ISLAMIC RELIEF USA

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PARTNERSHIP





THE CYCLE OF LOVE: IT STARTS WITH YOU!

INTERVIEW WITH MOHAMED ASSAF • NEW CEO IS A FAMILIAR FACE • SYRIA UPDATE



Assalaamu Alaikum

Islamic Relief USA turns 21 years old this year—I guess we could say it's officially grown up. I've been fortunate to have been

on the journey with Islamic Relief for 21 years, and many of you have been on that journey with us as well. There were years of expansion, and there were times when we experienced challenges. Even in the difficult times, I believe the sincerity of our donors, staff, and volunteers—and above all, the blessings of Allah (SWT)—brought us through.

You continue to be the heart of IRUSA.

The past year alhamdulillah has been one of expansion to new places and new endeavors. Last fall, we responded for the first time to the Philippines in the wake of the terrible Typhoon Haiyan. Islamic Relief USA's disaster relief specialist joined a team of Islamic Relief specialists from four continents to plan the response, and the tents you sent covered thousands of people from the harsh elements. Your help reached remote communities far from the public eye, and it was desperately needed—families too poor to buy nails to patch together the remnants of their demolished homes were sleeping on the ground in the rain and cold air at night. They were so grateful for the shelter you sent them.

This year, we worked to bring a spirit of multifaith partnership wherever we could, including in South Africa and Central African Republic, where ethnic populations were targeted by violence. In the Central African Republic, we're working on a response with Christian organizations to help displaced people: Both Muslims and Christians have been affected by the crisis, and we're trying to bring the two together for a solution. Further south, in South Africa, we're helping keep the spirit of Nelson Mandela alive with an education project as well as support for the children's hospital being built in his name. The Nelson Mandela Children's Hospital broke ground in March 2014, on its way to becoming one of only a handful of major children's hospitals on the entire continent.

In the United States, our prayers—and our staff and trained volunteers—were with the communities that were struck by devastating tornadoes in May 2014 in Arkansas, where former President Bill Clinton personally thanked our team

for their help in his home state. Our disaster relief team is continuing to train more volunteers to respond to disasters, and this year it is beginning to teach communities about disaster preparedness as well. Beyond emergency relief work in the United States, we are also expanding our food pantry and produce distribution efforts to care for our neighbors who are struggling on a daily basis. Poverty is very real right here at home, not just overseas, and we must look out for our neighbors in need.

This year, our theme in this magazine is the cycle of love. This cycle starts with you, and involves our volunteers, our staff in the United States, our international affiliates who risk their lives to deliver your aid to those who were asking the Creator, "Who will help us?" After receiving the food, medicine and other aid you sent, they then send their love back in the form of prayers. Insha'Allah, we receive the blessings for our joint efforts, and the cycle of love continues the next time you give again. It is not just food, medicine, tents, education and development work that we have been sending for the last 21 years—this aid is wrapped in your love.

May Allah reward you for your sacrifice, dedication, and love.

Anwar Ahmad Khan

Anwar Ahmad Khan Chief Executive Officer Islamic Relief USA







THE CRISIS TOUCHES EVERY ASPECT OF LIFE

AFTER 3 YEARS OF TURMOIL:

- 63% of hospitals were damaged by and 40% were out of service. Only one doctor was left in the country for every 4,041 people.
- Nearly half of Syrians were living in hunger.
- 4.4 million were living in extreme poverty.
- Food and beverage costs had more than doubled.
- 3,000 schools were damaged or destroyed, and more than 680 more were turned into shelters.
- The school dropout rate reached 49%.

HOW YOU'VE HELPED

THE NUMBERS ARE SHOCKING. But Islamic Relief USA's donors have continued to help, one person at a time, reaching more than half a million by early 2014. The assistance provided by June 2014 included:

- 106,558 food packages
- 13,662 winter survival kits
- 28,935 baby kits
- 22,776 medical treatments
- 218 field clinics and medical sites supported inside Syria, with care also provided to refugees at 7 hospitals in Jordan
- More than \$17 million in aid total

Human Costs Mount as Syria Emergency Rages

Inside Syria in April 2014, Islamic Relief USA's Chief Executive Officer Anwar Khan visited a hospital room where three boys lay on cots.

The 18-year-old had been shot near his spine by a sniper. The other two boys, both 9 years old, had been playing near their houses when an airplane roared overhead, dropping bombs that shattered into shreds of pain. The shrapnel pierced the stomach and chest of one, and sliced into the other one from his eyes to his feet.

The more badly injured 9-year-old writhed in pain and reached for his injured eyes, but stopped short before touching them—he must have known it would hurt more. Traumatized, lying in bed with his eyes closed, he called out "Yalla, yalla!"—meaning "Come on, let's go!"

"This is the real cost of the war in Syria," Khan said after returning home.

This spring, the crisis in Syria turned three years old. Three years in emergency mode, with the urgency and suffering only continuing to increase. By late spring, more than 2.7 million Syrians were registered as refugees in the region, and more than 6.5 million people were displaced inside Syria.

The people you have helped included the three boys Khan visited in their hospital room in Syria. All of the supplies and some of the equipment in that hospital were provided by Islamic Relief donors.

To the three boys in that hospital room, your help meant a chance for their suffering to end ... a chance to get their life back and grow up. To their mothers and fathers, it meant easing the torture of helplessly watching your child in pain and in danger, bleeding and broken. To their communities, it meant a little relief, a little hope, a little comfort that someone cares.

To those three boys and their families—to each person you've helped and you're still helping—your support means the world.



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DISASTER RELIEF TEAM ASSISTS IN ARKANSAS

VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF REACH OUT TO NEIGHBORS IN WAKE OF TORNADO



Leigh was hiding in her closet in Vilonia, AR, on April 27, 2014, with her grown daughter—her 21-year-old son hiding in another room—when the tornado hit and shelves started falling.

"The next thing we knew, a car flew in and we flew out," she said. "Just as the tornado picked me up and carried me through the air, I watched my cat being thrown into the living room. I felt myself flying along with debris, being hit by small and large pieces of homes and who knows what else."

She thought she was taking her last breaths in the heart of the storm. The next thing she remembers is waking up in a field across the street from her home, covered in bruises, wondering frantically where her children were.

When the tornado struck, Islamic Relief USA's disaster response leaders quickly sent a team to Arkansas to help. About 15 staff members and volunteers helped set up and staff two shelters with the American Red Cross, and headed out out into the community to assess damage. Then they could begin distributing financial assistance to those who qualified. Hundreds of homes were destroyed by the storm, and 16 people were killed.

When Leigh woke up in the field, she looked down and found her daughter, covered in blood and still clinging to her ankle, which she had grabbed when the storm lifted them up. Leigh ran to a neighbor and got towels to cover her daughter's wounds, and then, to her relief, she spotted her son walking toward her, holding their cat. He had sheltered himself in their bathtub and a mattress had landed on top of him, protecting him from falling debris. He was unscathed except for a cut on his finger.

Thankfully, all three were OK, but their home was not. Leigh turned for help to the resource center where Islamic Relief USA team members were working. With her home destroyed, she qualified to receive financial assistance from IRUSA—a gift card for several hundred dollars to help her get back on her feet.

Islamic Relief USA's disaster relief team responds in communities around the United States when disaster strikes. More than 1,200 volunteers are now trained and certified through disaster response classes conducted jointly with the American Red Cross. The local Muslim community near the tornado site in Arkansas—knowing they live in Tornado Alley—is planning to host a series of classes in the coming year so they are prepared to help next time.

Islamic Relief is also beginning now to offer disaster preparedness classes in addition to the disaster response certification, so families and individuals know how to prepare themselves for weather events or other crises. A booklet is available as well.

MORE U.S. PROGRAMS



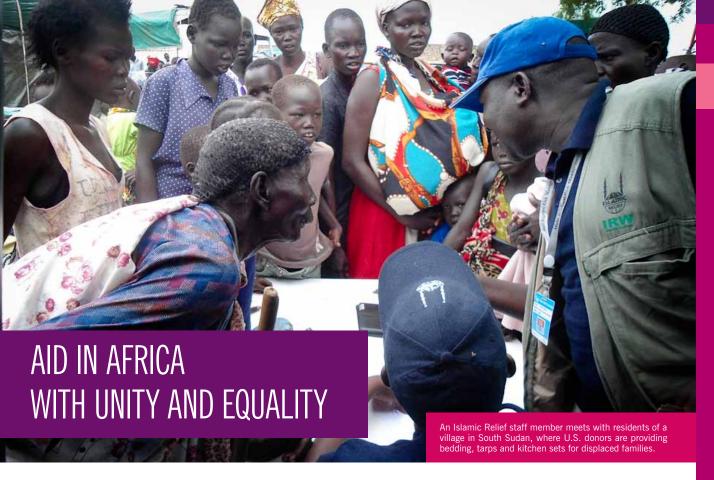
Islamic Relief USA is continuing to expand its services in the United States in 2014 with more food distribution, financial literacy training and a new program teaching disaster preparedness.

IRUSA distributed about 50,000 pounds of produce by early in the second quarter of 2014. The fresh produce included lettuce, greens, potatoes, sweet potatoes and apples, valued at about \$70,000.

IRUSA's financial literacy program expanded with three employees hired through a federal grant called VISTA. The new employees are working to collect data on the community and their needs, and to expand the program, which teaches Americans about financial literacy and matches their savings.

Leigh was grateful for the assistance she received. With help from Islamic Relief USA donors when she needed it most, she can move forward and begin to rebuild.

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Islamic Relief doesn't just care about people's physical needs, we also care about communities. Unity and equality are part of community health, and several of our projects are working to facilitate those critical elements.

ethnic violence is tearing communities apart. In the former, Christians are being targeted, while in the latter, Muslims are fleeing for their lives. Islamic Relief USA donors are helping in both.

In South Sudan, fighting had displaced 1.3 million people by late spring 2014, with close to 5 million in need of humanitarian assistance. Islamic Relief USA donors responded quickly May God relieve the suffering of the displaced, to provide emergency assistance to displaced and hygiene kits. Meanwhile, in the Central African Republic, where all schools were closed and more than 1 million people have been forced out of their homes, Islamic Relief is providing emergency psychosocial support and education for displaced children in three camps. Moreover, we're working on a response with a Christian aid agency to deliver that aid, in an effort to foster a spirit of reconciliation amid the heartbreaking divisions.

In South Sudan and the Central African Republic, Further south, in South Africa, the legacy of Nelson Mandela matches with the goals of Islamic Relief USA, so we're supporting the pediatric clinic being built in his name. Elsewhere in the country, Islamic Relief donors are also working to close the poverty gap that still exists 20 years after the end of apartheid by improving access to education—a key factor in overcoming poverty.

the injured, and those who have lost loved families, including bedding, tarps, kitchen sets ones, and of those who remember institutional oppression and still experience its legacy. And may He repair communities and restore love between the people's hearts—wherever people are turned against each other.

MORE PROJECTS IN AFRICA:



Somalia

The famine of 2011 is long over, but Islamic Relief donors are continuing to work in the Horn of Africa to help communities become sustainable and resilient against future climatic shocks, which are inevitable in this region of the world. In Somalia, donors are providing more new wells and latrines, along with assistance in rebuilding herds of livestock and strengthening them with vaccinations. This program is intended to help more than 70,000 people develop more secure livelihoods in good years as well as in years of drought.



Kenya

Work is ongoing in Kenya to assist refugees as well as to address long-term problems such as poor maternal health care. Donors are providing expanded health services for mothers and children in Mandera and Wajir to help save lives with proper care. Meanwhile, donors also continue to assist refugees in the Dadaab camps by providing water, health care and support for schools.

Mali

up in Mali, where donors have in recent years brought new irrigation projects that have turned the desert green and in 2013 to families in need in Zimbabwe helped families earn more stable livelihoods.

Zimbabwe

programs in 30 countries, and Zimbabwe is one of them. health care opportunities, new drinking-water systems, and Staff delivered Ramadan food packages and Qurbani meat

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MESSAGE OF THANKS FROM THE PHILIPPINES











With the ear-splitting winds of Typhoon Haiyan raging all around their little house in November 2013. Andrea hugged her son—who was frightened and unable to understand because of his disability—inside the frail walls. Suddenly, the family heard the loud crack of a tree falling on their house, and they rushed out and hid under the chicken coop, soaking wet and hugging each other to keep from being blown away.

"I could see rooftops flying out, trees blown away like plants being pulled out then thrown away," she said. "It really hurts to see trees flying out and slamming into houses. I would pray to God and ask Him, 'Please Lord, Please. That's enough...""

Finally, alhamdulillah, winds stopped, and soon your "I even think this tent is too big for only nine help was on the way.

IRUSA's Disaster Response Manager William Lea was on the ground within days to see what was needed, and he found the greatest need to be shelter. Donors immediately gave funds for IRUSA to buy tents for 1,500 families and tarps for 3,000 families, and Lea and other team members worked literally around the clock to get them there. The tents traveled by plane, then truck, then a boat and finally on tiny fishing vessels to get to isolated communities on remote islands overlooked by many other responders. The recipients—including Andrea's family deeply appreciated their strong, spacious shelters that arrived so quickly when they needed them. Her family had built a little shack with damaged



materials, but it did little to hold out wind and

"Thank you so much!" Andrea said.

Andrea's neighbor Vivian received a tent too, it allowed her family to leave the church they were sheltering in and regain some privacy. She was thrilled with the tent, saying it was roomy and well-made, and even the windows adjusted for ventilation.

people to live in, but it feels right," Andrea said.

"Everything is right with this tent. For everyone who contributed to making this possible, I would like to say thank you very much! I hope you can continue your mission to do good in helping people."

IRUSA is continuing to work in the Philippines by hiring local residents to clear debris from roads, farmland and water channels. This allows thousands of residents to earn an income while cleaning up their communities.

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RAISING OUR VOICES FOR THOSE WHO CAN'T

PUBLIC AFFAIRS TEAM SPEAKS OUT ON SYRIA AND MORE

At Islamic Relief USA, we're working toward a world where everyone has the opportunity to pursue their full potential. We strive to serve as a voice for those who cannot speak out for themselves. This is especially important when a crisis is so big that any organization's relief work is not enough to reach all of those in need. Times like these are when raising our voices in Washington, D.C., New York or Geneva matters the most.

By engaging with government agencies, nongovernmental organizations and the media, we lend our voices to some of the world's most vulnerable people. We aim to compassionately shine a light on the challenges and indignities facing our neighbors at home and around the world.

In 2014, a major focus of our attention was the international media coverage, attracted the tragic crisis in Syria. This year, again, IRUSA representatives met with U.S. government and United Nations senior officials to advocate for of a billion people. increased humanitarian access and protection of civilians. We also worked to raise public At the same time, IRUSA engaged on other topics awareness, hosting events from a vigil in

the groundbreaking #WithSyria campaign on social media. This grassroots initiative generated

attention of world leaders, and reached nearly half the population of twitter—nearly a quarter

with USAID, the State Department, and the Washington, D.C., to a Skate for Syria activity United Nations through Chief Executive Officer in Virginia, where participants shared messages Anwar Khan's appointments to the Secretary of support that we shared with the world online. of State's Working Group on Faith and Foreign Policy and USAID's Advisory Council of Voluntary The furthest-reaching event of 2014 to date was Foreign Aid. IRUSA also maintained Consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

LEADERSHIP THROUGH **PARTNERSHIP**

IRUSA could not do this work as efficiently alone. In 2014, we worked with NGO coalitions including InterAction, Crisis Action, the Interfaith Working Group on Foreign Development Assistance, and the Alliance to End Hunger. Our activities included the following:

- Sponsored the nation's Hunger Free Communities Summit, joining leading Christian and Jewish hunger advocates to speak about each faith community's response to food insecurity in America.
- Sponsored a panel for faith communities countering gender-based violence at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.
- Presented insights gained from our work at the World Bank, speaking to other faith-based organizations working on long-term development initiatives.
- Convened Muslim leaders to meet with USAID's director of faith-based and community partnerships.

Top left: Islamic Relief USA's Michelle Struck, left, joins panelists rom three faiths who spoke against gender-based violence at an

Bottom: Islamic Relief USA CEO Anwar Khan, right, and William Lea, second from right, join American Red Cross leaders to sign an agreement in Januar

RECOGNITIONS

From the White House, to the halls of the United Nations, to Capitol Hill, IRUSA brought insights from our work and our community to bear on influential discussions on domestic and international issues—speaking for you and for those we are trying together to help at home and around the world.

- When violence ravaged the Central African Republic and faith leaders from three traditions came to the White House to call on faith communities to assist those in need, Islamic Relief USA was called to the table.
- 2014 was a landmark year for our disaster response team. IRUSA became the first Muslim organization to officially partner with the American Red Cross. The dedication and hard work of our disaster response team was recognized by President Bill Clinton when we helped our neighbors struck by devastating tornadoes in Arkansas.
- IRUSA hosted Jordanian Princess Dina at our office in Alexandria, VA, to address Muslim leaders, and met with Prince El Hassan Bin Talal of Jordan. We also increased our engagement with foreign embassies and international organizations, including the Organization for Islamic Cooperation.





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NEW CEO HAS DELIVERED YOUR AID— AND YOUR MESSAGE OF LOVE—FOR TWO DECADES

It was early 1994 and young Anwar Khan-fresh out of college-was on an airplane to America, thinking he'd be there maybe three months. He'd help set up the baby organization Islamic Relief USA and then be back home in the United Kingdom by summer.

On the plane, the suffering in Bosnia weighed heavily on his heart, and the words of Surah Al-Maun repeated in his head: "Have you seen those that rejected the faith, rejected the orphan, that urge not the feeding of the needy?" (Quran 107:2) He and his colleagues at Islamic Relief back home took those words very seriously.

"We had just graduated and we wanted to help anyone in need around the world," he says. "We wanted to spread peace and goodwill to all mankind and help people around the world. I believe that everyone on the street has a right to food—why? Because Muhammad (SAW) told me so. He taught us that if your neighbor is hungry, put more water in your soup and give him some."

It's been a little more than the three months Khan was expecting: More than two decades later, he's of the people IRUSA donors have helped, who he still here, still on the journey with Islamic Relief USA. Today, he's the chief executive officer.

Khan first became involved with Islamic Relief Worldwide as a volunteer when he was in high school in 1989, and he was later hired as an employee in the United Kingdom. After coming to the United States, he's seen Islamic Relief USA He recalls speaking with refugees during an early through from its early days in a staff member's living room to an organization with seven offices, serving millions of people every year.

"I'm so grateful and honored to work here," he says. "It's been a great honor to be on this journey."

It's a journey that has taken Khan from Sarajevo to Syria in a very serious quest to help as many people as possible. He also maintains a strong focus on helping out neighbors in need here in group in Franklin, Michigan." his adopted country, the United States.

"Our job is not just to do relief work, but to return except my love." do peacebuilding, in America and other places around the world," he says. "We're bringing In the middle of that cycle of love is exactly communities together through relief and development."

Khan recalls two villages in Africa that had previously lived in conflict, working together to share a well given by Islamic Relief donors. He is also thrilled that the organization's work in the United States-including disaster relief work—helps break down stereotypes by living Islam's true teachings. In January, he signed a historic agreement with the American Red Cross to expand U.S. disaster-relief and preparedness work together.

Khan feels blessed to have met countless volunteers and donors through his work at Islamic Relief USA, and their dedication and sacrifice remain with him—from the earliest donors who gave their bus fare for the people in Bosnia, to the tiny girl who handed him her house-shaped money bank to help people in need.

Just as fresh in his mind are the faces of so many regards with deep respect and love.

Khan realized early in his career that he was in the middle of a beautiful cycle, the cycle of love—the cycle that links donors and volunteers with the people they help, the people who send back their love and their prayers.

humanitarian aid trip to a conflict zone.

"It's really hot and there's no electricity, and the women are telling me about how kids were hiding in basements and horrific things," he says. "Then I look at a box next to the bed they're sitting on and it has the Islamic Relief logo. I ask the woman, 'Do you know where this food box came from, and the ambulance outside? The ambulance came from a youth group in Canton. Michigan, and the food came from another youth

The woman replied, "I have nothing to give in

where Khan wants to be.

More About the CEO:

Anwar Khan, currently Chief Executive Officer of Islamic Relief USA, has served in many roles since co-founding the organization. Khan was born in Pakistan and grew up in England. He earned a degree in biochemistry in 1993, and began as a volunteer at Islamic Relief United Kingdom in 1989. He then moved to the United States in 1994 to be one the co-founders of Islamic Relief USA. Since then, he has aided in the organization's expansion, helping start up offices in Los Angeles and Dallas, before moving to the Virginia headquarters in 2013. His positions within the organizations have included National Development Director, Vice President of Fund Division and Vice President of Programs. He was named Chief Operating Officer in October 2013 and then Chief Executive Officer in spring 2014. In his role as CEO, he serves on the Secretary of State's Working Group on Faith and Foreign Policy and USAID's Advisory Council of Voluntary Foreign Aid (ACVFA).

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AT ISLAMIC RELIEF USA, WE GET TO SEE SOMETHING VERY SPECIAL HAPPENING.

We call it the cycle of love.

Here's how it works:

It starts with you. When you give, whether it's your time as a volunteer or your hard-earned money as a donor, Islamic Relief staff in the United States and overseas work together to reach the people that you want to help.

That's the first half of the cycle.

To complete the cycle, the people who received your help then send back to you the only things they can—their gratitude and their prayers.

What you give changes lives for the better every day. With Allah's permission, it lifts hardships, heals sicknesses, provides a safe haven, and offers hope. It shows people in the darkest days of their lives that someone remembers them—someone cares.

We strongly believe that what you receive in return is every bit as priceless.

Thank you so much for making this happen, with Allah's help and permission. May He reward you generously as the recipients ask, and may He bless you to continue helping others.

"All the time, my children and I pray to Allah that may Allah help those who helped us, even more than what they did for us."

- Zakia, Afghanistan

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From the Heart: Loving the Yateem



AT ORPHANS

Ahmad Sohail Ayam has an extra motivation to get to work every morning. Well, more like 41 extra motivations. They're the orphans he sponsors.

Ayam is from Afghanistan and so are his orphans, but that's not why he sponsors them. It's because he's seen how the poor are living there, right now in the 21st century, after decades of war. Especially the yateem—the orphans.

"There are people living in the 10th century," he said. "I saw them last year when I was there. Poor yateem live in a cave, and this is no joke."

Ayam has always put something aside for people in need, even back when he was a young security guard working two shifts, 16 hours a day. But his motivation kicked into high gear on a trip to Afghanistan more recently, when he visited an orphanage (not one run by Islamic Relief).

"I have a son, tall good-looking, young, and he's autistic, and I see how much my wife, my daughters and my other son does for this beautiful precious kid," he said. "And here was this little innocent angel who had nobody, living in this orphanage, and on top of that being disabled. It touched me."

All the children in that orphanage were disabled. And they had another thing in common—they hadn't eaten any dinner when he arrived that night.

"I said, 'Excuse me? Do you have a fridge?' They said, 'No, but here is our kitchen.' I opened pots just to see if they had anything. There was nothing in that kitchen—just a few onions, a few potatoes, but nothing even to cook for them."

He took another look at the caregiver and realized she looked weak and hungry too.

"Unexpectedly I realized that my beard was getting wet and water was dripping down my face," he said. "I've witnessed a lot of sad things, but this time the tears wouldn't stop."

"That day I swore I will do my best to support the yateem."

Ayam did some work on his own, but when an Islamic Relief representative asked him to sponsor an orphan, he agreed. And not just one. Masha'Allah, he dedicated an amount of money each month that's enough to sponsor more than 40 children.

"When I was approached by Islamic Relief and they asked me to sponsor their yateem, I felt obligated and honored to sponsor some yateem with Islamic Relief, because I believe in the management of Islamic Relief—they are dedicated and they are honest," he said. "I see what they're doing inside Afghanistan. I checked and found out that poor people do get good support from Islamic Relief."

Ayam owns a small business, but he doesn't consider himself rich. He just considers this essential.

"We as Muslims are obligated to help the yateem—to help every human being in need, but yateem are emphasized so much that I feel think that 'Wow, I did my job."

McDonald's in his neighborhood is as poor as each and every individual to su give up everything you have. If or 10, support one. At least whether the think that 'Wow, I did my job."

"I strongly believe Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) promises that when you do zakah, your money doesn't go down—totally the other way around. Every time I do something, I get something in return. Once you have a feeling for something, doing it is not that big of a deal," Ayam added. "I'm asking each and every brother and sister who reads my comments, please build that feeling inside your house. You must do something."

He built that feeling inside his home, reminding his children at the table that others were hungry, and giving them a little extra allowance to put in a charity jar every week. Recently, he found out that one of his sons, at 21 years old, is now sponsoring orphans himself, without letting anyone know.

"We as Muslims have to think of our brothers and sisters," he said. "If we don't, then who should think about it? Who should support them? If you and I get hungry, we can do something about it. At least we can go to a McDonalds. But an orphan—maybe he's a little kid who cannot walk, and there is no McDonald's in his neighborhood, and 99 percent of his neighborhood is as poor as him. I'm not asking each and every individual to support 100 or 200, to give up everything you have. If you can't afford five or 10, support one. At least when you go to bed, you think that 'Wow, I did my job."



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From the Heart: Satisfaction in Service

ALWAYS READY

Amine Bokura, 39, is one of Islamic Relief USA's disaster response team veterans. He's traveled to five states to help people recover after disasters—in Florida, Oklahoma, Mississippi, Texas and, most recently, Arkansas after a severe April 2014 tornado.

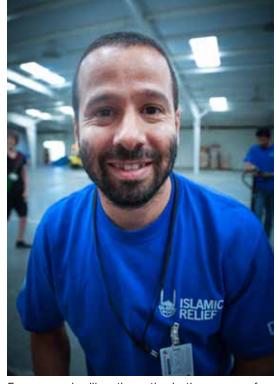
Amine works as a Software Engineer in Texas, but he always keeps an eye out for severe weather alerts and an ear out for the call from Islamic Relief USA. Trained and certified, he's ready to travel on short notice to assess damage, set up and staff shelters, distribute relief, and more.

"I find satisfaction in volunteering," he said. "It's kind of selfish; you think you are volunteering to help others, but at the end of the day you are helping yourself, too."

His favorite part is interacting with the people he's trying to help. He likes to be able to help people overcome the challenges they face after experiencing natural disasters.

"It's always a good feeling to go and help people on the ground," he said. "Volunteering for IRUSA is a great experience. It makes me feel useful to the community. This organization is all dedicated to help people in disasters, and that's what I like.

"Islamic Relief USA is a great organization," he added. "All the people I have interacted with are professional, dedicated, and they go the nine yards to help people. I like the enthusiasm I see in every single face at all levels."



Even more, he likes the enthusiastic response from the communities he's been able to help.

"One of the memories I have was when I was in Florida going between disaster areas and stopping at red lights, the people in cars beside us kept opening their windows and saying, 'Thank you,'" he said. "That's it. Those are the only words they had to say."

Amine encourages everyone to become a volunteer. "Try volunteering yourself and you will find great satisfaction in doing it," he said. "Any kind of help is going to be appreciated and it will help alleviate the suffering of people. That's what volunteering is all about."

THE DIFFERENCE YOU MAKE

Islamic Relief USA National Volunteer Coordinator Zebiba Jibreel reflects on the impact of volunteers who give their time and energy to making the world a better place.



From standing out in the freezing cold at a vigil for Syria to serving food all day at a shelter, to sitting in an office doing clerical work, I have often found myself doing boring or exhausting work—all as a volunteer. I knew that everything I was doing made a difference, but I never truly understood it until I became the volunteer coordinator at Islamic Relief.

In my role, I have come to realize how even the most minor jobs that volunteers do are absolutely essential to any nonprofit organization Volunteers are the lifeblood and the heart of our work. Volunteers save nonprofit organizations a lot of funds—funds that go to support more projects and people in need.

I often find myself wishing I could truly explain to our volunteers how dramatically they impact the world. The Syrian refugee who has a place to sleep tonight for her children; the orphan in India who can go to school; the unemployed man in Los Angeles who will receive regular medical care free of charge—these are

the fruits of our volunteers' labor. Every box packed, every chair set up at a fundraiser, every stack of papers stapled makes a difference in someone's life.

This year was the 40th anniversary of National Volunteer Week, a time that is set aside to honor our volunteers. The truth is, though, that a week is not nearly enough time to truly appreciate the impact that volunteers have on the lives of others. All around the world, there are people praying for the staff and the volunteers at Islamic Relief. All around the world there are those who will eat tonight because of paperwork that you filed, or a report that you wrote. A village will have clean water because you helped out at a fundraiser, and a man will have clean clothes because you handed him a bag full of them.

To all of our volunteers at Islamic Relief USA, we offer you our greatest and most humble thanks for the many jobs that you do. Without you, there wouldn't be IRUSA. Because of you, people who would be suffering this very day are feeling relief. Thank you all for being the heart of IRUSA, and God bless you.



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From the Heart: For Staff, It's Much More Than a Job

'Uncle' of Islamic Relief Family Gave 15 Years of Retirement to Work for Poor & for Donors

Before he joined the young organization Islamic Relief USA in 1998, Mohammed Daud had already finished an entire career. But instead of retiring to rest, pray and enjoy his grandchildren, he wanted to do more. So he flew from Texas to California to interview for a position with Islamic Relief. He wanted to help people.

"This is what our religion says—help each other," he said. "Sayyidna Usman said that if a needy person comes to you, it is a gift from Allah for you to help him."

When the office manager asked when he could start, he said, "Tomorrow." It turned out to be the most satisfying work of his life.

For 15 years, Daud worked to link donors with recipients in Islamic Relief's cycle of love. It wasn't a job—it was the employees' lives. They worked late into the night, doing whatever was needed, from picking up the mail to cleaning the bathroom. The staff called him Uncle, and he gave them fatherly lessons after each prayer. Many donors called him Uncle too, growing to feel as if they knew him over many receipts sent and questions answered. When Daud received a request for a receipt on Eid, he sent the receipt first, and then he went to the Eid prayer.



Daud retired after 15 years with Islamic Relief in 2014. In his years of work, Daud loved the other staff members, and he loved the donors, but maybe even more, he loved the recipients, and he loved knowing what the help meant to them, especially the orphans.

"Orphans—they get education, they get books, they get some medical help and a regular source of income, where there was nothing before," he said. "This is something great for them. They appreciate it."

He also recalls visiting Pakistan after the 2005 earthquake and asking a young boy who had helped his family. The boy told him Islamic Relief had helped them.

"He didn't know that I am working for Islamic Relief," he said. "This is a source of satisfaction for me, that whatever work we are doing, they are appreciating it. So we are grateful to Allah (SWT)."

And every day, he prayed for the others in the cycle of love.

"We always prayed for them," he said. "Our donors, our beneficiaries, our volunteers, our staff members."

With Daud's retirement, 15 years of work are finished. But the prayers—they remain.

Head of West Bank Office Perseveres Through Obstacles to Deliver Aid

Abdelrahim Alasa'd is right in the middle of the cycle of love, and it's not easy.

As head of mission of the Islamic Relief in the West Bank, he's one of the people receiving your gifts and handing them directly to the people who need them in some of the poorest neighborhoods of Palestine.

He and his staff endure checkpoints and roadblocks, spending all day transporting relief when it should only take an hour.

They don't work eight hours a day—often it's more like 12 or 14. On the second day of Eid al-Adha, he and staff members worked until midnight preparing and delivering the last gifts of meat sent by donors in the U.S. and elsewhere. They needed to make sure it would arrive on time, because you entrusted them with it.

They're patient through the obstacles, the indignities, even the dangers of working in an area of the world constantly simmering with instability and violence.

"No, we are not working in a quiet environment," he reflected. "We're working in a very complicated one.

He does it because of the difference it makes to the orphans, to the hungry, to people like Aziza.



Aziza is a widow who turned to Islamic Relief for help. Alasa'd was able to grant her a business loan from donors' gifts. When she applied for the loan, she was too shy to speak. A few years later when he met her again, her family was supported by her thriving business.

"She's running her business and she's confident and strong," he said. "She got confidence in herself and she's empowered."

That's the kind of thing that motivates him through the 14th hour of a long day, through an interminable wait at yet another checkpoint, through frightening words and even more frightening dangers.

And even better is when he sees the cycle going back the other way through the recipients' prayers.

"When I see poor people praying for the people providing the grants for them, it inspires me to help even more," he said.

"They are like our families. We are the same people. They are in a situation. Alhamdulillah God put us in a situation where we can help them. Now many of them are running their own businesses, and our aim insha'Allah is to partner with them. This dream is becoming real."

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New Hope for Syrian Refugees

When violence drove Fahad Falah and his family left their home in Syria, they found their tent behind for the warmth, privacy and refuge in Jordan. Living among crowds of other families, he pitched a tent and the family shivered in the cold, as a rare snowstorm threatened the tent's collapse. Fahad worked as a laborer for 10 JD a day, and one of the worst blows was when his 13-year-old son had to guit school to work in a brick factory to bring the family another 2 JD a day.



Islamic Relief donors brought Fahad's family relief. They began receiving food vouchers, and a rental assistance program allowed them to leave security of a house.

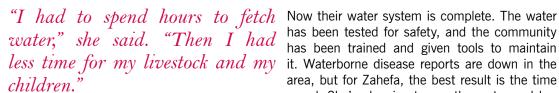
"We have hope now," he said. "We feel as if we are born all over again. We are living now in a house where we can feel like human beings. Islamic Relief has provided us with blankets and a heater during the snowstorm. With food vouchers, I can save money as my aspiration to establish my own business to depend on myself in order to fulfill my family's needs."

His son Mu'ath added: "Look where I was, and where I am now. I am back to school, my GPA is 80%, I guit the labor market, and we all enrolled in Holy Quran recitation as an after-school activity. Without Islamic Relief's help, we would have been alone, on the road back to Syria, a road to nowhere. May Allah (SWT) generously reward you."

Water at Her Doorstep

Zahefa lives in a remote hamlet of a remote village in Pakistan-administered Kashmir. She has three children—a son and two daughters. She has struggled to support the family alone since her husband died.

Zahefa worked hard to keep the family together, and there was one thing that made it all more difficult for her-finding clean water to drink. She had to walk about a mile and a half to get the water her family needed, and then carry it all back home.



Zahefa was a member of a community organization that Islamic Relief established in her hamlet. The group decided to reach for a dream: a closer source of water. So the group submitted a proposal to Islamic Relief to help them build a drinking water system. It took a few attempts as they learned about the process, but their proposal was accepted.



Now their water system is complete. The water has been tested for safety, and the community has been trained and given tools to maintain area, but for Zahefa, the best result is the time saved. She's planning to use the water and her newfound time to grow vegetables and expand her herd of goats so she can feed her family better, earn more income and rely less on family members. She's also glad that she can spend more time with her children.

"Now I have a clean water facility at my doorstep," she said. "It is a blessing for me that now I have enough time to focus on my home and children."

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From the Heart: The People You Reach

Back on His Feet



Arbab Ali's humble home in Sindh, Pakistan, was literally washed away by the monsoon rains and floods of August 2011—along with his crops, his livestock and his means of earning a livelihood for his family.

"We had to leave our home without a single penny," he recalled. "We never imagined that we would have to flee from our home and live in a vulnerable situation like this."

After a month in a camp, Arbab's family returned to their village. It was a difficult time, without enough food or clean water. The contaminated water made his children sick, and without an income, he couldn't take them to a doctor.

Before long, however, he saw a ray of hope: Two Islamic Relief representatives visited the village. They offered him work repairing and rebuilding a village road. Arbab worked for 15 days and earned 6,000 rupees. The very next day he took his sick child to the hospital for his treatment.

"He is now fully recovered and the family is happy," he said. "I am thankful to Islamic Relief for the opportunity to work through the cash for work project. I pray for the team and the donors who helped me during a tough time."



'Insha'Allah, I'll Help my Mother and my Family'

7-year-old Oruba lives in Oruba's family lives in a refugee camp. They Palestine. She was barely out of toddlerhood when her father died of cancer.



were struggling to meet their needs even before their father died.

"A social worker from Islamic Relief visited us at our home less than 50 days after my husband died," said the children's mother, Widad, And soon, four of the children had sponsors helping care for them.

"I'd like to say thank you to Islamic Relief and thank you to each of those who sponsored one of my children," Widad said. "The contributions they make have helped us tremendously. We wouldn't have known what to do without it. May God bless all of you."

Oruba likes to play with her 10-year-old brother Ashraf, and she likes to sing and draw. She goes to school and her grades are very good.

"I want to become a dentist when I grow up," she says. "Insha'Allah, I'll make a lot of money and help my mother and my family."



Zainab* and her husband are active members of their masjid in Virginia. They take part in programs, they attend prayers, she's even volunteered at the food pantry and raised money for relief for others.

*Name changed to protect privacy.

So when she and her husband fell on some hard times, she turned to the Islamic Relief USAsponsored Zakah program there.

find any job," she said. They fell behind in their rent. They applied at different programs, and this one is where they found help. The program paid the month's rent. It was enough to help them through the difficult time.

"We know this is from our Islamic history, from Rasul (saw). You have to be a giver or a receiver, there's no third one. We just do our obligations. When I have money, I have to give "My husband was not feeling OK, and he couldn't because that's my pillar of Islam, to help my fellow brother and sister. I really urge everyone who can, to help.

> "May Allah (SWT) give me to give the people who helped me," she said. "May Allah bless you all."

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From the Heart: 'Arab Idol' Recalls Donors' Help



As a boy in Gaza, Mohamed Assaf—long before he heard of the Arab Idol contest—watched Islamic Relief staff members deliver humanitarian aid.

"I used to see them deliver food packages and water," he recalled during an interview in May 2014 at Islamic Relief USA's Virginia office. "And people whose houses were damaged in the war—they helped them to fix their houses."

Assaf, 24, grew up in a place where nothing is easy, not even dreaming.

"I left from a place that wasn't almost existing, I left the camp, a camp where hundreds of thousands of people used to live in a small area, poverty and unemployment ... great poverty," he said. "When we were young kids, we couldn't even find a place to play.

"One of the biggest concerns for a Palestinian household is to find food for his family. We led a simple life."

He described life amid the restrictions in Gaza as being like a slow starvation. Health, education, infrastructure—everything drips in with agonizing slowness.

"It's as if you're starving someone for a week, and then you give him just a piece of bread, and then you go for another week and then another piece of bread," he said. "People don't deserve this."

Despite all of the difficulty, he said, his people retain their dignity and find joy within themselves and their communities—celebrating weddings, playing soccer and working hard to pursue an education.

"People who live in Gaza are human beings, they're not animals. They have the right to live. They have the right to dream. They have the right to build. To work. To get educated."

Back up to the dream part, because that is what Assaf did.

"I didn't want to hide in a shell," he said. "I wanted to go out, I wanted my voice to be heard."

Assaf grew up singing at weddings and community events, but his voice could go farther. Though traveling

out of Gaza was nearly impossible, he set his sights on making it to the Arab Idol interview for the 2013 season. He got there—but after long delays at the border, he was too late to get in. His dream seemed to be shattered beyond repair, until another contestant heard his voice and gave him his spot. Assaf's voice and his words made him an instant star in the Arab world. But his heart is still very much in Gaza, and he travels as a goodwill ambassador for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency. Islamic Relief USA donors support many projects in Palestine through UNRWA and through Islamic Relief Palestine.

As a goodwill ambassador, Assaf can use his great gift—his voice—for the people whose voices cannot be heard.

"Serving human beings is a great thing," he said.
"And people who talk about good will and good things, it's very honorable if they can support these organizations. Instead of supporting wars, why don't we support poor people so the community will benefit from them?"

Assaf recalls more humanitarian aid he saw Islamic Relief donors provide to his community: Loans so youth could start businesses. Relief for refugees. "And many other good things," he said. "We're very grateful for that."

"It's good to know the good people who support the needy people around the world, not just in Palestine but all around the world," said Assaf.

"Thank you for being the heart of IRUSA!"

Projects currently supported by IRUSA donors in Palestine:

- Equipping a breast cancer diagnostic center in Gaza (pending)
- Equipping a neonatal intensive care unit in the West Bank
- Equipping a kidney dialysis unit in the West Bank
- Vocational training and job placement for youth in Gaza (pending)
- Home rehabilitation for orphan families in the West Bank
- Orphan sponsorship
- Ramadan food distribution
- Eid al-Adha meat distribution (pending)



NOURISHING HEART & SOUL IN RAMADAN

'SONS AND DAUGHTERS IN THE IR FAMILY' CARING FOR HER

Gul Nazira bibi is a widow raising five children, and her family is extremely poor. As a recent Ramadan approached, she felt despair, expecting that her family would be fasting with no breakfast and no certainty of any dinner either. Her heart was hurting. At this dark moment, she received a Ramadan package sent by an Islamic Relief donor. It was like a ray of hope and support, and she cried tears of relief.



"I was feeling that I am alone in this world ... such a suffocating, lonely feeling," she said. "When Islamic Relief helped me during Ramadan, I suddenly felt that I'm not alone anymore -- that I have sons and daughters in IR family who care for for me and my children. ... That is my prayer, that Allah bless you people and may your organization remain strong and grow day by day."

RAMADAN 2013 TOTAL: 356,545 PEOPLE HELPED **AFGHANISTAN** 3.500 **LEBANON** 10,690 **ALBANIA** 3.205 4,220 MALAWI BANGLADESH MALI 6,415 3.565 **BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA NIGER** 4,135 13,940 CHAD 5,940 **PAKISTAN** 14,250 **CHECHNYA PALESTINE** 6,415 35,630 **SOUTH AFRICA** 2,225 CHINA 3,340 **EGYPT** 13,360 **SOUTH SUDAN** 410 **ETHIOPIA** 40,080 SRI LANKA 5.170 16,585 INDIA 38,480 **SUDAN** 18.035 IRAQ **SYRIA** 60,500 **JORDAN** 2,865 **TUNISIA** 585 KENYA 7.075 YEMEN 28,630

Ramadan Food Packets = Love sent to a family in need

ZIMBABWE

5.345

Ramadan is a month of sharing, of giving, of feeling with the hungry and poor, and most importantly, Ramadan is a month of love for Allah, the Most Gracious and the Most Merciful.

When you send Ramadan food packets to hungry You can choose where to send your valuable gift, families, you send more than just important or you can send a Ramadan food packet where nutrition and help—you send love.

KOSOVO

The love you share during Ramadan by sharing food with the poor is an important part of worship. Helping people in need during Ramadan will only that, but the families who receive Ramadan food packets through Islamic Relief USA are so thankful for the food supply they receive, they make dua'a for you, their donor, in thanks.

Ramadan food packets can be sent around the world, in 29 countries in 2014. For a small donation, a food packet filled with nutritious and important foods enough for the whole month of Ramadan will be sent to a family who is struggling to eat.

it's needed most. You can even send more than one food packet—it's your choice.

1,955

You can be sure that a family in need will receive your food packet—a donation that may save multiply your blessings with Allah (SWT). Not them from going hungry for days at a time, or worse, from starving to death.

> Thanks to donors like you, 71,309 Ramadan food packets were sent to help 356,545 people in need in 2013.

> This year, you could help even more needy families during Ramadan by sending Ramadan food packets with Islamic Relief USA.



A Letter from Eman:

Dear Sponsor,

Assalamu Alaikum,

I write this letter to express my great thanks to you and to tell you about my condition ... I am now in eighth grade and my marks were very good, 89.5 ... I hope you will stay with me and give me help in order to achieve my future dreams so I can be an architectural engineer in order to design nice houses, especially my bedroom, because I always dreamed to have one like other children in the world. Before you helped me, all my hopes were disappeared, but now with your help and support all my dreams will come true ... insha Allah.

I ask Allah in all my prayers for you to stay in good health and wellness and expand your age from my deep heart. You are always in my mind; you are my only hope to achieve my dreams. I love you and thank you very much.

-Eman

17-year-old Sana in Pakistan dreams of going to college. Thanks to her sponsor's generosity, her dream looks within reach.

HOW IT WORKS:

- 1. Sign up online or with a staff member.
- 2. Within a month, you'll be matched with an orphan, and then you'll receive an initial report by email or mail.
- 3. Nurture a young life—and, if you wish, a connection. You can also send an extra gift for special occasions.
- 4. At the end of a year, receive an annual report.
- 5. Unless you mark your commitment as recurring, we'll contact you about renewing your sponsorship for another year.



WALKING 5K IN THEIR SHOES

Islamic Relief USA, shared her for Water in Sterling, VA. Brianna, from California, is a student of International Relations at American University.

Islamic Relief USA hosted a 5K walk in Virginia on April 26 to symbolize the distance many people must walk to access water, and to raise money to provide water solutions.

Volunteer Mahmoud said, "It really puts things into perspective, to have to walk the 5 kilometers that some families have to walk every day. On their walks, they don't have people giving out water bottles, helping them along the way."

in Sterling, VA, and one of four held this year around the country.

Walk for Water raised thousands of dollars to use to support water and sanitation projects around the world.

Brianna Curran, a volunteer for Beginning shortly after 10 a.m. on Saturday morning, the race began with several participants running, and many walkers following shortly after. observations from the April 26 Walk
Walkers Nargis, Fatima, and Mariam agreed that the Walk for Water was an excellent outlet for the community to become engaged in helping to fix the global water crisis.

> Ahmed, a volunteer originally from India, said, "Where I come from, it can be very hard to find clean water. Walk for Water definitely sheds light on the fact that we are all not as lucky as we are here in the U.S."

Amana used the event to educate her two children about the water crisis. "We had our daughter read articles online about the [global water crisis] before we participated, so that she became educated on what she was walking for," she said. "As a mother, events like these really hit home more than a sit-down dinner or The walk was the second annual Walk for Water a lecture at a lecture hall. We're here, working together, and fighting for the same great cause."

Volunteer couple Raisa and Daniel praised the event for its originality. "We look forward to outdoor activities and quality interaction with the community, and it's great to give back at the same time!" Raisa commented.

"The water supply around the world, especially in many Islamic countries is such a pressing issue," Daniel added. "If I could go to a developing country, that's what I would do. But through events like these, we really feel like we're helping."

In addition to raising awareness, the event also brought members of the community together at the ADAMS Center, to spend time with friends as family, as well as to enjoy food, a bazaar, and bounce houses and face-painting for the children.

Islamic Relief USA's event not only helped raise a substantial amount of money to bring water to communities in need worldwide, but it also brought a spirit of hope and giving to community members determined to make a difference.



A volunteer helps a young participant cross a stream.

"The fact that we're doing this event, particularly in this community, is especially important," Daniel said, "to show that we're a group of people trying to get involved to make the world a better place."

Ever want to lead a group and help in a big way? Maybe you and your friends or family want to do something together to make this world a better place?



VISIT WWW.IRUSA.ORG/TEAM-FUNDRAISING

Two words: **TEAM FUNDRAISING.**

Maximize your impact by inviting others to support the campaign! Sign up to be a campaign fundraiser and ask your friends, family, and colleagues to join you in bringing real, lasting change to families around the

Choose the area you're most passionate about

You can even create your own fundraising campaign for one of the areas listed on our website. Sign up and raise money for a cause close to your heart.





AFGHANISTAN	4,820	MALAWI	12,950
BANGLADESH	29,270	MALI	20,135
BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA	3,590	NIGER	28,580
CHAD	25,545	PAKISTAN	52,200
CHECHNYA	4,080	PALESTINE	28,025
CHINA	510	SOUTH AFRICA	1,355
EGYPT	24,960	SUDAN	10,240
INDIA	30,225	SYRIA	84,100
JORDAN	855	UNITED STATES	8,800
KENYA	4,590	YEMEN	3,080
KOSOVO	1,640	ZIMBABWE	25,990
LEBANON	815		

QURBANI: A Gift to Remember

In a conversation with Marzia in Afghanistan, an Islamic Relief staff member asked her how much meat cost.

And that meat her family ate that year—and was about to receive again—was a gift from an Islamic Relief donor.

Marzia lives with her son and two young grandchildren in a refugee camp in Afghanistan. She is a widow and has no job. Her son Ahmad works loading fruits and vegetables at the market. When he has trouble finding work, the grandmother will go out and look for work washing clothes or sweeping.

"The day without work, we do not have food to eat," she said.

In Palestine, 50-year-old widow Hanan looks forward to Eid al-Adha too.

"One of the lovely moments we have is the Eid, where we receive Qurbani meat from them," she said. "My children love to eat food with meat."

Last year, she cooked meat and rice the first day of Eid, and kabab the second day.

Her 13-year-old daughter Ghadeer remembers those days happily.

"The Eid was beautiful as we played and had our favorite meal," Ghadeer said.

Your gift of meat for Eid al-Adha isn't just nutrition and a treat for a day or two—it's a gift so special a family can remember it all year.

Thank you for making this difference!







CELEBRITIES SUPPORTING THE CAUSE

A wide range of artists and celebrities join Islamic Relief USA—and you!—to support a variety of causes. We thank the following artists who have joined Islamic Relief USA during the past year: Omar Offendum, Fawad Khan and Maher Zain, pictured below, along with Mo Amer, Said Durrah, Freedom, Alman Nusrat, Aman Ali, Khalid Latif, Salman Ahmad, and Najam Sheraz.



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