return." Some of the PRC's senior figures are Muslim Brotherhood activists and Hamas members who found asylum in Britain.)



5) **The Stop the War Coalition:** The Coalition is a British anti-war organization whose **vice president is George Galloway, who heads Viva Palestina and organizes convoys to the Gaza Strip.** Another senior Coalition figure is Ismail Patel, who heads The Friends of Al-Aqsa.



24. On March 11, 2011, Hamas' Palestine-info website reported that the British organizations had agreed to jointly fund the purchase of a ship for the British delegation. However, to date it would seem that they have not succeeded and the British delegation and its media personnel will **sail aboard the *Mavi Marmara*.**

## Scotland: Free Gaza Scotland

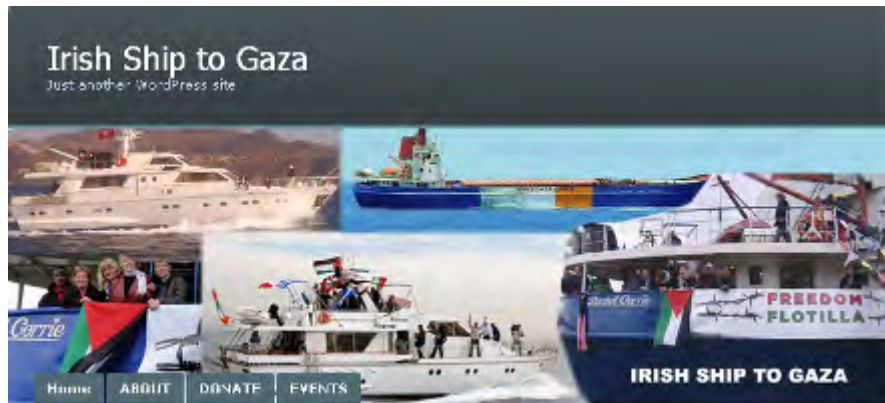


Free Gaza Scotland

25. **Free Gaza Scotland is a pro-Palestinian network centered in Edinburgh, affiliated with the FGM.** It represents itself as using "non-violent direct action" to bring

humanitarian assistance to the Gaza Strip and to help liaise between the residents of the Gaza Strip and Scottish citizens. In addition to its participation in the flotilla, it spreads pro-Palestinian propaganda in Scotland.

## Ireland: Irish Ship to Gaza



From the Irish Ship to Gaza website

26. The network includes a number of pro-Palestinian organizations in Ireland, and is affiliated with the FGM. Its website deals mainly with fundraising. One of its activists is Dr. Fintan Lane, who participated in the *Mavi Marmara* flotilla.

27. A group of four Irish artists held a fundraising evening for the upcoming flotilla, during which they sold their works. One of them, Felim Egan is supposed to sail with it, as are several writers and politicians.

## Switzerland: Bateau Suisse Pour Gaza ("A Swiss Boat for Gaza")

### Droit Pour Tous ("Right for All")



Droit Pour Tous

28. **Bateau Suisse Pour Gaza** is a network based on a Swiss NGO called Droit Pour Tous. **Droit Pour Tous belongs to the ECESG**, and claims to seek justice for people around the world. **In reality, it focuses on the Palestinian issue and the "Palestinian rights" in**

the "occupied territories." It organizes demonstrations, conferences and displays. It is also involved in boycotting Israeli products, part of the delegitimization campaign being waged against Israel.

29. **The president of Droit Pour Tous is Anouar Gharbi**, an engineer of Tunisian origin who is an ECESG activist. In the past he was a senior figure in the Association de Secours Palestiniens in Switzerland, **an organization which belonged to the Union of Good, which raises money for Hamas**. He is also a member of Partners for Peace and Development for Palestinians (PPDP), which was involved in demanding that the Swiss attorney general arrest Israeli President Shimon Peres on his visit to Switzerland in March 2011.

30. According to the flotilla organizers, **the organization's boat will be called *Freedom Flotilla – Stay Human***, and it will be dedicated to the memory of Italian journalist and ISM activist Vittorio Arrigoni (a pro-Palestinian activist murdered by a global jihad network in the Gaza Strip on April 14, 2011).



Droit Pour Tous, Geneva branch, call to boycott Israeli products (aqsa.org.uk website)

31. Speaking for the ECESG, Anour Gharbi recently stated that despite the efforts of the Israeli government to stop the flotilla, **three additional ships** carrying passengers from **Germany, Switzerland, Holland and Italy would join it**. He said that it would be the largest flotilla so far and that **the three ships would depart from the ports of Marseille, Genoa and Hamburg** (ECESG website, London, May 26; Palestine-info website from Brussels, May 30, 2011).

32. The ship sailing from Hamburg will be German-Swiss and will join the others. It will carry **40 Swiss nationals**, among them members of Parliament, politicians, media personnel and human rights activists; **ten passengers will be German** (Palestine-info website, Brussels, May 30, 2011).

## Belgium: Belgium to Gaza



Belgium to Gaza

33. **Belgium to Gaza is a network of pro-Palestinian Belgian organizations and activists wanting to join the flotilla to "lift the siege" of the Gaza Strip. It is conducting a media campaign to purchase a ship costing €300,000.** Belgium to Gaza is linked to the FGM. There were three Belgian women registered to sail with in the previous flotilla aboard the *Mavi Marmara*, one of whom changed her mind at the last minute.



Belgium to Gaza activists hold a press conference  
(Photo from the organization website)

34. **The Belgium to Gaza website has posted a list of recommendations and instructions for flotilla participants, as follows:**<sup>11</sup>

- 1) **Participants are responsible personal expenses** (every participant will be charged at least €500).
- 2) While the basic plan is to remain in the Gaza Strip for a short time, **participants should plan for a commitment of at least three weeks.**
- 3) **The voyage is liable to involve stress and physical difficulties.**

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<sup>11</sup> Similar instructions appear on many of the websites of the organizations participating in the flotilla, and are apparently reflect decisions of the steering committee. For that reason they will be mentioned only once.

4) **Every participant must sign a statement that he will not engage in violence.**

5) **There is a real danger of being detained by the Israeli authorities.**

6) **For many reasons, joining the flotilla is potentially life-threatening** because "Israel has a history of violence in the Gaza Strip region." Some of the flotilla organizers and their families received **anonymous threats**. In addition, there are extremist groups operating in the Gaza Strip, some of them linked to Al-Qaeda, which the past threatened Westerners.

## Germany: Deutsche Initiative zum Bruch der Gazablockade



Deutsche Initiative zum Bruch der Gazablockade

35. **Deutsche Initiative zum Bruch der Gazablockade** ("The German Initiative to Break the Blockade of Gaza") is a German network operating in collaboration with other pro-Palestinian German organizations and the ECESG. **It aspires to purchase a ship with activists from Switzerland and other countries.** According to ECESG activist Anouar al-Gharbi, there will be ten German activists aboard the German-Swiss ship, which will depart from Hamburg (Palestine-info website, May 30, 2011). There were seven Germans aboard the *Mavi Marmara*, three of whom began the trip aboard the *Challenger 2* and joined it later. Four additional Germans were on board other ships.

## Italy: Freedom Flotilla Italia



Freedom Flotilla Italia

36. **Freedom Flotilla Italia is a network of organizations, unions and individuals** who joined one another to have an Italian ship join the flotilla. It has representatives in a number of Italian cities. **It intends to sail aboard the *Stefano Chiarini***, named after an



Italian correspondent who dedicated his life to the Palestinian cause and died three years ago.

## Netherlands: Netherlands Boat to Gaza



Netherlands Boat to Gaza

37. **Netherlands Boat to Gaza** is a network of dozens of organizations established to "lift the siege" of the Gaza Strip. It has a Facebook page with 500 friends. Its website calls for supporters who can organize fundraising or other events, and asks for donations for the flotilla – mainly drugs, medical equipment and school supplies – and for contributions to purchase a ship or equipment for the residents of the Gaza Strip.

38. At the end of May 2011 **Uri Rosenthal, the Dutch foreign minister, said his country opposed the flotilla, had added the Dutch branch of IHH to its list of terrorist organizations and had frozen its assets.** That, he said, was because "...IHH Netherlands regularly transferred funds to IHH Germany. This organization is banned in Germany **because it has raised funds for Hamas.** Hamas has been on the EU list of terrorist organizations since 2003 [ITIC emphasis throughout]." He added that "The decision to list IHH Netherlands was taken independently from the current plans to organize a new flotilla. **The government is opposed to the flotilla... The Dutch government believes that the second Gaza flotilla is counter effective to further opening of the regular border crossings...**"; "...The Netherlands government has called upon organizations to refrain from participation in the Gaza flotilla since it will not help to improve the situation in Gaza. **Under Dutch law, however, the government cannot prevent ships from setting sail**" (Jerusalem Post, May 26, 2011).

## Spain: Rumbo a Gaza ("[On a] Course for Gaza")



Rumbo a Gaza

39. **Rumbo a Gaza** is a network of pro-Palestinian Spanish activists whose stated objective is to express solidarity with the residents of the Gaza Strip. **Its website posts a list of 300 Spanish organizations which identify with the goal. It intends to send 200 activists and 2,000 tons of humanitarian assistance to the Gaza Strip**, which on arrival will be transferred to UNRWA. **Rumbo a Gaza intends to purchase two ships**, and to that end has initiated a fundraising and propaganda campaign. There were three Spanish nationals aboard the *Mavi Marmara*, among them activists of **an organization calling itself Culture, Peace and Solidarity, which will also take part in the upcoming flotilla** (See below).

40. On May 22, 2011, Rumbo a Gaza activists appealed to the Spanish government not to yield to Israeli pressure to prevent the flotilla from sailing, and to ensure the safety of the passengers and the humanitarian assistance on board (Freedomflotilla.eu website, May 22, 2011). The activists lodged a complaint with a Spanish court, claiming that the Spanish Civil Guard had stopped and searched the car of the organization's spokesman (rebellion.org website, April 22, 2011).



Recruiting poster for the flotilla: "[On a] course for Gaza: two ships, 200 people, 2000 tons of humanitarian assistance."

41. The organization's activists include musicians, actors, union members and social activists. According to its website, two of its activists participated in the *Mavi Marmara* flotilla. They were:

- 1) **Manuel Espinal Tapial**: Born 1974. President of **Culture, Peace and Solidarity**, an NGO established in 1996 by cultural professionals, and trade union and social activists to initiate a dialogue with like-minded individuals around the world, including "Palestinian refugees." The organization has branches throughout Spain.



Manuel Espinar Tapial (elpais.com website, May 31, 2010)

- 2) **Laura Arau Crusellas**: Secretary of Culture Peace and Solidarity in Catalonia.

## Greece: Ship to Gaza Greece



Ship to Gaza Greece

42. **Ship to Gaza Greece** is a Greek network participating in the flotilla "to break the siege." Its activists are in the process of purchasing a ship, as they did for the previous flotilla. On October 2, 2010, a conference was held in Athens with representatives from Athens and other Greek cities, as well as Palestinians. A report was given about a coordination meeting held with the organizers of Freedom Flotilla 2 in Athens, September 26-27, 2010. **In our assessment, the Greek network plays an important role in organizing the flotilla.** One of the organizations participating in the *Mavi Marmara* flotilla was a Greek network called The Greek Ship to Gaza Campaign.

43. **A prominent figure in the Greek network is Professor Vangelis Pissias, who has an important position in the convoy-flotilla campaign.** In 2008 he participated in an attempt to send a number of Greek ships to the Gaza Strip in collaboration with Paul Larudee and the FGM. He was on the steering committee of the coalition which dispatched the *Mavi Marmara* flotilla and also attended the May 16, 2010 meeting in Istanbul, representing the Greek network (which contributed a cargo ship to the flotilla). During the voyage he was apparently a passenger on one of the cargo vessels, along with Dror Feiler and the Swedish writer Henning Mankell (who writes crime thrillers).

44. According to a blog which posted reports from the flotilla, Vangelis Pissias was among those who formulated the idea of surrounding the deck with barbed wire in preparation for boarding by IDF soldiers. One of the ship's passengers reported that he refused to leave the ship's wheel and was hit by IDF soldiers.<sup>12</sup> Interviewed by an Israeli correspondent, he compared the flotilla to the actions of Greece against the Nazis during the Second World War and said he "understood" Palestinian terrorism (claiming that "[t]hese people are doing what reality causes them to do."<sup>13</sup>).

<sup>12</sup> [flotillamassacrepassengers.wordpress.com](http://flotillamassacrepassengers.wordpress.com)

<sup>13</sup> Ynet, May 26, 2010.



Vangelis Pissias after the 2010 flotilla to the Gaza Strip (YouTube, May 30 2010)

45. Vangelis Pissias recently said that **despite the Egyptian decision to open the Rafah crossing, the flotilla will set sail as planned**. He claimed the "blockade" was still in effect as long as Israel controlled the Gaza Strip's air and maritime space and limited the goods which could be brought in and out (Agence France-Presse, May 30, 2011).

## Norway: Ship to Gaza Norway (STGN)



Ship to Gaza Norway

46. **Ship to Gaza Norway** is a network whose objective is to "lift the siege" of the Gaza Strip and is in favor of "nonviolent resistance" to the so-called "Israeli occupation." It claims it will send a delegation of 20 activists and a shipment of humanitarian assistance. The network is headed by **George Morland**, with deputies Stine Renate Haheim, Tom Dahle and Sunneve Elvasdottir. It collaborates with Ship to Gaza Sweden: the two networks held a solidarity meeting in March 2011 at Oslo University to enlist support for the flotilla.



A press conference held in Oslo by three Norwegian activists who were aboard the *Mavi Marmara* flotilla (newsinenglish.no website, April 28, 2011).

47. **George Morland**, interviewed by the Norwegian newspaper Aftenposten, said that he felt insecure about the flotilla. He claimed that after the confrontation aboard the *Mavi Marmara* the IDF issued pictures of weapons which had never been on the ship. He asked that a neutral group like the UN or NATO oversee the flotilla. Espen Goffeng, another Norwegian activist who participated in the *Mavi Marmara* flotilla, **said that they would not agree to their shipment of humanitarian assistance's being brought into the Gaza Strip through Egypt because that "would not mean breaking the siege."** Espen Goffen, 38, is a member of an anti-Israeli organization called Palestinkomiteen, which has branches throughout Norway.

48. **Several Norwegian politicians, especially from the Labor Party, expressed a readiness to participate in the flotilla.** The organizers feel their participation is likely to both make the flotilla seem more legitimate and moderate the IDF response. On the other hand, the Norwegian government, Parliament members and even some Labor Party activists have expressed concern that the humanitarian assistance sent to the Gaza Strip will fall into the hands of Hamas.

## Sweden: Ship to Gaza Sweden



Ship to Gaza Sweden

49. **Ship to Gaza Sweden** seeks to purchase and equip a humanitarian assistance ship to send to the Gaza Strip. According to the organizers, the assistance will be transferred to the Gaza Strip for independent apolitical organizations. Ship to Gaza Sweden has appealed for volunteers to join and/or to raise contributions by buying "sea miles" or concrete. The network issued a book and CD about the events which took place aboard the *Mavi Marmara* and sells them on its website.

50. A network called The Swedish Ship to Gaza participated in the coalition which organized the *Mavi Marmara* flotilla. There were two Swedes aboard the *Mavi Marmara*, both historians and human rights activists. Nine other Swedes sailed with the other ships.

51. Spokesman for the Swedish network is **Dror Feiler**, a Jewish leftist activist who was born in Israel (1951) and who sailed on the previous flotilla aboard the *Sfendoni 8000*. He holds Israeli citizenship and is a musician. Since 1973 he has lived in Sweden and **plays an important role in the flotilla campaign.** He was also spokesman for the previous Swedish

network and participated in the coalition's coordination meeting in Istanbul on May 16, 2011. **Dror Feiler routinely spreads anti-Israeli propaganda.** On November 7, 2010, he and Mehmet Kaplan, a member of the Swedish Green Party, both of whom participated in the *Mavi Marmara* flotilla, instituted criminal proceedings in Israel and Sweden against the so-called "IDF attack" of the ships.



Dror Feiler (left) at a press conference with Huwaida Arraf during her visit to Sweden on August 4, 2010. Huwaida Arraf (right) is a senior figure in the coalition organizing the flotillas. Between them is Vangelis Pissias, a Greek activist who plays a central role in the flotilla campaign (tripolipost.com website, August 10, 2010).

## France: Un Français Bateau pour Gaza



Un Bateau Français pour Gaza

52. **Un Bateau Français pour Gaza** is a French network established for the flotilla, **composed of several dozen French organizations.** Its website **enlists contributions for a French ship planned to set sail from Marseille.** As of May 19, 2011, 172 signatures had been collected. Among the passengers there will apparently be members of political parties and trade unions.

53. The network holds events throughout France to purchase or rent a French boat and buy humanitarian equipment for the Gaza Strip. In May 2011 it held a number of fundraising and solidarity events in various locations in France, holding a soccer tournament for the Gaza Strip, showing films about the Gaza Strip, organizing musical evenings, bicycle trips, etc. (according to the network website).

## Denmark: Free Gaza Movement Denmark



Free Gaza Movement Denmark

54. **Free Gaza Movement Denmark** is a network established in 2010 to "break the siege" of the Gaza Strip. According to its website, **its members will sail aboard a ship called the *Tahrir*** ("Liberation," named after Tahrir Square in Egypt). The network is part of the FGM umbrella organization.

## Networks, Organizations and Activists in North America

### The United States: US Boat to Gaza



US Boat to Gaza

55. Eleven Americans participated in the *Mavi Marmara* flotilla (three aboard the *Mavi Marmara* itself). Prominent among the American participants were senior FGM activists Huwaida Arraf and Greta Berlin.

56. **US Boat to Gaza** is a coalition of anti-Israeli organizations and activists established to participate in the upcoming flotilla. **The coalition plans to launch a ship called *The Audacity of Hope*, which will fly the American flag. Many of its activists are Jewish.** The coalition's activists claim that the ship will be in a unique position to deal with American foreign policy and ensure an international commitment to preserve international law and



human rights. The flotilla participants stated they would not use violence and that the ship's cargo would be open to international inspection.<sup>14</sup>



Raising money in the United States for the flotilla (ActiveStills, May 19, 2011; [occupiedpalestine.wordpress.com](http://occupiedpalestine.wordpress.com) website)

57. According to Jane Hirschmann, one of the organizers, **the American boat will carry 66 passengers, among them students, artists, nurses, media personnel, movie producers, lawyers, academicians**, etc. She said they would not be armed and would not behave violently. The ship's cargo, she said, would be composed mainly of letters from thousands of American citizens expressing solidarity with the residents of the Gaza Strip ([occupiedpalestine.wordpress.com](http://occupiedpalestine.wordpress.com) website, May 19, 2011).

58. The US Boat website asks for signatures in support of the Gaza Strip from organizations and individuals. The network also holds events to raise money and prepare the propaganda groundwork for participation in the flotilla: on May 31 an event was held to commemorate the anniversary of the *Mavi Marmara* flotilla; participants were asked to bring Turkish or Palestinian flags with them. The US Boat Facebook page has been friended by more than 5,500 people. **In February 2011 the organizers stated that they had already raised €300,000 in donations. According to Jane Hirschmann, it was possible for them to buy a boat and were looking for one in Europe** which could carry between 40 and 60 passengers ([fjfp.com](http://fjfp.com) website, February 22, 2011).

59. For their organizational needs the network set up a number of "work groups" to deal with specific aspects of the flotilla: requests, obtaining authorizations, legal issues, the media, fundraising, etc. ([fjfp.com](http://fjfp.com) website, February 22, 2011).

60. The organizers included ([fjfp.com](http://fjfp.com) website, February 22, 2011):

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<sup>14</sup> Another American network, the Free Palestine Movement (FPM), headed by Dr. Paul Larudee, is also making preparations for the flotilla, contacting its organizations and activists. However, to date its name has not appeared on the lists on the websites of IHH or US Boat to Gaza.

1) **Jane Hirschmann**: A Jewish psychotherapist. Member of **Jews Say No** in New York City. For the past four years has participated in "anti-war" activities. Coauthored three books.

2) **Nell Hirschmann-Levy**: Teaches sociology in an experimental high school in New York City. Studied at Brown University in California where she dealt with social justice. Active in establishing young leadership in global movements.

3) **Nic Abramson**: Member of **Middle East Crisis Response**, a group of civilians who united to support the human rights of the Palestinians and end what they call America's "aggressive" policies in the Middle East.

4) **Laurie Arbeiter**: Calls herself a "peace activist." In December 2010 she was ejected from a New York gallery with three other activists for wearing a T-shirt reading "US Boat to Gaza." Part of the organization's "response team." Active in organizing fundraising events for the flotilla.



Laurie Arbeiter ejected from the Gagosian Gallery in New York  
(<http://thelede.blogs.nytimes.com>, December 27, 2010)

5) **Lisa Fitan**: Resides in Texas. Member of **Alliance for Community Trainers**. In January 2010 she demonstrated in Cairo at the Israeli embassy to show solidarity with the Palestinians and to lift the so-called "siege" of the Gaza Strip. Confronted Egyptian police.

6) **Felice Gelman**: Member of WESPAC (the Westchester Peace and Justice Coalition) Foundation. **Since 2005 she has been active in boycotting Israel in collaboration with BDS**, a global organization boycotting Israel as part of the delegitimization campaign being waged against it. In June 2009 she went to the Gaza Strip with a delegation which brought toys for the Gazan children.

7) **Richard Levy**: Lawyer, volunteers in organizing the American end of the flotilla.

8) **Abdeen Jabara**: Lawyer specializing in human rights. Was formerly president of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Community. Extremely critical of Israeli policies in the Gaza Strip. Was one of a delegation of 80 New Yorkers who joined the aid convoy which reached the Rafah crossing and engaged in a confrontation with the Egyptian security forces in January 2010.

9) **Gail Miller**: Lives in Woodstock, New York, and belongs to the Woodstock Women in Black. Until recently worked as a teacher and social worker in Manhattan, New York City high schools. Has been active in social justice movements for many years. **Joined the ISM in the summer of 2002 and was a member of the organization's first team to the Gaza Strip.**

10) **Hannah Schwarzchild**: Jewish, lawyer, comes from Philadelphia. Active in organizations for solidarity with the Palestinians and boycotting Israel.

11) **Sarah Wellington**: Actress and political activist. Lives in Brooklyn, New York City. Participated in a convoy to the Gaza Strip in December 2009. Part of the response team of the American flotilla to the Gaza Strip.

## Canada: Canada Boat to Gaza



Canada Boat to Gaza

61. Three Canadians participated in the previous flotilla to the Gaza Strip, two of them aboard the *Mavi Marmara*. This time the anti-Israeli organizations and activists in Canada seek to enlarge the Canadians delegation.

62. **Canada Boat to Gaza** is a Canadian network involved in the upcoming flotilla. It represents itself as a private initiative of activists collaborating fully with the FGM. **The network is planning to purchase a ship and call it *Tahrir*** (apparently a joint purchase

with other organizations). According to the organizers, they need \$300,000 to cover the cost of the ship and crew, not including the humanitarian assistance which is supposed to be delivered to the Gaza Strip. The network holds fundraising events throughout Canada. As of this writing, 1,172 people had friended it on Facebook.

63. On its way back, the Canadian ship, in collaboration with the Palestinians, expects to take exports with it from the Gaza Strip. According to the organizers, **even if the Rafah crossing is freely open, the ship will continue on course to the port of Gaza, because the objective of its voyage is to open the port to free passage.**

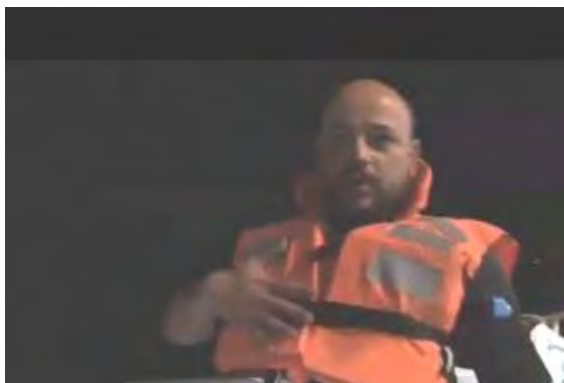
64. According to the organizers, **there will be between 45 and 50 Canadian passengers** aboard the ship, representatives of Canada's multicultural population (including public figures and media personnel). The organizers have stated that they have taken into consideration that Israel will confiscate the vessel, and **should that happen they expect the Canadian government to intervene.** They say that it will be illegal for Israel to attack the ship because it is Canadian, and therefore the Canadian government will protect the passengers.

65. The Canadian network includes the following activists:

1) **Dr. Farid Iyad:** From Toronto, president and head of the board of trustees of the Palestinian cultural center (Palestine House).

2) **Ruth Breen:** Canadian Union of Postal Workers activist. The CUPW displays solidarity with the "Palestinian cause."

3) **Farooq Shehzad Burney:** Born 1972, resides permanently in Qatar. Head of a Qatar-based organization called **Al-Fakhoora**, whose declared objective is to ensure freedom of study for students in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip. He was aboard the *Mavi Marmara*, claiming that he sailed to deliver computers to the universities in the Gaza Strip (gazafлотillasurvivors.posterous.com website, June 3, 2010).



Farooq Shehzad Burney aboard the Mavi Marmara (fakhoora.org website)

4) **Stephan Corriveau**: Human rights activist from Montreal. Holds an MA in international relations, one of the founders of an organization called Alternatives.

5) **Kim Elliot**: From Ottawa. Writer, researcher, publisher. Active in a number of social and human rights causes. Founding member of the Canadian Palestinian Education Exchange (CEPAL). Active for a number of years in organizing aid convoys.

6) **Bassem Amara**: From Toronto. Active in the Palestinian cause, participated in a convoy to the Gaza Strip in December 2009. Develops and designs Internet projects.

7) **Jeff Halper**: Born 1946, holds Israeli citizenship. Anthropologist, writer, lecturer and political activist. For years has opposed Israel's Palestinian policies. In 2008 participated in a flotilla to the Gaza Strip. On May 6, 2011, participated in a press conference held by the network.

## Organizations in Asia

### Asia: Asia to Gaza



Asian People's Solidarity for Palestine

66. **Asia to Gaza** is affiliated with the **Asian People's Solidarity for Palestine (ASPS)** network, whose objective is to "break the siege" of the Gaza Strip. The APSP is hostile to Israel, rejects Israel's legitimacy, and supports the so-called "resistance" (i.e., terrorism). **It is based in India but has activists from other Asian countries.** The APSP is affiliated with the FGM.

67. According to its website, its member organizations are NGOs and it has individual activists from India, Pakistan, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, New Zealand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Kuwait and the UAE. Its activists are variously Muslim, Christian, Jewish, Hindu, Sikh and Buddhist. Past experience (the Asian flotilla dispatched to the Gaza Strip in December 2010) has shown that **the network is made up of activists who belong to the extreme left, radical Islam,**

human rights and social organizations, and separatists from various Indian states.<sup>15</sup>



Left: Iranian president Ahmadinejad speaks before the members of the Asian convoy on its way through Iran to the Gaza Strip (Mehr News Agency, Iran, December 13, 2010). Right: Burning the American and British flags during a ceremony held in the convoy's honor, held in Palestine Square in the heart of Tehran (IRNA News Agency, December 14, 2010).

68. **One prominent APSP activist is Feroze Mithilborwala**, a human rights and social causes activist from Mumbai, who is also head of the FGM's Indian branch. He was a leftist and is now active in Muslim causes. In July 2009 he was arrested in Mumbai during a visit of American Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. He is hostile to Israel and supports Palestinian terrorism. In January 2011, after the Asian convoy entered the Gaza Strip, he was interviewed by Al-Awda, the monthly magazine of the Palestinian Return Centre (PRC), a British-based organization affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas. The interview was titled "**Israel will fall and the Palestinians will return to their lands.**" He made it clear that the convoy's objective had not been to reach the Gaza Strip but "all Palestine," and that "**Gaza was only the first stop.**" He also appealed to the "residents of Palestine" "**to continue the resistance** [i.e., terrorist attacks], because the path of resistance is spreading around the globe..."

## Indonesia: Ship to Gaza Indonesia

69. We have no information about the organizations and activists in this network. Twelve Indonesians sailed participated in the *Mavi Marmara* flotilla, volunteers and members of pro-Palestinian NGOs.

<sup>15</sup> For further information about the ASPs, see the December 12, 2010 ITIC bulletin, [A convoy from India and other Asian countries left New Delhi to reach the Gaza Strip at the end of December. Among the participants are extreme leftist and Islamic activists who were joined by human rights activists. The convoy has links to FGM, which plays a central role in organizing flotillas](#)

## Malaysia: Malaysian Humanitarian Sail



Malaysian Humanitarian Sail

70. The **Malaysian Humanitarian Sail** is a network composed of several NGOs collaborating to participate in the flotilla. It is supported by local, Palestinian and Muslim organizations. It operates through the FGM, the Turkish IHH, the Indonesian MERC and KISPA, and a number of other NGOs in various parts of the world.

71. Registration for the flotilla is carried out at the offices of an **organization called Haluan**, an Islamic NGO whose activists were prominent aboard the *Mavi Marmara*. The organization was established in 1988, and its name is the Malaysian acronym of The Coalition of Graduates of Higher Institutions of Malaysia. The organization has a Palestinian wing headed by Noorazman Mohamad Samsuddin. Website registration refers to the *Mavi Marmara*, so it can be assumed that this time as well the Malaysian activists will sail aboard the same ship.