

**TO THE EDITOR OF THE NEW YORK TIMES**

DRAWER : IHH – Human Rights and Freedoms Humanitarian Relief Foundation

ATTORNEY : Uğur YILDIRIM

SUBJECT : This is to notify and demand the correction of a published article that contains inaccurate remarks about my client.

REMARKS :

The article published in the 16 July 2010 edition of your newspaper and entitled “Sponsor of Flotilla Tied to Elite of Turkey” contained unsubstantiated, almost slanderous, and fabricated comments (!) that aim to damage the public image of my client **foundation**, and misinformed the public opinion on the issue.

The representatives of your newspaper in Turkey Dan Bilefsky and Sebnem Arsu had a three-hour long interview with Huseyin Oruç, a senior executive of the IHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation, about the Foundation and the Gaza aid flotilla project. However, the article included misinterpretation of points raised in the interview and even false information that did not transpire during the interview.

As per international and national legislations “A person claiming certain content is in violation of his rights has the right to demand from content provider the removal of at issue content and the publication of his response.”

The publication of unsubstantiated and not thoroughly researched claims in a respectable newspaper like The New York Times and the misrepresentation of my client the IHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation to the world public opinion have forced us to send you the following corrections. We want to believe that press will always stand by the truth. My client reminds you that you can directly reach the foundation to receive accurate information in any subject related to the foundation and we believe that hearing the foundation’s opinion before publishing anything will contribute to accurate briefing of public. For aforementioned reasons, we request the publication of the following correction text with the reservation of all our legal rights.

Uğur Yıldırım  
Attorney at Law

## **RESPONSE AND CORRECTION TEXT**

The Human Rights and Freedoms Humanitarian Relief Foundation (IHH) was established with the intention of helping, without any exception, needy people anywhere in the world. It is a fully independent international relief foundation free from all kinds of political links. The IHH has not supported or been a part of any project which constitutes a crime in the Turkish and international law. The IHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation is regularly controlled by the relevant institutions of the Turkish Republic. As dictated by our transparency policy, all sections of our projects are also open to public inspection. The entire funding of the IHH comes from civil society. The IHH is funded neither by the Turkish government nor by any other governments. Most of our donors usually belong to lower and middle class.

We took part in the humanitarian aid flotilla organized to deliver relief supplies to the Gazan people, who have been harmed by the three-year long embargo on the Gaza Strip, and to draw world's attention to their plight. Dozens of men, women, youngsters and elderly people with different religions, languages, races and nationalities had joined the campaign for the pure sake of a humanitarian action. There were also a number of lawmakers from a number of countries among the participants. Several Turkish political parties released statements supporting our campaign, but no lawmaker from any party applied to take part.

Our foundation met all official formalities to ship humanitarian aid in boats, had all the relief materials checked by Turkish customs authorities, and the participants were allowed to board the boat after all their personal luggage had been thoroughly searched.

Our boats came under attack in stark violation of the applicable international laws while sailing in the international waters 72 miles from the Israeli waters. Eight Turkish citizens and one American citizen were killed, over 50 activists were severely wounded, and all the activists were taken to Israeli prisons. The detainees were held incommunicado and were denied the right to learn about ongoing developments. As the entire world has mobilized in reaction to Israeli perpetration of crimes against humanity against the humanitarian mission, the stance of the Turkish government to stand by the activists is nothing but one of its fundamental obligations. Any government is obliged to do the same in such a situation.

Although almost all the comments stated in the article are in contrary to the facts, we respect it as we are committed to freedom of expression. However, we would like to share with your readers certain points that show unsubstantiated claims have been made in the article to defame our foundation.

- The Mavi Marmara boat was not purchased from Ulaştırım A.Ş., which IHH Executive Board member Ali Yandır is assistant manager of, but from İstanbul Deniz Otobüsleri A.Ş. for 1,370,000 USD in a public auction open to any bidder.

- There is nobody named Mehmet Emin Şen that is tasked in any unit of our foundation or authorized to act as legal representative of the foundation.
- All our executive board members named in the article became trustees of the foundation long years before AK Party was founded.
- We have no affiliation other than the similarity of acronym with “Internationale Humaniterien Hilfs Organizatione” that has been banned by the German Interior Ministry. This fact has been substantiated with a court verdict and announced in the press. You can reach detailed information on the subject at the following link: <http://www.ihh.org.tr/ihh-insani-yardim-vakfi-ndan-yazili-aciklama--almanya-daki-ihh-nin-bizimle-ilgisi-yok/en/>

The news article at issue has been written not to inform the public opinion but to target the IHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation and its activities. We announce to the public opinion, with the reservation of all our legal rights, that the article that is not supported with any concrete evidence and aims to defame my client foundation and its activities in a discourse incompatible with journalism ethics is inaccurate.

**On behalf of the Human Rights and Freedoms  
Humanitarian Relief Foundation  
Attorney Uğur Yıldırım**