

eventually marrying a Turkish woman.¹⁰⁵ However, other media reports say he first came to Turkey in 1983.¹⁰⁶ He later became head of the SANTRAL company that describes itself as “supplying products and goods from Turkish and international markets and marketing them in the Arab world.”¹⁰⁷ Shortly after joining MÜSIAD, sometime in 1999 or 2000, Mr. Misirli became a trustee of the European Trust, a part of the Federation of Islamic Organizations in Europe (FIOE), known to be the umbrella group representing the Muslim Brotherhood in Europe.¹⁰⁸ The Trust describes itself as a “*Waqf*,” an Arabic term meaning a religious endowment in the form of a property earning revenues, as regulated by Islamic law. Since renamed the “Europe Trust,” the organization has amassed a real-estate portfolio of income-earning properties, a small portion of which has been used to fund FIOE or FIOE member-organization projects. At the time Mr. Misirli joined the Trust, as well as at the present, the other trustees included some of the most important Muslim Brotherhood leaders in Europe, such as Ibrahim El-Zayat, the leader of the German Muslim Brotherhood, and Fouad Alaoui, one of the leaders of the French Muslim Brotherhood.¹⁰⁹ Illustrative of Mr. Misirli’s close connections to the current Turkish government, in April 2009 he offered on an online forum to forward letters to the office of Prime Minister Erdogan.¹¹⁰

IHH – A Politicized Charity

By late 2002, the Turkish charity known as IHH was showing clear signs that it was not only a humanitarian operation but also a highly politicized Islamic NGO. IHH had been founded in 1995 by individuals who were operating in the Balkans during the conflict in the early 1990s. These individuals said that they had continued their efforts during the Chechen war and wished to “deliver humanitarian aid to all people and take necessary steps to prevent any violations against their basic rights and liberties.”¹¹¹ As early as 1998, links could be observed between IHH and the Global Muslim Brotherhood. According to media reports from that time, the Ankara Directorate of the Police had confiscated important documents showing links between an NGO dealing with foreign university graduates, IHH, the International Federation of Islamic Student Organizations (IIFSO), and the Refah Party.¹¹²

In addition, a US federal agent testified that he had found various correspondences dating from 1999-2002 at the Success Foundation, indicating that IHH had received substantial donations from both the Success Foundation and the IIRO for use in “relief and charity work” as well as for humanitarian aid to the Chechen refugees in Georgia and Azerbaijan.¹¹³ The former president of the Success Foundation was US Muslim Brotherhood leader Abdul Rahman Alamoudi, later convicted in a plot to murder Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah on behalf of Libyan leader Muammar al-Gaddafi.¹¹⁴ The US agent also testified that contact information for IHH and its director was found in the Palm Pilot of US Brotherhood leader Alamoudi.

Since that time, IHH has expanded its work beyond Muslim war zones to operations in 120 countries, including humanitarian assistance in disaster zones such as the Haiti earthquake and Hurricane Katrina.¹¹⁵ IHH currently maintains strong ties to the AKP, and many of its board members are AKP officials.¹¹⁶ The BBC has further reported that IHH “has strong sympathy” among the AKP and raises some of its money from unidentified Islamic religious groups.¹¹⁷ According to Israeli media reports, while IHH says it has no ties to the AKP, the organization says it is funded by donations only and that the money comes mainly from Turkey’s religious businessmen, the same social class that supported Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan’s bid for power.¹¹⁸ As discussed elsewhere in this report, the Turkish Islamist organization known as



The Roots of the IHH

Bosnian government soldiers of the 7th Muslim Brigade parade during the celebration of the third anniversary of the Bosnian Army Third Corps in Zenica, Bosnia, on December 10, 1995. IHH founders served in the 7th Brigade along with Arab veterans of the war against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. (AP Photo/Enric F. Marti)

MÜSIAD is known to represent Turkey's religious businessmen, and IHH reporting strongly suggests that MÜSIAD is a major funder of IHH. For example, in September 2006, IHH reported that it had constructed two health centers in Kashmir with the contributions of MÜSIAD.¹¹⁹

However, there are also multiple intelligence reports about the ties between IHH and terrorist groups, beginning with a 1996 NATO intelligence report that listed IHH as one of several charities suspected of providing support for terrorist groups in Bosnia.¹²⁰ According to Bosnian intelligence, IHH founder/board member Osman Atalay and IHH founder Hakan Bogoclu had been part of the Bosnian Army's 7th Muslim Brigade, described as "an umbrella for several hundred foreign Mujaheddin known at the time for their Islamist fervor."¹²¹ In 1996, French police, investigating an attempted car bombing in the city of Lille, found that key suspects had IHH contacts. In addition, a French intelligence report cited multiple instances of *jihadi* activity by IHH during the mid-1990s:

- » Turkish authorities started a criminal investigation of IHH in December 1997 when sources revealed that leaders of IHH were purchasing automatic weapons from other regional Islamic militant groups. IHH's bureau in Istanbul was searched, and its local officers were arrested. Security forces discovered "disturbing items," including firearms, explosives, bomb-making instructions, and a "*jihadi* flag." Based on seized documents, Turkish authorities concluded that "detained members of IHH were going to fight in Afghanistan, Bosnia, and Chechnya."
- » IHH President Bulent Yildirim conspired in the mid-1990s to "recruit veteran soldiers in anticipation of the coming holy war [*jihadi*]. Men were sent into war zones in Muslim countries in order to acquire combat experience." In hopes of

“obtaining political support from these countries, financial aid was transferred [on behalf of IHH], as well as caches of firearms, knives, and pre-fabricated explosives.”

- » IHH’s phone records in Istanbul showed repeated telephone calls in 1996 to an al-Qaeda guesthouse in Milan and various Algerian terrorist operatives active elsewhere in Europe – including Abu el-Ma`ali, who has been referred to by US officials as a “junior Osama Bin Laden.”

It has also been reported by Turkish media that during the 2003 Iraq War, IHH sent donations and aid to insurgent-dominated areas.¹²² In fact, IHH had representatives on the ground in Fallujah during mid-2004, when the Iraqi city was still under the control of al-Qaeda \Iraq and former Baathists.¹²³



Overt IHH Humanitarian Efforts

Victims of Yemen floods receive food and blankets in humanitarian aid distributed by Turkey’s Foundation for Human Rights and Freedom and Humanitarian Relief (IHH) in Mukalla, Yemen, in November 2008.

In perhaps the most noteworthy of these reports about IHH and terrorism, a French magistrate testified in a US District Court that IHH had played “[a]n important role” in the al-Qaeda Millennium bomb plot targeting Los Angeles International Airport (LAX).¹²⁴

The IHH also acknowledges its heavy support of Gaza including aid to orphans, known to be associated with support of Hamas.¹²⁵ The IHH says it funds more than 9,000 orphans in Gaza, many of whom were acknowledged by an IHH spokesman to be the children of Hamas members who died. The IHH says it spent nearly \$25 million delivering aid to Gaza from 2005 to 2009.¹²⁶ It should also be noted that according to the Israeli government, IHH is a member of the Union of Good, a coalition of Islamic charities headed by Global Muslim Brotherhood leader Youssef Qaradawi, which raises funds for Hamas.¹²⁷ The Union of Good is both banned by Israel and designated by the US as a terrorist organization.¹²⁸

The accusations of ties between IHH and terrorist groups notwithstanding, more important for this report is the evidence that IHH is a politicized NGO rather than a purely humanitarian organization. This politicization can first be observed in December 2002, when a Turkish news agency reported that the imam of the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the chairman of the Social Aid Foundation came to Turkey as the guests of the IHH. They were reported to have visited Felicity Party (SP) leader Recai Kutan and the Palestinian Ambassador in Ankara, Fuad Yaseen, who also attended the meeting. Kutan was reported to have said that people who were injured in incidents in Palestine had previously received medical treatment in hospitals in Turkey and called on the government to give medical treatment to injured Palestinian people again in Turkish hospitals. Kutan also said that Turkey had the biggest responsibility to solve the Palestinian problem and that the new government should be sensitive to the issue, adding, “The whole Islamic world should come together under the leadership of Turkey.” Huseyin also had a meeting with AKP deputy leader Saban Disli.¹²⁹

Since then, evidence of the politicization of IHH can be seen in numerous examples:

- » In late 2002, IHH and its leader Bulent Yildirim were reported to have played a key role in fostering anti-Western sentiment among Turkish Muslims in the run-up to the 2003 war in Iraq. By late 2002, a Danish national security think-tank report said that the IHH was “instrumental in convening large and raucous protest rallies opposed to the then-imminent effort to depose Saddam Hussein, capped off by the burning of US and Israeli flags.”
- » The same Danish think-tank reported that in mid-2004, IHH issued incendiary English-language news updates from its representatives in Fallujah, Iraq, accusing the US of shooting at ambulances and praising the Iraqi “resistance.”¹³⁰ The report also said that Yildirim characterized US military operations in the Iraqi city of Fallujah as “equally a strike on Istanbul, Ankara.”¹³¹
- » In May 2004, Yildirim was identified by AFP as one of the organizers of an Istanbul demonstration protesting against Israeli military actions in Gaza. A group of almost 800 people were reported to have gathered in front of the Fatih Mosque after prayers Friday afternoon to chant: “Israel, assassin, leave Palestine. US, murderers, leave Iraq” and to have burned an Israeli flag.¹³²
- » During a November 2004 news conference, Bulent Yildirim called on the Turkish people to boycott US, British, and Israeli goods, claiming: “The United States has been committing a massacre in Fallujah, city of Iraq.”¹³³

- » Leading another anti-US rally in Istanbul in December 2004, Bulent Yildirim told the Anatolia News Agency, “Intelligence cooperation between the United States, Britain, and Turkey must be stopped. Otherwise, we will organize actions at every consulate and, if necessary, will assemble 50,000 or 100,000 people at the US consulate.” Protestors at the December rally reportedly shouted various slogans, including, “Murderer US, get out of the Middle East” and “Long live our resistance.”¹³⁴
- » In March 2005, AFP reported that IHH was one of the organizers who called for demonstrations in memory of Chechen leader Aslan Maskhadov, slain by Russian troops. Bulent Yildirim told the crowd, “I call on all Turks to help Chechnya combat Russian imperialism.” The demonstrators chanted, “Putin, murderer, out of Chechnya,” “Free the Caucasus, neither America nor Russia,” and “Martyrs won’t die, the resistance won’t stop.”¹³⁵

In 2006, the BBC reported that the IHH website had shifted its focus largely to anti-Israeli reporting, with reports centered on the Israeli offensives against Gaza and Lebanon and protests against “Israeli brutality.” As of August 18, 2006, a click on the “Day in Palestine” box led the reader to photos that depict the treatment of Palestinians by Israeli soldiers.¹³⁶ In July 2010, the *Wall Street Journal* confirmed that IHH had remained focused on Islamic issues, and Gaza in particular.

Muslim-focused causes and conflicts remain at the core of its work. On a recent day, four of the first six projects listed on the IHH’s Web site were Islam-specific – two for building mosques, one for refurbishing a Quranic school, and another for translating and publishing key Islamic texts into Cambodia’s Khmer language. The IHH has focused on Gaza in recent years.¹³⁷

This shift to a Gaza focus is confirmed by a search of the IHH website, which reveals dozens of reports on Gaza projects as well as anti-Israeli political activities.¹³⁸

■ Jamal Kerim – Second MB Leader Emerges

During this period, a second Turk of Arabic origin was emerging as a leader of the Turkish/MB network.

Sometime in 2003, an organization was founded known as HIKMET Bilim Dostluk ve Yardımlaşma Derneği (Wisdom Science Society of Friendship and Solidarity), referred to in this report as HIKMET and known to be the Turkish member organization of the Federation of Islamic Organizations in Europe (FIOE).¹³⁹

HIKMET is headed by Jamal Kerim, also known by his Turkish name Cemalettin Kerim. Mr. Kerim, who was 40 years old in July 2009, was born in Palestine but has lived in Turkey for 29 years, holds a Turkish passport, and received a degree in “Electrics and Electronics” from Boğaziçi University.¹⁴⁰ He is also the head of a business known as KERİM DIŞ TİC.VE TURİZM LTD.ŞT. (Kerim Tourism and Travel), which is also listed as an export business dealing in a wide variety of products shipped primarily to Middle Eastern countries but also to Kosovo, Turkmenistan, Nigeria, Zambia, and the US. In January 2005, Turkish media identified Jamal Kerim as the Commissioner of the MÜSIAD Foreign Relations division.¹⁴¹

In late June 2005, HIKMET hosted the 15th annual session of the European Council for Fatwa and Research (ECFR), the theological arm of FIOE, headed by Global Muslim Brotherhood leader Youssef Qaradawi. The meeting was held at an Istanbul hotel