



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

June 12, 2011

## **Changes in the Nature and Schedule of the African Aid Convoys to the Gaza Strip Update, June 12, 2011**

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### **Overview**

1. According to updated information, **changes were recently made in the route, schedule and nature of the South African convoy to the Gaza Strip**, which was supposed to depart during the third week of June 2011. **The convoy was initiated by two anti-Israeli Muslim organizations operating in South Africa: Al Quds Foundation and the Muslim Judicial Council (MJC)**. They were joined by other Muslim organizations, broadcasting stations, charitable societies, universities, colleges and Muslim schools in South Africa.<sup>1</sup>
2. **The main changes were the following: Fewer vehicles will participate in the convoy and the route has been changed to avoid passing through Sudan and Kenya**, where political tensions and concern for the safety of the convoy led to a change in plans. In addition, **the departure of the land convoy has been delayed** (it will not leave South Africa before the end of July), and **it was suggested that some of the**

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<sup>1</sup> For further information see the May 1, 2011 ITIC bulletin, [An aid convoy to the Gaza Strip is being organized in South Africa by two anti-Israeli Islamic organizations](#)

**participants and cargo be flown from Durban to Alexandria on August 20. The cargo ship is supposed to set sail from the port of Durban on July 15 and reach Alexandria on August 18.**

3. In addition, another aid convoy is being organized by a South African NGO called the South African Relief Agency (SARA)<sup>2</sup> and was expected to leave for the Gaza Strip in the coming weeks; its departure has been delayed.

## **The South African Aid Convoy to the Gaza Strip – Update**

4. According to the original plan, the South African convoy would pass through several African countries on its way to the Gaza Strip: Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi, Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Sudan and Egypt, and from there to the Gaza Strip; the humanitarian assistance would be sent by sea.

5. According to the convoy's Facebook page and radio broadcasts made by its organizers, the following changes have been made:

1) **The overland route to the Gaza Strip has been changed:** According to the organizers, **logistical issues and political unrest in a number of African countries such as Kenya and Sudan** led to a change of plans. The chief organizer, Maulana Hendricks, said that contacts had been made with the authorities in Sudan, where political tension exists between north and south and where confrontations have been renewed. He said that the convoy organizers had been **warned off by the authorities, who said they could not be responsible for the safety of the convoy participants. The authorities in Kenya also said that because of local tension they were concerned about the convoy's safety.** In view of the situation, **the number of convoy vehicles has been limited and will pass through fewer countries on their way to Egypt** (Facebook, June 9, 2011).

2) **The convoy's departure has been postponed:** In view of the change in route, the date of departure has apparently been delayed and **the land convoy will not leave before July 29.**

3) **Some of the participants may fly from Durban to Alexandria:** It was suggested that they fly to Alexandria to receive the cargo and arrive with it in the Gaza Strip. In that case, **a flight would leave Durban for Cairo on August 20.**

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<sup>2</sup> SARA is an NGO established in Durban, South Africa, in 2006. It carries out humanitarian activities locally and in foreign countries, avowedly collaborating with local governments and international humanitarian organizations. In July 2010 a SARA delegation went to the Gaza Strip.

## 6. Additional information:

1) **Humanitarian assistance:** The ship carrying the humanitarian assistance will set sail from the port of Durban on July 15. According to the organizers, negotiations with a Durban shipping company have been finalized. The voyage will take 33 days and **reach the port of Alexandria on August 18**. The cargo will be transported to El Arish and from there to the Rafah crossing. The organizers are planning a mass rally at the port of Durban to see the ship off.

2) **Number of participants:** According to the organizers, 75 activists have already signed up for the overland convoy. However, they have also had difficulties in **enlisting participants, primarily because of the high cost of participation** (expenses run to 12,500 rand, about \$1,800). The organizers are still trying to enlist more participants.

3) **Illness of Maulana Hendricks, the most prominent figure organizing the convoy:** For several months Maulana Ihsaan Hendricks was ill and was eventually hospitalized. He was discharged on June 2, 2011. His illness apparently did not prevent him from making preparations for the convoy. **Despite his illness, last month he was elected chairman of Al Quds Foundation for a second term** (Al-Quds website, June 9, 2011).



Maulana Ihsaan Hendricks (picture from Al Quds Foundation website, June 9, 2011).

## Another South African Convoy

7. **Another convoy is being organized, this one by an NGO called the South African Relief Agency (SARA)**, in collaboration with other organizations. It was supposed to depart on May 15 (Nakba Day) but did not, nor on the next appointed date, June 12.<sup>3</sup> The actual date of departure is still unknown. One of the reasons for the delay is apparently **the**

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<sup>3</sup> SARA made preparations for a ceremony to be held at the Durban City Hall on June 12, the proposed date of the convoy's departure. Invited to attend were **Archbishop Desmond Tutu**, the governor of the KwaZulu-Natal province, Dr. Zwele Mkhize, Ali, Halimeh, the Palestinian ambassador to South Africa, and the mayor of Durban, James Nxumal. **The ceremony did not take place.**

**difficulties in coordinating entrance into the Gaza Strip with the Egyptian authorities.** It would not be the first time a SARA aid convoy reached the Gaza Strip. In July 2010 a SARA delegation visited the Gaza Strip.

8. On June 9 the SARA website posted a notice stating that because of delays in the receipt of official authorization [i.e., from the Egyptians] for some of the vehicles, the convoy's departure would be postponed, as would the official sendoff at city hall. A new date has not yet been set.



One of the convoy vehicles (picture from the SARA website, June 9, 2011).