

# London-based ' Hamas operative' behind Greta Thunberg's Gaza flotilla

From [the Telegraph](#)

A man accused of being “a Hamas operative” based in London is a key figure behind Greta Thunberg’s Gaza-bound aid boat, it emerged on Monday.

Zaher Birawi, who was described in Parliament as a person with links to Hamas, called himself a “founding member” of the Freedom Flotilla International Coalition, which arranged the voyage by the aid boat Madleen.

Israeli forces [boarded and seized the boat](#) on Sunday, detaining the 12 pro-Palestinian activists it was carrying, including Ms Thunberg,

Mr Birawi, a Palestinian-British journalist at an Arabic-language satellite TV channel in London, was at the launch of the Madleen a week ago, livestreaming it from its dock in Sicily. Ms Thunberg gave a speech before the boat set sail for Gaza.

In 2013, Mr Birawi was named by Israel as a Hamas operative in Europe, and is the head of the Europol Forum, which Israel designated as a terrorist organisation in 2021. The Europol Forum has strongly denied any terror links



Zaher Birawi, pictured addressing pro-Palestinian demonstrators outside Downing Street in 2018. Credit: Mark Kerrison/Alamy Stock Photo

Speaking in the Commons in October 2023, Christian Wakeford, the Labour MP for Bury South, [used parliamentary privilege](#) to name 63-year-old Mr Birawi as a Hamas operative living in Barnet, north London.

“He is listed as a trustee of a UK-registered charity, Education Aid for Palestinians, and publicly available video shows him hosting a 2019 event in London titled Understanding Hamas,” Mr Wakeford told MPs.

Mr Birawi was photographed in 2012 with Ismail Haniyeh, the former Hamas leader [who was assassinated](#) last year by an explosive device suspected to have been placed by Israeli agents in his guest house in Tehran.

Mr Birawi wrote of the Madleen mission earlier this month: “It carries a message of solidarity with Gaza, a message of defiance and determination to continue popular efforts to break the Israeli blockade of the Gaza Strip.”