

Partnership

with the needy

The Official Newsletter of Islamic Relief USA

IRAN EARTHQUAKE UPDATE

Islamic Relief USA Staff Member Returns from Bam, Iran. Three camps have been set up to assist the victims of the devastating earthquake.

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IRAN EARTHQUAKE DEATH TOLL REACHES 41,000

IRW SETS UP CAMPS, SCHOOLS FOR VICTIMS



Earthquake victims in Iran in an Islamic Relief Worldwide-administered refugee camp

The earthquake death toll in Bam, Iran has reached 41,000 and officials fear that the final count may reach 45,000. The earthquake, which measured 6.5 on the Richter scale, struck Bam on the morning of Friday, December 26 with devastating impact. In addition to the thousands who lost their lives, over 30,000 people were injured and around 100,000 left homeless. Islamic Relief USA representative Naeem Muhammad was in Bam, working with Islamic Relief Worldwide's Emergency Response Team.

Humanitarian Disaster

The deadliest earthquake the world has seen this decade struck in the Kerman district in southeastern Iran. Entire families were crushed to death in their beds. The victims were buried in mass graves as quickly as possible. Around 80% of the buildings in Bam have been reduced to rubble or severely damaged, including two of the city's main hospitals. Remaining hospitals have been overwhelmed by the numbers of injured.

Islamic Relief Worldwide Emergency Response

IRW's Emergency Response Team in Bam has been busy distributing over \$200,000 worth of relief supplies. Hundreds of families have received essential aid items including blankets, hygiene kits and cooking stoves. IRW is also providing daily breakfast for over 200 homeless families living in tents in a nearby camp, called the "Green Camp," for one month. IRW has recruited a team of local staff from amongst the earthquake survivors to help with general maintenance of the camp.

School Set Up for Children in Camp

IRW has set up and furnished a school for children in the Green Camp, which includes a childcare center and play facilities. The school was set up in partnership with a local organization.

Camp Razmandagan

Seeing the need for another camp for the victims, IRW, working closely with local authorities, has set up an additional camp for 300 homeless families. IRW manages the new camp (Camp Razmandagan), distributes relief goods, and coordinates the provision of food, water and sanitation facilities and electricity with partner organizations. IRW also plans to establish a school for the children of the new camp.

Islamic Relief USA needs your support to help the thousands who have been affected by this disaster. Donate now to the Iran Earthquake Appeal to ensure that desperately needed food, shelter and medicine reaches the stricken people as quickly as possible. •



Islamic Relief USA representative Naeem Muhammad (left), setting up refugee camps for the earthquake victims



SUFFERING PEOPLE OF SUDAN HOPE FOR A BRIGHTER FUTURE

After decades of conflict, peace negotiations in Sudan are promising a more stable future for the country's 33 million people. Islamic Relief Worldwide, one of the first international aid agencies to be granted access to the Blue Nile region in Southern Sudan, has begun the initial stage of its humanitarian program. Until now, instability had restricted international aid agencies from reaching those living in some of the world's poorest areas. With the end of the conflict now in sight, a major humanitarian effort is needed to help the people of Sudan recover from one of the longest-running conflicts in recent history.

The Effects of War

The civil conflict in Sudan is the foremost contributing factor to the poverty and hardship faced by the Sudanese people on a daily basis. In addition to causing death and injury, the civil war has displaced millions, forcing them to leave their homes in search of better living conditions and greater security. The conflict has contributed to increased levels of poverty throughout the country.

Islamic Relief Worldwide representative Mohammed Afsar recently visited Southern Sudan, and commented on his visit to a hospital: "Wherever I looked there were patients, some lying on beds, others on the floor and some even in doorways. Blood was smeared all over the walls and the pungent smell inside the dark, gloomy rooms was indescribable. A mixture of patient perspiration, human waste, and vomit, the hospital smelled of death itself."

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- Islamic Relief Worldwide representative Mohammed Afsar, on his visit to Rumbek Hospital in Southern Sudan.

Islamic Relief Worldwide in Sudan

Since the late 1980s, Islamic Relief has been providing humanitarian assistance to vulnerable communities in north Sudan. In the South and Blue Nile however - where need is considerably greater - this has not been possible due to the lack of stability. With a peace deal now in sight, an Islamic Relief Worldwide delegation met with officials to negotiate an agreement to work in previously inaccessible areas. Islamic Relief Worldwide was the first international non-governmental organization (NGO) to be given access to the disputed Blue Nile area, and has already begun the initial stage of its humanitarian program, focusing mainly on providing water, sanitation and education facilities.

Looking to the Future

An entire generation in Sudan, who have known nothing but war, will need to adapt to new ways of life. They will also need to start normalizing their lives; many will have to return to their homes and millions will need help before they can start earning a sustainable income. Islamic Relief Worldwide is committed to helping the people of Sudan on a long-term basis, and needs the support of our donors to make our goals a reality. •

IRAQ:

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Questions answered by Moustafa Osman, from
Islamic Relief Worldwide's Emergency Response Team.



Islamic Relief beneficiaries in Iraq



IRAQ

Is Islamic Relief Worldwide still providing emergency relief in Iraq or has it moved on to long-term development?

The situation in Iraq is extremely tense and unstable, and for this reason it is still being treated as an emergency. Islamic Relief Worldwide reviews its strategy regularly and plans on implementing more long-term development projects as soon as the situation becomes more stable.

What are the most pressing needs of the Iraqi people?

- *Security*

Security is undoubtedly the most pressing issue facing Iraq. Continued high levels of insecurity have had a very negative impact on the lives of the Iraqi people. Many are afraid to venture out after dark, resume normal everyday activities, or even access facilities such as schools and healthcare centers. Insecurity is having a particularly negative impact on freedom of movement for women. Assaults, car-jacking, kidnapping, theft, shootings and criminal activities are all contributing to increasing levels of fear and instability among the population. In addition to this, the security situation is having a detrimental impact on the activities of humanitarian agencies.

- *Public services*

The second priority of the Iraqi people is the restoration of essential public services. Almost eight months after the conflict, Iraq's still do not have adequate access to basic services such as clean water, sanitation, healthcare, and education. Continuing shortages of electricity and fuel further contribute to difficulties in service restoration.

- *Unemployment*

It is currently estimated that unemployment and under-employment in Iraq are at approximately 60%.

What kind of projects does Islamic Relief implement in Iraq?

Islamic Relief Worldwide's work in Iraq includes emergency relief, education, healthcare and water treatment. In recent months, IRW has distributed emergency food aid to over 30,000 people. In addition, IRW also provided 50 containers full of essentials such as clothing, medical equipment, bed sheets and school furniture. Emergency health kits were also distributed and 17 hospitals and healthcare centers in central Iraq were supplied with much-needed medicine. IRW has also rehabilitated five health clinics. Almost 3,000 children have also been able to return to school due to our education programs. IRW is also working with other agencies to distribute over 270,000 packs of water treatment chemicals to families and hospitals in the worst affected areas.

Does Islamic Relief work only in some areas or does it help all the different minorities in Iraq?

Islamic Relief Worldwide provides assistance to the Iraqi people regardless of religion, race, gender or political beliefs. Our selection of beneficiaries is based solely on their needs. The number of beneficiaries is only limited by constraints in budget, human resources and security. Islamic Relief Worldwide's Needs-Assessment Team revealed that the main humanitarian needs were in the central and southern parts of the country. Therefore we decided to focus our work in those areas, taking into account the limits of our resources. To maintain our neutrality, the composition of the Islamic Relief Worldwide team in Iraq also reflects the diversity of the different groups. •





ISLAMIC RELIEF USA REPRESENTATIVE RETURNS FROM CHECHNYA

Islamic Relief USA representative Abdel Salam visited Islamic Relief Worldwide's office in the Northern Caucasus in December 2003 to visit projects in Chechnya, as well as in neighboring Chechen refugee camps. This was the second visit to the region for Br. Abdel Salam; he also visited in February 2001 to take part in the implementation of IRW's seasonal Udhayah / Qurbani program.

Br. Abdel Salam shares his thoughts on his recent visit.

The displaced Chechen people fled fighting in Chechnya in 1999 and have been living in squalid over-crowded conditions in tents and makeshift homes ever since. For most people, humanitarian assistance is an essential lifeline.

The overall situation in the Northern Caucasus has remained very difficult. Extreme insecurity and a high level of poverty in Chechnya have persisted, and increased insecurity, lack of sufficient shelter, and a dearth of basic services have discouraged displaced people from returning to Chechnya.

In Grozny, the situation has not changed much, as a very large number of checkpoints continue to block traffic; and only ruins remain from the buildings that were once there.

There is reason for hope for the civilian population of Chechnya, as more and more people have resumed normal life after the conflicts. The central market in Grozny has re-opened, and hospitals are being reconstructed as staff return home from refugee camps.

IRW Continues to Assist Chechen Refugees

Children constitute 60% of the population in the Sputnik refugee camp. Many of them stay in the tents because they do not have shoes or warm clothing to venture outside in sub-zero temperatures. Due to this, only a few, privileged children have the luxury of attending school.

Alina and Bella Camps Closed Down

The Alina and Bella camps, which housed displaced Chechens in Ingushetia were officially closed down by the government in late 2003. Most of the families relocated to the neighboring Satsita camp. According to the United Nation's World Food Program, there are currently 7,884 displaced Chechens in the Satsita, Bart, and Sputnik camps, with another 61,874 living in temporary settlements or private accommodations.

Islamic Relief Worldwide has been helping the Chechens since 1995, providing food assistance, shelter, primary medical care, clean water and sanitation. •



Chechens standing in line in the bitter cold to receive aid

SHARING RAMADAN BLESSINGS

2003 HUMANITARIAN DAY IN LOS ANGELES

// This was a response to 9/11. Instead of telling people what Muslims do, we wanted to show them. The Prophet (pbuh) was the most generous and compassionate and we want to reflect that philanthropy within Islam. //

- Imam Saadiq Saafir, Imam of Masjid Ibadillah in South Central Los Angeles and director of the Ilm Foundation

Islamic Relief USA was one of the lead organizations involved in the 2003 Humanitarian Day and Health Fair for the Homeless, a day-long event held in downtown Los Angeles (in the “Skid Row” area) on November 16, 2003 during the month of Ramadan. The event was coordinated by the Ilm Foundation, a Los Angeles-based community organization, along with the newly-formed “Coalition for Human Dignity.” The coalition consists of many organizations across Southern California, including mosques, Muslim Student Associations, community organizations, and more. Kaiser Permanente is also a member of the coalition.

Over 3,000 people benefited from the event, which provided much needed assistance to the homeless including a hot meal (donated by Wendy’s and KFC), blankets, hygiene packs (including toothbrushes and toothpaste), on-site health screenings provided by the UMMA Free Clinic, clothes distribution, and more.

Although very little attention is given to the subject, many people in Los Angeles suffer due to lack of food. According to the Los Angeles 2001 Hunger Report, out of nearly 10 million county residents, 1.4 million people (14.8%) have difficulty putting food on their tables and 584,000 people experience the pain and face the health consequences of hunger. Homelessness can be caused by a variety of problems. According to a research study conducted by Homeless.org, the main cause is unaffordable housing for the poor. There are more than 3 million men, women, and children who suffer from homelessness in the United States.

The long term goal of the coalition is to construct a shelter and halfway house where residents can get back on their feet, learn vocational and educational skills, and be provided with social services and family counseling. Such a shelter would be the first of its kind run solely by a Muslim organization.

Islamic Relief USA, which is a partner with the Ilm Foundation for its monthly homeless feedings as well as other activities, is committed to help expand the work of the coalition. •



Over 3,000 homeless people benefited from the event



Health screenings were among the services provided to the homeless



Muslim Community Association (MCA), Santa Clara, CA

MUSLIM COMMUNITIES RISE TO CHALLENGE FOR IRAN EARTHQUAKE VICTIMS

MCA IN S.F. BAY AREA LEADS THE PACK, COLLECTING OVER \$120,000

**Muslim Community Association
Santa Clara, CA**

The Muslim Community Association (MCA) in Santa Clara, CA, one of the largest masjids in the United States and a long-time supporter of Islamic Relief USA's work, rose to the challenge on Friday, January 9. Islamic Relief USA representative Anwar Khan gave presentations after both Jumu'ah prayers at the MCA, raising more than \$120,000 for the victims of the devastating earthquake in Bam, Iran.

Several other communities across the country diligently raised funds for the earthquake victims as well, including: Islamic Society of Orange County (Garden Grove, CA), Masjid Annur (Sacramento, CA), Islamic Center of San Diego (San Diego, CA), Islamic Society of Rutgers University (New Brunswick, NJ), Mosque Foundation (Chicago, IL), Islamic Center of Hawthorne (Hawthorne, CA), Dar Al-Hijrah (Falls Church, VA), Islamic Community Center of Des Plaines (Des Plaines, IL), MSA at California State University, Northridge (Northridge, CA), Council of Islamic Organizations of Greater Chicago (Chicago, IL), and more.

Jazakum Allahu khayran for everyone's help! •

HOW CAN YOU HELP ISLAMIC RELIEF USA'S FUND-RAISING EFFORTS?

10 Ways to Get Involved:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Membership Drive | 6. Fund-Raising Dinner |
| 2. Islamic Relief Awareness | 7. Masjid Visit |
| 3. Donation Box Project | 8. Islamic School Project |
| 4. Orphan Sponsorship Drive | 9. Medicine for the Needy Project |
| 5. Community Garage Sale | 10. Create your Own Project! |

Volunteers are the backbone of Islamic Relief USA's work. Contact us today to get started with your volunteer efforts, and become part of the Islamic Relief team.

Visit www.irw.org/howyoucanhelp
or email volunteer@irw.org



Make a Difference. Sponsor an Orphan.

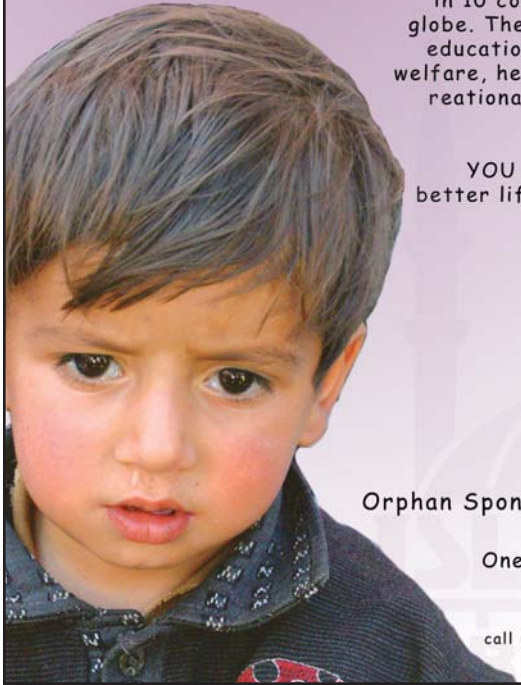
Islamic Relief operates its Orphan Sponsorship Program in 10 countries across the globe. The program provides educational support, social welfare, healthcare, and recreational activities for the orphan.

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



Orphan Sponsorship Program
Changing Lives,
One Orphan at a Time

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



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For more information or to
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Tel: (888) 479-4968

Fax: (818) 238-9521

www.irw.org

info@irw.org

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poverty and suffering of the
world's poorest people.

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