



SUMMER 2004

Partnership

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The Official Newsletter of Islamic Relief USA

TRAGEDY IN DARFUR, SUDAN

Two Islamic Relief USA Staff Members return from delegation to Sudan. With over one million people displaced, the United Nations has called Darfur the 'world's greatest humanitarian crisis.'

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IR-USA STAFF MEMBERS RETURN FROM DARFUR LIVING CONDITIONS OF IDPs DESCRIBED AS 'SHOCKING'



Islamic Relief USA representative Anwar Khan, visiting an Islamic Relief Worldwide IDP (Internally Displaced People) camp in Darfur

Islamic Relief USA representatives Arif Shaikh and Anwar Khan recently returned from a delegation to visit Islamic Relief Worldwide projects in Sudan. Sudan is the first country in which Islamic Relief Worldwide started projects nearly twenty years ago. Until January of this year, however, the work mainly focused in the north of Sudan. In January of this year, Islamic Relief Worldwide began a new phase of relief and development work in Sudan by opening new offices in the south, as well as in Ad-Damazin in the Blue Nile region in the east. Islamic Relief Worldwide also has additional offices in nearby Ethiopia and Kenya, which assist in the relief efforts in the southern and eastern regions of Sudan. Initial projects operated by these offices include water and sanitation, education and training, and emergency relief.

Ongoing Conflict

The people of Sudan have suffered massive displacement for several decades. The displaced people sometimes flee their homes and villages from conflict, while others are uprooted, by drought, famine, or other forms of economic hardship. Sudan has the highest number of internally displaced persons in the world, currently numbering over four million. The main cause for this massive displacement is the current conflict that, apart from a brief halt in the 1980s, has been ongoing for the past forty years. The Internally Displaced People (IDPs) are forced to live dreadful lives. They often arrive with few or no material resources and with little capacity to support a livelihood in the camps, where a harsh climate and difficulty in finding work leave them highly vulnerable. They often lack basic education, infrastructure, basic healthcare, and food security, and thus live in a vicious cycle of high levels of poverty, malnutrition, and disease. Most of the IDPs are in the south, where there is increased conflict. It is because of this situation that Islamic Relief has decided to focus its efforts in the South. Currently, Islamic Relief Worldwide is operating several new projects

in the south, including water and sanitation, education and training, food security, emergency relief, and other development projects.

Darfur - World's Greatest Humanitarian Crisis

On this trip, Shaikh and Khan also visited the village of Al-Junaynah, in the state of West Darfur. With over one million people displaced, and an additional two million affected due to the current conflict, the United Nations has called this region the "world's greatest humanitarian crisis." The United Nations has estimated that, out of a pre-conflict population in Darfur of 6.5 million, approximately 1 million people have been internally displaced within Sudan and more than 110,000 people have fled across the border into neighboring Chad as a result of this conflict. According to Shaikh, "The living conditions of the displaced people are simply shocking. Thousands of people have been living in huts made of 4 sides of straw for several months. As the rainy season approaches, their situation will only get worse, as their current shelter will not be able to withstand the rain. Due to the poor living conditions, there are also very serious health problems in the region, including a meningitis epidemic." Islamic Relief Worldwide is committed to helping the people of Darfur in this emergency situation, and is urging its donors and



OVER 2,200 LEFT HOMELESS IN GAZA STRIP

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) reports that over 2,200 people have been made homeless so far in May, following the demolition of homes throughout the Gaza Strip. Frightened residents were often forced to abandon most of their possessions in their homes, after bulldozers arrived and began demolishing houses with little or no warning. Lionel Brisson, director of operation for The United Nations Relief and Works Agency said his staff in Rafah described the situation as “...very bad, very tense. Nobody can approach this area. The Palestinians in Rafah are living in hell.” In a 10 day period alone, over 1,100 Palestinians were left homeless, including 600 children, and over 40 people (including 10 children) were killed in that same span.

Islamic Relief Worldwide Response

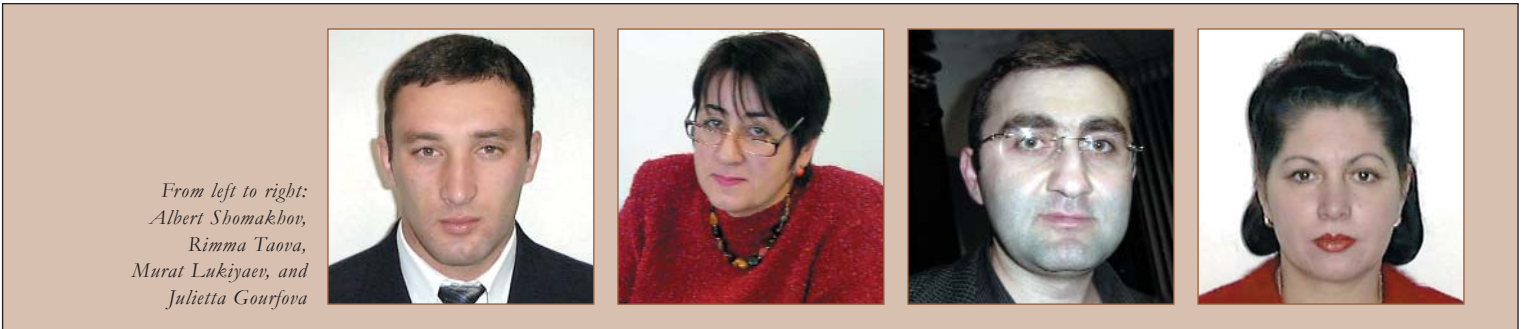
Islamic Relief Worldwide is distributing aid to a total of 400 affected families, including 400 food packages, 800 mattresses, 800 blankets, 1,600 pillows, 400 sets of kitchen tools, 400 hygiene kits, and clean drinking water. In addition, IRW has purchased healthcare items to support the only existing hospital in Rafah, the Abu Yousef al-Najjar hospital, which serves over 100,000 people. Islamic Relief Worldwide will provide emergency medical supplies and medical equipment, including x-ray machines and ECG monitors. •



A Palestinian woman standing in front of her demolished home, cries, while holding her family picture

CHECHNYA

TRIBUTE TO FOUR DEDICATED AID WORKERS IRW'S CHECHNYA OFFICE SUFFERS A TREMENDOUS LOSS



*From left to right:
Albert Shomakhov,
Rimma Taova,
Murat Lukiyayev, and
Julietta Gourfova*

Four members of Islamic Relief Worldwide’s Chechnya staff were killed in a car accident on Thursday January 22, 2004, while on their way to visit a bereaved colleague, in the Russian Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria. The fatal accident occurred just outside the village of Argudan when the car, driven by Murat Lukiyayev, swerved into the path of an oncoming truck.

Islamic Relief Worldwide’s staff in the Russia office has been devastated by the sudden and tragic deaths. Those who died were not simply colleagues, but were also close friends. “They were our dearest friends, and wonderful people,” said Mohammed Alla, Islamic Relief Worldwide Country Director for Russia. “We will always cherish their memories in our hearts.”

Murat Lukiyayev, 32, was a dedicated member of staff who helped establish Islamic Relief Worldwide’s presence in Russia. He worked as area coordinator for four years and set up warehouses and distribution chan-

nels to bring aid to Chechen refugees in Ingushetia. He regularly worked long hours and spent weeks away from home. Lukiyayev leaves behind his wife and a four-month-old son. Julietta Gourfova, 40, was married with two sons. She began working in a warehouse packing food parcels for distribution to refugees, and then moved to the Country Office in Nalchik. She was a much loved member of staff who kept everyone in good spirits. Albert Shomakhov, 24, worked as a security officer. He was known for his patience and resilience, having coped bravely with the loss of both his mother and his fiancée two years ago. Albert is survived by his father. Rimma Taova, 48, joined Islamic Relief Worldwide recently as a personnel officer. She had two daughters, the younger one is 13 years old. Rimma was a friendly person, who was reliable, responsible and professional in her work.

Islamic Relief USA extends its deepest sympathies to the families of the victims and their friends in the Islamic Relief Worldwide Russia office. They all remain in our thoughts and prayers. •



Dr. Hany El-Banna (left), President of Islamic Relief Worldwide and Ahmad El-Bendary (right), President of Islamic Relief USA with 101-year old Salema, who thanked Islamic Relief for bringing running water to her home.

ISLAMIC RELIEF WORLDWIDE CONTINUES TO EXPAND DEVELOPMENT WORK IN CHINA

Islamic Relief has renewed its commitment to helping the world's most populous nation following the completion of its initial phase of projects which included reconstruction of homes and provision of clean water for the victims of the 2002 floods.

On a recent visit to China, Islamic Relief Worldwide President Dr. Hany El-Banna and Islamic Relief USA President Ahmad El-Bendary were able to secure the cooperation of government officials as well as establish partnerships with local organizations to pave the way for future projects to be implemented.

Islamic Relief Worldwide's emergency and development work in China is spread across the provinces of Gansu, Xinjiang, and Shaanxi. Many of the communities in these provinces live in mountainous areas where access to basic facilities is severely restricted.

At present, over a third of China's rural population does not have adequate access to safe water. To meet this critical need, Islamic Relief Worldwide has now started a new project to install water pumps for at least five villages in Xinjiang province. Further projects are being planned in the fields of education, orphan support, and income generation.

China is a country of climatic extremes, with plains and hills in the east, and mountains and deserts in the west. From the sub-arctic north to the tropical south, the people of China are as diverse as its terrain, belonging to over 50 different ethnic communities. Amongst these are China's 25 million or so Muslims, many of whom live in remote areas and are cut off from essential

facilities.

In the past two decades, China has made considerable economic progress but due to the extreme diversity in its natural condition, millions of people still live in poverty. Those living in remote rural areas suffer extremely as they do not have access to basic facilities like clean water and safe sanitation. Food security also remains a serious problem as only one sixth of the land is fertile. In addition to this, the severe water shortage in some areas has left farmers with no means of earning a living. Many people, particularly those in the west of the country, also continue to suffer from the devastating effects of natural disasters such as annual flooding, earthquakes, and landslides. Access to clean water remains the most important need for the rural population in China. As one of the villagers told the Islamic Relief team on their recent visit, "Water means more to us than just something we use everyday for our domestic purposes. It helps us raise our livestock, cultivate our crops and is the key to alleviating our poverty. If we have access to water, it will dramatically change our lives." •

Islamic Relief Worldwide projects in China include:

- New flood-resistant homes for 600 families whose homes were destroyed in the recent floods (in coordination with China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation)
- Establishment of a water transmission system to pump water from a local river to those living in the remote mountainous area of Beiling. The project, established in partnership with the Gansu Association for Non-Governmental Organizations, helps 3,000 villagers gain access to clean water
- Access to clean water for 100 families in Gansu Province
- Seasonal Ramadan and Udhiyah / Qurbani food distribution to needy families



Islamic Relief USA's Naeem Muhammad, visiting an orphan in Mali

ISLAMIC RELIEF USA REPRESENTATIVE VISITS ORPHAN PROJECTS IN MALI

Naeem Muhammad, Islamic Relief USA representative in the Washington, DC area, shares his thoughts on his visit with an Islamic Relief-sponsored orphan in Mali.

It's easy to feel disconnected from those suffering around the world. It's easy to turn off the news, not read a newsletter, or not attend a fund-raising event to disconnect from the world of those in need. But once you've stared in the eyes of those in need, it's not so easy. Rather, it is almost impossible. This is what I experienced in my visit to Mali.

Even for a person such as myself, who works for Islamic Relief, reads reports from the field, newsletters, weekly updates, and watches countless videos of suffering around the world, it is easy, at times to feel disconnected from such people. But that changed in a short visit one afternoon in Mali. I only went with the intention of visiting the Islamic Relief Worldwide office in Mali to thank them for their efforts; but they had something else in mind. The Mali staff arranged for me to visit with one of the orphans sponsored through Islamic Relief's one-to-one sponsorship program.

I was told that Mali is the third poorest country in the world. I had been touring the country but didn't really get to see poverty such as this face to face until we took this visit. As we navigated the dirt roads filled with endless potholes, rocks, and trash - which made for a less than smooth ride - I was filled with a sort of youthful optimism about meeting this child; to meet someone who is benefiting maybe even directly from a donor I may have shaken hands with; to see actual Islamic Relief work. As we arrive at the home of the orphan I am completely humbled by the presence of the orphan and her mother. The young girl was very shy and stuck very close to her mother. This

child was one of nine siblings. Their father died, sadly leaving behind the mother with these children to make a way for themselves alone. The only regular income this family receives is what's given to them by the young girl's sponsor. Neighbors that live close to the family sometimes employs them to do laundry, which helps generate income for them. The sponsored child is too young to go to school, so one of her older sisters is able to attend school with the money allocated for her.

The family lives in a mud brick structure with no electricity. The mother informed us that during the rainy season it is impossible for them to sleep due to the poor conditions of their roof. In addition, the walls for their outdoor cooking area collapsed because of the rain, and they do not have the money to replace the wall. They cook their meals outdoors over an open fire pit. The wall which provided privacy for their outhouse collapsed. Recently, some kind men from the neighborhood helped rebuild the wall. They receive water through a simple well, using a rope and bucket.

Before this visit to Mali, these were conditions I saw only on videos and read about in reports. But now after seeing them up close, it's much more than just a nameless face on a Power Point slide. The child I met was an actual person who is benefiting from what the sponsor and Islamic Relief staff members are doing every year, time and time again. I swelled with pride to be associated with this child in this way. I could not wait to go home and tell as many people as I could about the need in Mali. This was just one child out of nine in the family who was getting help. What about the other eight? What about their neighbors; and the other children and families through out the country? Who is answering their cries for the basics to survive? Allah hears them and answers, and I pray our donors and those who aren't donors will hear their cries now, and answer as well. •

IR-USA AWARDED 4-STAR RATING BY CHARITY NAVIGATOR NATION'S LARGEST CHARITY EVALUATOR GIVES ISLAMIC RELIEF ITS HIGHEST RATING



// We commend your charitable endeavors and congratulate you for receiving a 4-star rating from Charity Navigator. In earning our highest 4-star rating, Islamic Relief has demonstrated exceptional financial health, outperforming most of its peers in its efforts to manage and grow its finances in the most responsible way possible. A 4-star rating from Charity Navigator means your supporters can be assured that Islamic Relief is worthy of their trust and commitment. //

Trent Stamp, executive director of Charity Navigator

Islamic Relief USA was recently awarded with a 4-star rating by the largest charity evaluator in the country, Charity Navigator. The stated goal of the organization is "to advance a more efficient and responsive philanthropic marketplace by evaluating the financial health of 3,000 of America's largest charities." Their free charity ratings can be found on the Web at www.charitynavigator.org.

Throughout our history, we have always worked hard to build the trust of our donors. This recent award confirms Islamic Relief

USA's commitment to maintaining a professional organization that fulfills the intentions of our donors and the needs of the beneficiaries.

Islamic Relief USA has been growing steadily over the last few years. We thank Allah first, as well as all our donors, supporters, and volunteers across the country for helping us achieve the goals that we all share - alleviating the poverty and suffering of the world's poorest people, as well as providing lasting, sustainable solutions to help people help themselves. •



Medical equipment donated by Islamic Relief Worldwide to hospitals in Palestine

ISLAMIC RELIEF USA NOW ACCEPTING IN-KIND DONATIONS

After hearing many suggestions over the years from donors and supporters, Islamic Relief USA is now accepting in-kind donations from individuals or institutions that have valuable goods which can be utilized to benefit people in the many countries in which we operate. Due to the cost and logistics of shipping items overseas, however, we cannot accept small scale donations at this time.

What Items Can be Donated?

The in-kind donations we are looking for include large quantities of new blankets, medicine, medical equipment, educational materials (including books), toys, and more.

IMANA Donates \$1 Million in Medical Supplies for Iraq

The Islamic Medical Association of North America (IMANA) recently donated \$1 million in medical supplies to Islamic Relief USA to send to Iraq. The shipment, containing various medical supplies, including much-needed hygiene kits, has already arrived in Islamic Relief Worldwide's warehouse in Baghdad. We sincerely thank IMANA for its generous contribution which will help many needy people in Iraq, and we look forward to sending more in-kind donations to our beneficiaries across the world.

For more information on donating in-kind goods to Islamic Relief, call our office at (888) 479-4968, or e-mail inkind@irw.org. •



SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA MUSLIMS RAISE OVER \$120,000 FOR NEEDY CHILDREN

"CHILDREN OF FORGOTTEN LANDS" EVENT DRAWS OVER 400 PEOPLE



Shaykh Yassir Ibrahim from the Orange County Islamic Foundation, speaking at the Islamic Relief fund-raising dinner in Anaheim, CA

Over 400 people attended a fund-raising dinner in Anaheim, CA to benefit "Children of Forgotten Lands." Guest speakers, which included Dr. Abdalla Idris Ali, Shaykh Sadullah Khan, and Shaykh Yassir Ibrahim, spoke about the importance of helping children in need - especially those who live in places that are not covered in the news, yet continue to suffer. Over \$120,000 was raised at the event, which will be used to support Islamic Relief Worldwide projects which benefit children. Islamic Relief USA sincerely thanks all of the masjids, MSAs, and youth groups which helped organize the event.

Islamic Relief USA would also like to commend the following communities for organizing recent fund-raising events: Washington, DC (MSA at GWU), Detroit, MI (High School MSAs from Troy, MI), Houston, TX (MSA at UH), Chicago, IL, and San Diego, CA. In addition, we would like to thank all the communities who diligently raised funds for the victims of the recent earthquake in Morocco.

Jazakum Allahu khayran! May Allah reward all of you for your hard-work. •



Girl Scouts display the "Coins 4 Change" station

GIRL SCOUTS COLLECT MONEY FOR ORPHANS IN PALESTINE

A Girl Scout troop based out of the Muslim Community Association (MCA) in Santa Clara, CA recently installed a "Coins for Change" station in the masjid. The project was initiated so that the Girl Scouts can raise money to sponsor orphans in Palestine. Thus far, the masjid is sponsoring three orphans in Palestine. About \$150 was collected in the Coins for Change station, which will go to the Palestine Orphan General Fund. Islamic Relief commends the efforts of this group, as well as all children and youth who work so hard to help provide a better life for children across the world.

If your masjid, school, scout troop, youth group, etc. would like to participate in a similar program, please contact Islamic Relief today and we will be glad to help you out. •

Make a Difference. Sponsor an Orphan.



Islamic Relief Worldwide operates the Orphan Sponsorship Program in 10 countries across the globe. The program provides educational support, social welfare, healthcare, and recreational activities for the orphan.

YOU can help provide a better life for an orphan in need.

For your convenience, the Orphan Sponsorship form is inserted in this newsletter. Fill it out and send it today!

Orphan Sponsorship Program

Changing Lives,
One Orphan at a Time

"I and the one who takes care of an orphan and provides for him will be in Paradise like this."
(placing his index and middle fingers together)

for more information,
call (888) 479-4968 or email
orphansupport@irw.org



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Islamic Relief USA has been recognized as a 4-star charity by Charity Navigator, its highest rating. Charity Navigator is America's largest charity evaluator.

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