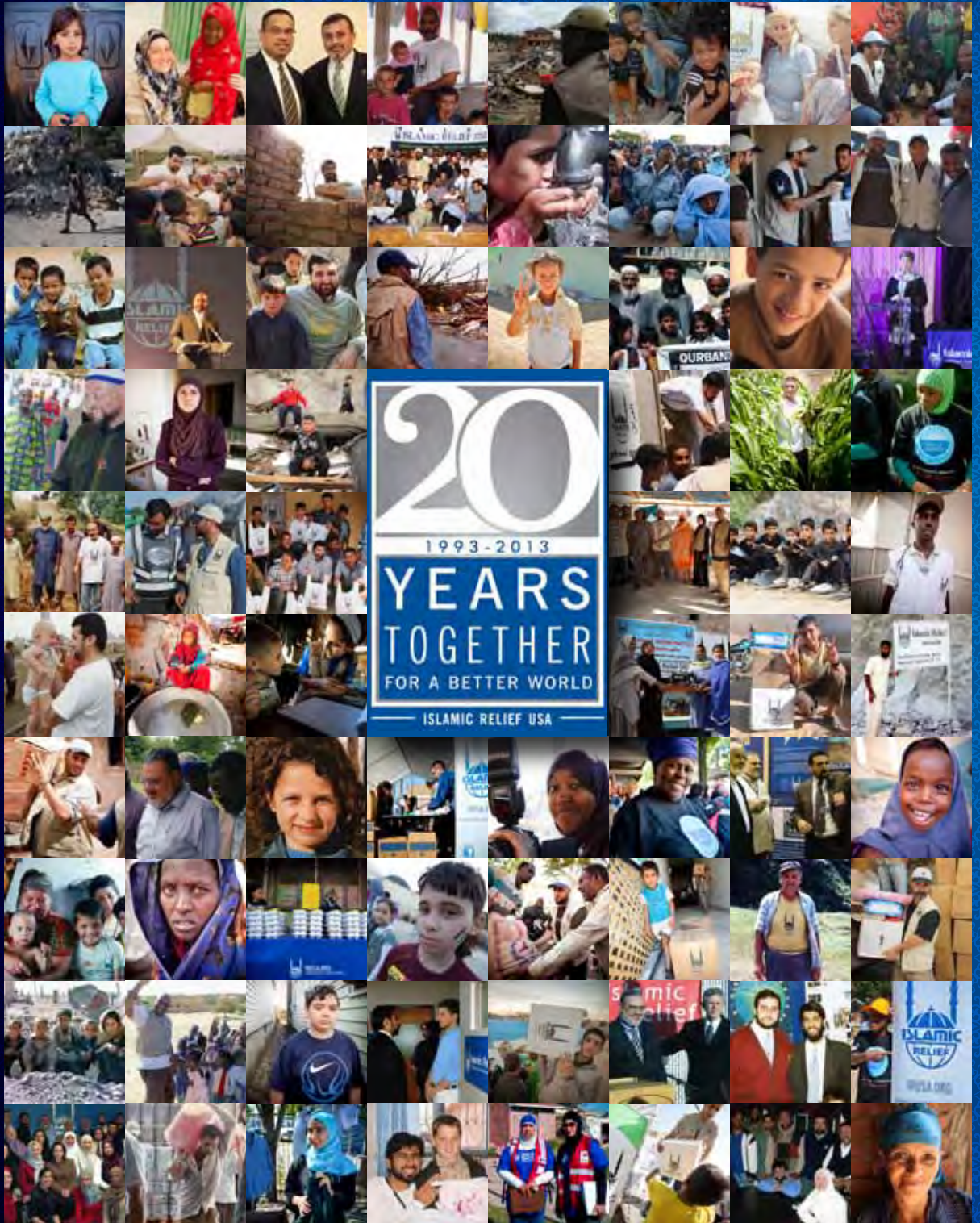


# PARTNERSHIP



SUMMER 2013





Assalamu alaikum! (Greetings of peace!)

**I remember my first meeting with a United Nations official—it was 1994 and I was representing Islamic Relief USA, which was only a few months old. He was telling me about the great United Nations ... and I told him it was a credit for the United Nations to have Islamic Relief working with them. That's because Islamic Relief represents *you*.**

Islamic Relief USA is a true grassroots organization, and that's our greatest strength. Without our dedicated grassroots community of donors and volunteers—and of course the help and guidance of Allah (swt)—we never would have been able to achieve what we have done in the past 20 years.

Looking to the future, Islamic Relief has a great responsibility, because the more success a person or organization gains, the more obligations that brings. As we continue to grow, we have to help other relief and development organizations grow and improve as well. We complement each other; we don't compete with each other.

It's been a wonderful journey so far, and we are so glad you're making it with us. Let's redouble our efforts and see what else we can do together. May Allah help us and guide us always.

Sincerely,

Ahmed El Bendary  
Co-Founder, Islamic Relief USA



Assalamu alaikum!

*As Islamic Relief USA turns 20, we look back and say alhamdulillah—thank God—for 20 amazing years. Alhamdulillah for the growth that has taken us from coast to coast and around the world. Alhamdulillah for our dedicated donors and supporters, whose generosity and sincerity have humbled us since our earliest days.*

Alhamdulillah for the trust placed in us by authorities and the public overseas and here at home, and for the growing network of groups working with us.

Alhamdulillah, most of all, for the ability to serve millions of people each year—each one of them a precious life.

Islamic Relief has long had a well-known, very strong system providing humanitarian aid internationally. In recent years, we've continued to work to strengthen that mission, but we've also focused on increasing our work here at home. In addition, we've connected with

major agencies and nongovernmental organizations, so we can reach more people. We must work together for the sake of those in need.

*Thank you so much for 20 years of working together to make the world a better place.*

Sincerely,

Abed Ayoub  
President, Islamic Relief USA



# CONTENTS

---

6. INTRODUCTION 8. PREDECESSOR 10. EARLY YEARS 12. THE TEST AND GROWTH  
14. WAR ZONES 16. NATURAL DISASTERS 18. RAMADAN AND QURBANI 20. ORPHANS  
22. DEVELOPMENT 24. HELPING AT HOME 26. WORKING TOGETHER 28. PUBLIC AFFAIRS  
30. SPECIAL EVENTS 32. VOLUNTEERS 36. LOOKING AHEAD 38. THANK YOU

**Creative Director and Photo Editor:** Ridwan Adhami

**Managing Editor:** Lina Hashem

**Contributing Writers:** Bilal Aslam, Lina Hashem, Zainab Hassan and Nabeelah Naeem

**Copy Editor:** Nada Shawish

**Designers:** Zainab Hassan and Ali Hussain

**Production Intern:** Anisah Khan

**Photographers:** Ridwan Adhami, Bilal Aslam, Zainab Hassan, Anwar Khan and Nabeelah Naeem

**Programs:** Bilal Aslam and Sannia Qazi

Thank you to all who contributed imagery and content from around the world.

Photographs © Islamic Relief



# 20 years ago...



**TOP:** Co-founder Anwar Khan visits a camp in Bosnia in the mid-1990s.

**MIDDLE:** A man accepts a box of food in Chechnya in the 1990s.

**BOTTOM:** Co-founders Anwar Khan and Jehangir Malik in the early days.

... a handful of men and women, mostly young people with a couple of mentors, decided to do what they could to relieve the suffering they saw on the news.

They set to work in their apartments, stuffing envelopes with fliers they made about the refugees in Bosnia, because that war was the major emergency at the time, and innocent people needed food, water and warmth to survive.

They visited youth groups and conferences, and worked day and night. After their first real office opened the next summer, sometimes one or another would work so late that he'd fall asleep there—and then wake up and work some more.

From that dedication and sincerity, alhamdulillah, grew an organization that now helps millions of people every year. The goal is still the same: to alleviate poverty and suffering, and give people the items they need to survive and better yet, the tools they need to thrive.

*But it's not us doing this—it's you!*

We're humbled to serve as the link between *you* and people in need. Because like our founders, you want to do what you can to help out struggling mothers and fathers, little children and the elderly, and young people trying to get by and build a bright future. We just help your assistance get to them.

Alhamdulillah, we are so grateful to Allah for letting us work together to help people in need.

Thank you for choosing to work with us! Let's do even more in the years ahead.



An Islamic Relief Bosnia staff member helps distribute food in Bosnia in the mid-1990s.



# PREDECESSOR ISLAMIC RELIEF WORLDWIDE

## All in the family.

Islamic Relief USA was started in California in 1993, but the family tree starts nine years earlier in the United Kingdom.

In the early 1980s, Hany El Banna was a young doctor in the United Kingdom who was focused on starting his medical career, but tragedies on the news kept tugging his heart and attention away. First, the Sabra and Shatila massacre in Lebanon. Then drought in Sudan.

He couldn't just sit there and watch, so the Egyptian-born El Banna arranged in 1983 to go to a medical conference in Khartoum to see the situation up close.

"He was dumbstruck," writes biographer Suma Din in "Dr. Hany El Banna: A Servant to the World's Poorest People." "...Instant shock. Orphaned infants waited to die under trees ... Men and women were too weak to look for food, their bodies exposing their skeletons. ... It was particularly painful to witness the scarcity of resources, when he knew the rest of the world had enough to help them."

By the next year, El Banna and other volunteers had founded Islamic Relief to try to bring that help to the people who needed it.



Islamic Relief Worldwide co-founder Hany El Banna visits children in Chechnya in 1995.

His first donation came from his young nephew named Bassem, who gave him the 20 pence in his pocket that he had been saving for a chocolate bar.

*"Take this for the people in Khartoum," Bassem told him.  
"I don't need the chocolate."*

From that humble beginning, the Islamic Relief family of charities has brought aid to more than 42 million people over three decades.

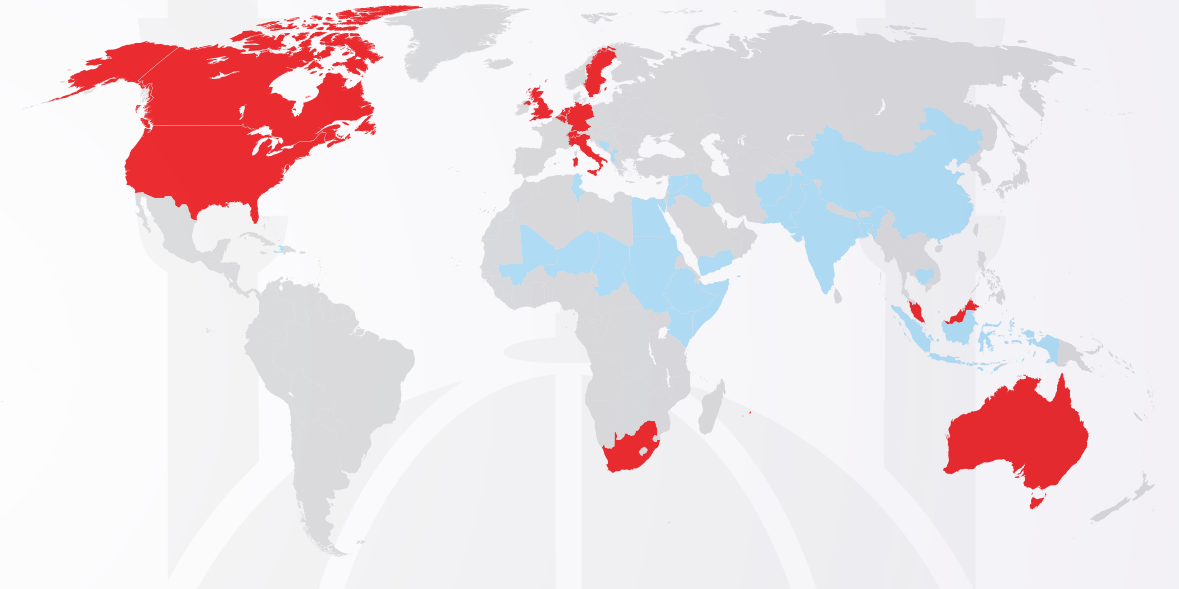


Islamic Relief Worldwide co-founder Hany El Banna visits children in Sudan, where his inspiration started.

## ISLAMIC RELIEF WORLDWIDE IN 2013

### AFFILIATED OFFICES

- AUSTRALIA
- BELGIUM
- CANADA
- ENGLAND
- GERMANY
- HOLLAND
- ITALY
- MALAYSIA
- MAURITIUS
- SOUTH AFRICA
- SWEDEN
- SWITZERLAND



### FIELD OFFICES

- AFGHANISTAN
- ALBANIA
- BANGLADESH
- BOSNIA
- CHAD
- CHINA
- EGYPT
- ETHIOPIA
- HAITI
- INDIA
- INDONESIA
- IRAQ
- JORDAN
- KENYA
- KOSOVO
- LEBANON
- LIBYA
- MALAWI
- MALI
- NIGER
- PAKISTAN
- PALESTINE
- RUSSIA (CHECHNYA)
- SOMALIA
- SRI LANKA
- SUDAN (NORTH)
- SUDAN (SOUTH)
- SYRIA
- TUNISIA
- YEMEN

PEOPLE HELPED SINCE 1984: MORE THAN 42 MILLION



# EARLY YEARS

## 1993-2000

### *Small beginnings, big dreams.*

Donors from the United States now contribute more to Islamic Relief's projects than any other affiliate. That all started when Islamic Relief Worldwide founder Dr. Hany El Banna came to visit California to spread awareness about the war in Bosnia and to ask for help.

Ahmed El Bendary was there to listen to El Banna's talk, and he decided to establish Islamic Relief in the United States. El Bendary and his wife Jill filed for incorporation in 1993.

El Bendary said, "It was a dream for us when we started Islamic Relief in the U.S., that Islamic Relief would be at least the equivalent of the Red Cross for the Muslim community as well as for the larger community. Alhamdulillah, this is the beauty of being an active Muslim—that you don't know how to dream small."

One of the earliest Islamic Relief USA workers was Anwar Khan, who started in California in 1994. He recalled, "Our plan was Surah Al-Maun: 'Have you seen those that rejected the faith, rejected the orphan, that urge not the feeding of the needy?' Women were being raped in Bosnia and men were being tortured and killed. We had just graduated from college and we wanted to help anyone in need around the world. We wanted to spread peace and goodwill to all mankind and help people."

The group set to work getting to know their community and spreading the word about people who needed help.

"We would go to every picnic, every *aqiqah*, every wedding we could so that we became part of the community," Khan said.

The small group worked out of their own apartments until they opened their first office in Downey, CA, in the summer of 1994.



Bosnia, 1994

*"There were sisters and young brothers, all different ages, sitting down, filing envelopes and sending fliers," El Bendary said.*  
*"... People would be fundraising at night ... and during the days they would be doing data entry and whatever they can to help. ... It created a beautiful family and brotherhood/sisterhood environment where all of us were very close."*



Bosnia, 1994

El Bendary—then-CEO and chairman of the board, whose office also served as prayer room and sometimes storage closet—recalled the first time he visited a mosque for fundraising. It was a low-income community with very big hearts.

"All the brothers and sisters who were in the mosque didn't have that much, but when the brother got up to ask them for donations, they were donating ... 25 cents, 50 cents, \$1, some few pennies here and there," he said. "... That was the difference between them walking home or taking the bus. The total funds raised from that mosque was about \$80 but subhanAllah, to me that was the seeds that grew to be Islamic Relief."

The other founders recall similar generosity. Khan remembers a young sister in high school who handed him a check for an odd number—he recalls it as being \$317.38 ... every penny she had earned that summer. He even remembers a toddler handing him her piggy bank for the people of Sarajevo.

The first relief campaign raised money for victims of the war in Bosnia, to send them food and wood for cooking and warmth. Later campaigns sent similar humanitarian relief to victims of violence in Chechnya, then Iraq and then Kosovo and Palestine. Natural disasters also presented the need for relief, including earthquakes in Afghanistan and Turkey and drought in parts of Africa. Wherever there was suffering, the Islamic Relief workers wanted to help.

The young staff and volunteers started their work mainly by reaching out to youth groups and student associations, building a strong and wide grassroots following. Only later did they rely more heavily on mosque communities and the large fundraising dinners.

This grassroots approach formed a strong foundation that would stand the organization in good stead through the tests that were to come.



# THE TEST 2001-2004

**Islamic Relief USA co-founder Anwar Khan was in his car on the morning of September 11, 2001, when he heard on the radio that the first tower had been hit. He pulled over and cried for the victims. Then he called the Islamic Relief office in California. Nobody answered.**

The office manager, concerned for the staff's safety, had closed the office and headed to a press conference. Khan reopened it.

"I didn't want us to be closed out of fear that something would happen to us," Khan said. "We hadn't done anything wrong and I thought we could do a lot of good."

They received dozens of death threats just for being an Islamic organization, but the staff decided not to hide. Instead, they sprang into action. Workers and volunteers in New York and in Los Angeles organized blood drives, and the New York team distributed food to first responders at Ground Zero.

The following weeks, months and even years were rough on many Muslim organizations. Investigations began, and by the end of Ramadan—mid-December that year—several organizations had been shut down.

Auditors moved in to Islamic Relief's offices and investigated—for nearly 10 months. Islamic Relief USA's future now depended on eight years of records.

Alhamdulillah, the records were careful and complete. Islamic Relief USA passed the audit.

But another challenge remained—fear. Some Muslim community groups and mosques were afraid to host or attend events. Yet donations actually increased, especially as Eid al-Fitr neared and Muslims looked for a trustworthy organization through which to give their Zakah.

"People who would normally give hundreds gave thousands," Khan said. "Some Muslims weren't scared to donate."

Islamic Relief wasn't scared to use those donations either. With war inevitably producing hardship and suffering in Afghanistan, Islamic Relief launched a major campaign for relief for war victims.

"We were proud to be American and proud to be Muslim," Khan said, "and the way to overcome the fear was to carry on—and to increase our activities."



*Islamic Relief USA staff and guests in the Virginia headquarters in 2011.*

# GROWTH 2005-TODAY

*All grown up – but just getting started.*

Islamic Relief USA leaders had planned to open new offices just before the September 11 attacks. The plan was derailed for four years. Finally, in 2005, the organization—having survived an enormous test—was ready for a growth spurt.

After operating from the Burbank, CA, office for more than a decade, Islamic Relief opened new offices in Dallas, New Jersey, Washington D.C. and Chicago.

Islamic Relief USA's finances—and ability to send relief—also grew quickly, in part due to the

formation of partnerships that began to bring in large in-kind donations.

IRUSA president Abed Ayoub joined Islamic Relief USA in November 2008, when the organization had about 67 employees and was receiving about \$24 million in annual cash donations. Five years later, the organization's donations have nearly doubled.

Ayoub has continued to work to form partnerships with other organizations. The goal is always what he regularly reminds staff: To maximize the benefit to those who need it.





# ‘PEOPLE PAY ATTENTION TO MY PAIN’

Palestine, 2012

*From the beginning, donors have sent humanitarian relief to war victims. We share 3 stories.*

## Sarajevo, Bosnia, 1994:

Islamic Relief USA co-founder Anwar Khan was on United Nations plane, flying over Serbian troops encircling Zagreb. They touched down, right in the Bosnian war zone. Khan ran off the plane into the trenches—wearing a bullet-proof vest but no helmet—snipers firing all around.

*It was a baptism of fire.*

At the local Islamic Relief office in Sarajevo, workers were living in the cold with no fire, washing in icy water and subsisting on cans of old Qurban meat. Shells exploded every night.

One night, one of the local Islamic Relief workers asked him why he wasn't eating. Was the cold salami not appetizing? Was he cold, or was it the gunfire bothering him?

He answered:

“My problem is that I have seen so much pain and misery with the children here, and I am afraid I will not represent them properly when I go back to the USA.”

The local worker put his hand on Khan's shoulder and said, ‘Your job is not to fix the problem – it's to try. Allah will help the people—you have to just try, and trust in Allah.’”

## Ingushetia, Russia, 2000:

In Severni, Islamic Relief USA co-founder Jehangir Malik met Raisa while they were distributing the salami sausages from the 12,000 Qurbanis performed for the Chechens. Raisa began to cry after receiving her portion. He asked why, through a translator. She said: “I have not eaten meat for six months, and I cry for two reasons: One, that I wish this tyranny does not happen to anyone else in the world. And two, out of joy that alhamdulillah there are still people who remember us today and have not forgotten us. Alhamdulillah, there are still people who pay attention to my pain. I shall not forget the people nor the name of Islamic Relief which has brought relief during the most terrible hardships we have faced in our lives.”

Malik and other workers visited the rail car where she was staying with her sick, elderly husband who had tuberculosis. When they left, she wanted to give them something, to say thank you, and so they would remember her and pray for her. She gave them one of her last prized possessions: her *tasbih* beads.

*(As told to Pakistan Link)*



*Children happily line up for class at the Ramada camp for Libyan refugees in spring 2011.*

## Ramada, Tunisia, 2011:

“The 1,400 inhabitants of this camp share the same narrative: they were forced to flee their homes and abandon their possessions as violence gripped the western part of Libya. Amid constant shelling and bombardment, men rushed women and children into trucks and drove for two hours through treacherous mountain terrain to arrive in Tunisia. Inhabitants have told me that their children—traumatized by what they have seen—were having difficulty trusting others. Many I spoke with were hesitant to reveal their names or say where they came from.

But today, I can see the positive effects of [Islamic Relief's] school program, and am most amazed at the transformation of these brave Libyan children. As soon one comes upon the children at the camp, the first thing they do is extend their hands to shake yours. Children at Ramada smile as they welcome visitors to what has become their temporary home. They are eager to engage visitors in conversation—introducing themselves and asking about who you are and where you come from. As a mother myself, it's difficult imagine the level of stress these children must have endured. I find myself comforted by their confidence and smiles as they wave their victory signs, showing pride and courage.”

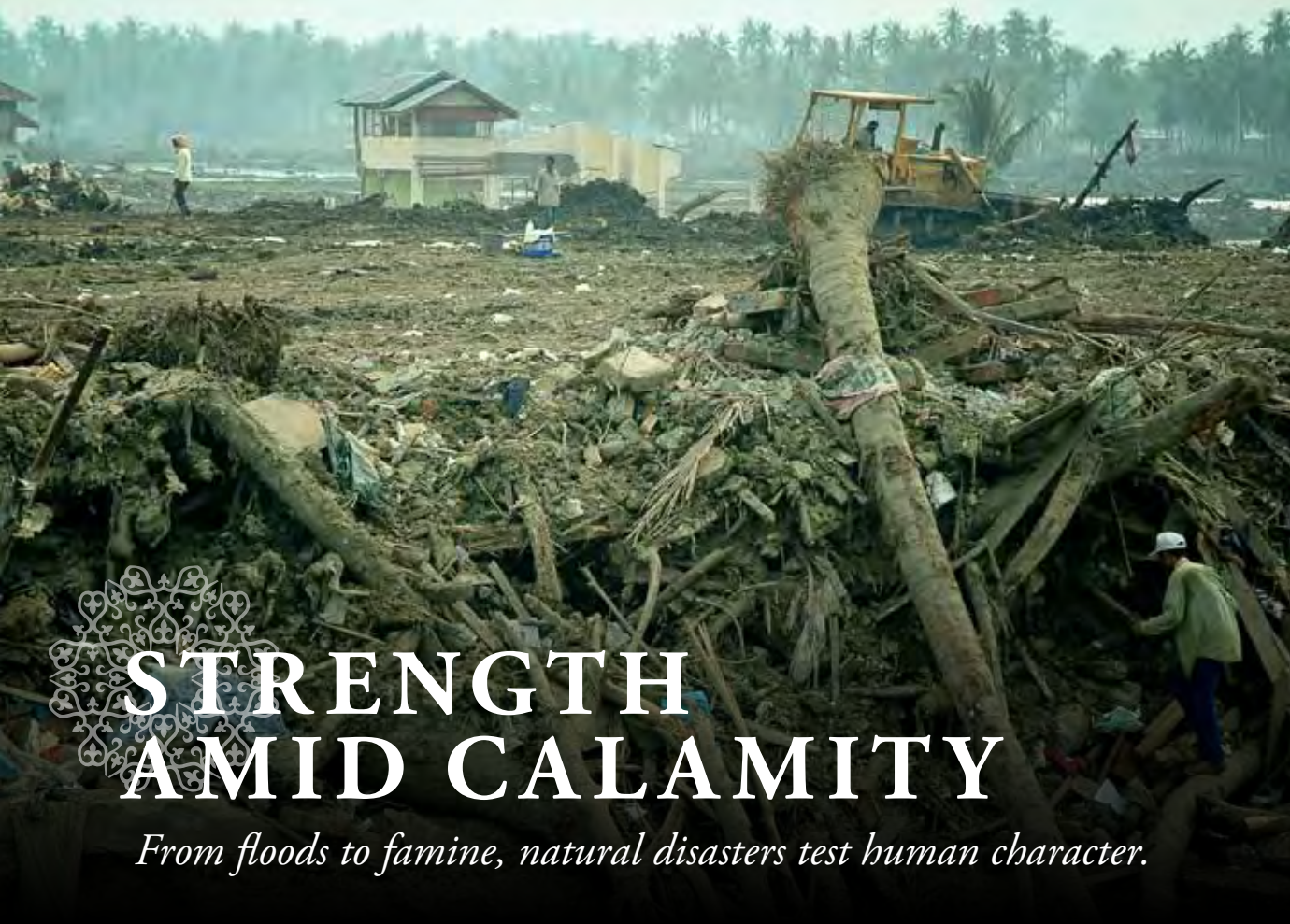
*(By Asma Yousef, in IRUSA blog)*



*Jehangir Malik visits refugees in Chechnya in the 1990s.*







# STRENGTH AMID CALAMITY

*From floods to famine, natural disasters test human character.*

## Mogadishu, Somalia, 2011:

“Abdul Rahman had pneumonia and Abdul Razik was malnourished. Another one of their little brothers was not as lucky and had passed away. And yet their mother was sitting there as we interviewed her ... she turns to our field office liason and asks him to ask me what my name is. I say, ‘Ridwan.’ She smiles and says something in Somali. I ask what she said, and he tells me that she is pregnant and if she gives birth to a boy she will name him Ridwan. I walked out of the tent and had to fight back tears...”

*...In that simple exchange there was nothing about death, nothing about famine or hunger, nothing about despair ... it was a moment of hope that the child growing inside her would have a future...*

I put my hands to the sky and I said insha'Allah.”

*(By Ridwan Adhami at Scars & Smiles Gallery, 2012)*

*Abdul Rahman and Abdul Razik visit a health clinic in Somalia for treatment with their mother in fall 2011.*



## Bandeh Aceh, Indonesia, 2005:

When a wall of water of unimaginable size crashed through Indonesia on December 26, 2004, Islamic Relief USA co-founder Ahmed El Bendary traveled to Bandeh Aceh. He was standing at a collapsed building almost a week after the tsunami when a girl was pulled out—alive! She was about 11 or 12, and she had a can of soda in her hand.

El Bendary said, “In spite of her being thirsty and almost dying—she was dying because subhanAllah she was trapped for a week—she didn’t open the can of soda to drink it.

“When they got her out, her first question was she didn’t know who owned the can of soda and she didn’t know if she could drink it. She asked if it was allowed.

“She made everyone cry. The minister of housing was standing next to me and he broke down crying like a child.

“That was the sense of morality that was implanted in the heart and mind of this young sister: In spite of her need, she couldn’t touch the drink because it wasn’t hers.”



# GIFTS TO FILL STOMACHS— AND RAISE SPIRITS

Islamic Relief USA's donors have provided food during Ramadan and meat for Udhiyah/Qurbani since our earliest years. In the past three years alone, your gifts have brightened the holidays for more than 2 million people!

Ramadan food packages allow families to break their fast with a full, nutritious meal at the end of the long day of fasting. And many times, the Qurbani meat you send is the first meat they may have tasted in months.

Here are a few of the people our donors have sent these special holiday gifts over the years.



# RAMADAN FOOD RECIPIENTS 2012

<b>SUDAN</b> 56,569	<b>EGYPT</b> 43,715	<b>INDIA</b>   10,000
<b>PALESTINE</b> 25,000	<b>ETHIOPIA</b> 21,984	<b>BANGLADESH</b>   8,567
<b>MALI</b> 20,629	<b>NIGER</b> 17,500	<b>CHECHNYA</b>   7,827
<b>SOMALIA</b> 15,909	<b>LEBANON</b> 15,030	<b>IRAQ</b>   5,400
<b>PAKISTAN</b> 14,764	<b>JORDAN</b> 14,645	<b>KENYA</b>   3,600
<b>YEMEN</b> 12,500	<b>AFGHANISTAN</b> 10,798	<b>TUNISIA</b>   3,000
		<b>ZIMBABWE</b>   2,794
		<b>SOUTH AFRICA</b>   2,500
		<b>LIBYA</b>   2,500
		<b>CHINA</b>   2,500
		<b>SRI LANKA</b>   1,000
		<b>TOTAL</b> <b>318,731</b>



# HOPE FOR A CHILD

Islamic Relief USA donors were sponsoring 513 orphans in January 2003. The number has grown fast, and in 2013, U.S. donors sponsored more than 11,000 children—about one-third of all orphans sponsored by the Islamic Relief family worldwide.

What difference does it make? A sponsor's love and care gives each of those children a better life and a chance at a brighter future. Here's what a few wrote recently to their sponsors ...



*"Dear Sponsor,*

*Assalamu alaikum. I hope that you receive this letter in good health. I still remember your telephone call and your tender voice and your interest in me ... thank you, and I hope to see you my dear sponsor.*

*As you know I live in a refugee camp, and we don't have a lot of necessary needs and all the time there are problems and attacks, I always feel horror and afraid because of that, and I am afraid to think that one day I will lose my mother too. ...*

*I would like to thank you for your help and support, whether it is moral or material support, I hope to see you soon.*

*Your daughter,  
Isra'a"*

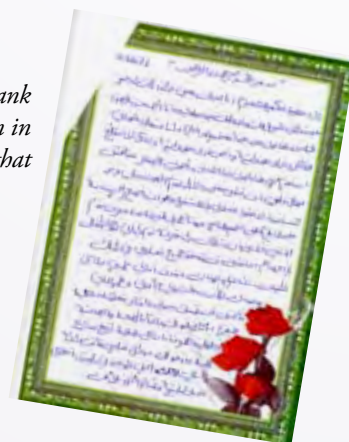


*"Dear Sponsor,*

*I extend my sincere thanks and gratitude, words can't express our feeling, and I thank Allah because He sent you to me, and without you I don't know what would happen in my life because my father died and I lost everything, and from the moment I know that you helped me, I felt happy and protection that someone cares to give me help.*

*... I ask Allah to increase your reward and to let you always be as a support for everyone who needs your help ...*

*—Sajedah"*



## SPONSORSHIP THROUGH THE YEARS

	ORPHANS SPONSORED*
2003	513
2004	1,273
2005	2,601
2006	4,954
2007	6,278
2008	9,049
2009	8,412
2010	7,718
2011	7,671
2012	7,480
2013	10,788

\* AS OF JANUARY EACH YEAR





# BUILDING LIVES AND DREAMS

Early in its history, Islamic Relief added development work to its existing work of emergency humanitarian aid. After meeting people's urgent needs when a disaster strikes, Islamic Relief often stays in the area to rebuild destroyed infrastructure—and many times to find creative solutions to long-term problems. Examples of these solutions include irrigation systems in Mali to reduce the people's vulnerability to recurring droughts, and construction of drainage systems in Pakistan to safely drain away the floodwaters that wash over the country each monsoon season.

**Bilal Aslam, Islamic Relief USA's International Programs Coordinator, visited Pakistan recently and saw the effect of our donors' dollars at work to help rebuild a village.**

Last year, I visited Pakistan for the first time in over 10 years, when I went with Islamic Relief to visit our flood relief projects. I had the opportunity to visit villages in Southern Punjab, as well as some of the most devastated and impoverished communities I had ever seen, in Southern Sindh.

In Muzaffargarh, I visited a small village that was completely destroyed in the floods. It had since been completely rebuilt, with families receiving flood-resistant shelters, hand pumps, brand new latrines, and even seeds to start farming again.

Being a native Punjabi speaker, I was able to understand the villagers and heard their stories firsthand.

The purpose of my trip was to help evaluate the programs we funded, which were implemented by our field staff in Pakistan, yet I was showered with gratitude and praise by the villagers, as if I had personally laid the bricks to their new shelters. It felt unfair to be the one to receive any credit for the generosity and hard work of others.

One woman in the village said to me: "You

*"I realized the impact that comes from the small efforts we all collectively make. Everything adds up. Every little piece rebuilds a life, a village, a dream."*

weren't here when the floods came. You didn't see our condition then, so you don't know." She went on to tell me that they were up to their waists in water, that when the rain came, it just wouldn't stop, not until they had lost everything. IRUSA restored her home and her livelihood, she told us.

"Islamic Relief gave us our lives back," she said, "so we have to thank you now."

It was during this visit that I realized the impact that comes from the small efforts we all collectively make. Everything adds up. Every little piece rebuilds a life, a village, a dream. People have their faith restored in humanity.

Throughout our travels in the country, we saw broken buildings, scattered bricks, piles of rubble, and remnants of homes and villages that were vibrant before the floods. Coming upon the areas where Islamic Relief was working, though, felt almost like I was visiting my own family in their village again. It felt like it could be home again.

Looking back now, I feel that that is the greatest outcome of our post-disaster development work. It isn't flashy. It doesn't uproot people's lives, or change their environments and lifestyles completely. It restores normalcy. It helps people

overcome the stress and trauma of a disaster, which robbed them of their homes, their tranquility. It gives them the chance to go back to living their quiet, peaceful lives again.

After a disaster, going back to normal becomes your dream, and thankfully Islamic Relief helped make those dreams come true.



*International Programs Coordinator Bilal Aslam visits Pakistan in 2012.*





# OUR NEIGHBORS' RIGHTS

**Islamic Relief USA has been helping its neighbors in the United States almost from the beginning. Over the decades, Islamic Relief USA's donors have shared their zakah with neighbors in need and supported community initiatives such as homeless shelters, health clinics and food pantries. An annual Day of Dignity has inspired community service nationwide since 2002.**

**The past few years have seen an increased focus at Islamic Relief on helping our neighbors, who have some of the strongest rights on us under Islamic principles.**

New initiatives include a program to help low-income residents save for financial goals, as well as a joint effort with the U.S. Department of Agriculture to provide meals for low-income children.

In the past two years, Islamic Relief USA has also developed and quickly expanded a domestic hands-on emergency response program. In 2011, a Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) was formed, and Islamic Relief USA—working with the Red Cross—began to train volunteers. Two years later, more than 800 volunteers have been trained, and teams have responded in more than a dozen natural disasters, from wildfires in Colorado to tornadoes in the Midwest to hurricanes on the East Coast.

In just two years, Islamic Relief USA's DART has become a national voice in disaster relief. IRUSA was one of 11 organizations invited by the Red Cross to a conference in Washington, D.C., in spring 2013 to help form a disaster response plan for the year.

Lea said, "Everyone that operates in the disaster response community, from FEMA to Red Cross leadership, they say,

*'You haven't been doing this for all that long, but we see you everywhere.'*"

That's exactly how he wants it.

*Islamic Relief USA's very first domestic emergency relief effort consisted of \$5,000 sent to help survivors of the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing. Ironically, in our 20th year, we again provided assistance in Oklahoma—but this time, in person, as teams flew in to assist with tornado relief.*

*Staff member Zainab Hassan traveled with the team in Oklahoma in May 2013. She writes about resilience amid disaster:*

It was past 1 a.m. when I landed in Oklahoma. As we navigated toward the resource center Islamic Relief was helping to operate, we ran into one closed street after another. It looked like a set for one of those end-of-the-world movies. The sky was dark with huge, heavy gray clouds hanging low and threatening. You could barely see the street under all the rubble.

In place of what used to be houses were piles of wood, brick and debris. Full neighborhoods were torn up and spit out. Mixed in the mess were clothes, books, toys—I saw rubber duckies—and broken dishes. Pieces of the residents' lives.

Cars were turned upside-down or sideways, with broken glass everywhere. Some looked like they were cut open by a giant can opener. The smell of burning plastic and musty molding things hung in the air.

Before we had even opened the resource center the next morning, people were already lined up at the door. The first person I spoke to was an older gentleman who had lost the home he had just finally paid off; it was completely destroyed. Gone were the new appliances he had installed,

the new cabinets, the recessed lights, the newly paved driveway, his daughter's lovely garden and all the time and effort that went into it.

He saw my hesitation and I expected him to be annoyed by it, and by my questions. But despite all he went through, he tried to comfort me. He was telling me that he'd be all right, he said he felt much better just talking to me and that he was grateful that people like me come to help. I told him I was just the photographer, that I wasn't qualified to officially help, but he said I was qualified because I was human.

His optimism was mind-boggling. He stood in his destroyed neighborhood, counted his blessings and believed everything would be all right. And he began picking up his life.

I remembered how at home, I was too lazy to clean up my bedroom; I felt it was so messy I wasn't sure where to start. All my previous worries didn't even count compared to his situation. Now I'm just grateful to have a room to clean up, a healthy, safe and happy family to go home to.



A DART volunteer greets tornado survivors in Oklahoma.



An Oklahoma shopping center after the 2013 tornado.



# WORKING TOGETHER



In 2004-2005, Islamic Relief USA turned a new page when we joined with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to send necessities to Indonesia for tsunami survivors. That began a relationship that has lasted until today. Working together with other organizations increases Islamic Relief's efficiency—for example, when another organization can provide a large donation of soaps and toothbrushes, the Islamic Relief network of affiliates can deliver it efficiently and securely. It also expands Islamic Relief's reach and influence in advocating for relief around the world. In recent years, Islamic Relief USA has focused on finding new ways to work with other like-minded organizations.



**Red Cross:** *"The Red Cross really benefits from our partnership with IRUSA. ... I don't think we have any partner that's any more dedicated and enthusiastic than IRUSA."*

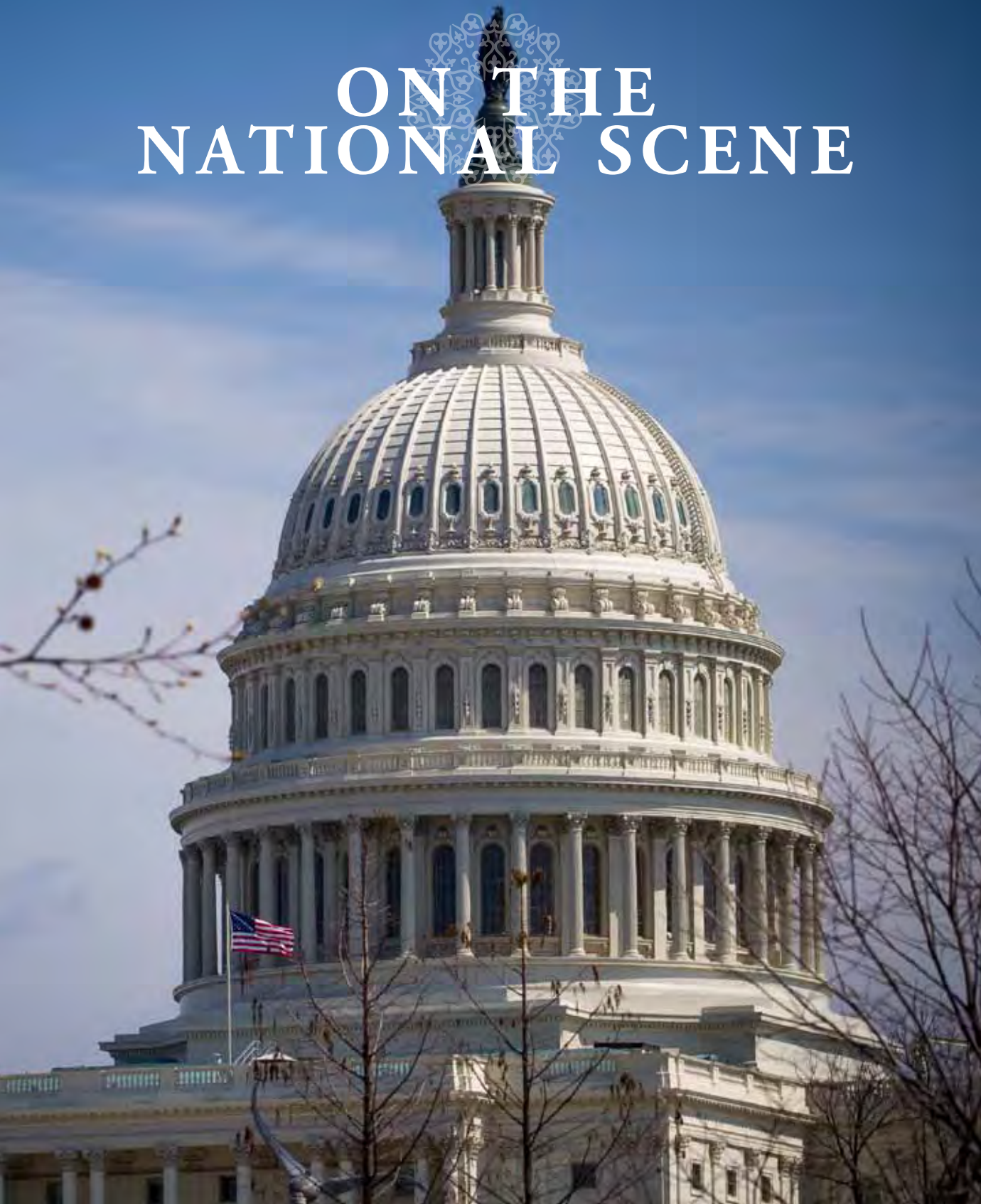
—Jerry DiFrancisco, President of Humanitarian Services for the American Red Cross



*The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is one of IRUSA's longest-standing friends in humanitarian work.*



# ON THE NATIONAL SCENE



## *Speaking for those who have no voice*

By the time Islamic Relief USA was just over a decade old, it was ready to be involved in the national dialogue. With a new office space right in the middle of all the action in the U.S. capital, employees could better engage with other nongovernmental organizations, and occasionally with government workers.

These efforts grew with the formation of an official Public Affairs department in 2011, and Islamic Relief quickly became a known name on Capitol Hill.

“The reaction has always been positive,” said Government Affairs Representative Jihad Saleh. “They were happy to find out there were active community organizations in their districts focusing on helping people in need.”

Employees now regularly meet with members of Congress and other government officials

*“Part of our work is helping redefine who Muslims are in the public perception.”*

—Jihad Saleh,  
Government Affairs  
Representative



to discuss ways to coordinate aid. IRUSA representatives attended President Obama’s holiday reception in 2011 and the White House iftar in 2012, and IRUSA was the sponsor of a joint USDA and USAID iftar in 2012 after being a guest in the past.

But the ultimate purpose is finding new ways to work together to help ever more people in need. Islamic Relief’s president participates on committees formed by USAID, the State Department and the Federal Emergency Management Agency. And by working together with both governmental and nongovernmental organizations, IRUSA has been able to ultimately get more help to more people. For instance, the Department of Health and Human Services has connected IRUSA with state-level departments that subsequently offered free health testing for the homeless at the annual Day of Dignity events nationwide.

Saleh said, “It’s all about working together for the benefit of the community.”

**TO LEARN HOW YOU CAN TAKE PART VISIT [IRUSA.ORG](http://IRUSA.ORG)**



*Islamic Relief employees take part in a pre-Ramadan event on Capitol Hill with Congressman Keith Ellison in 2012.*



# SPECIAL EVENTS

From time to time, Islamic Relief USA joins with Muslim singers, actors, athletes and other celebrities to offer a special treat for our donors at events. In 2006, singer Sami Yusuf joined us for an Evening of Inspiration tour across the United States, which became an annual tradition with a different lineup every year. Celebrities like Egypt's Hanan Turk and Pakistan's Shahid Afridi also have visited the United States to speak at Islamic Relief fundraising dinners.



AZHAR USMAN    DAWUD WHARNSBY    SAMI YUSUF    LEFTIST    JUNAID JAMSHED

In 2013, Pakistani actor Fawad Khan and singer Alman Nusrat were two of the special guests who joined Islamic Relief for a series of special dinners. Here they explain why they wanted to take part.



Fawad Khan

**Islamic Relief USA:** *What do you hope to accomplish with Islamic Relief USA?*

**Khan:** Helping out widows and orphans in Pakistan ... There is an extremely varying economic and social

terrain in Pakistan. It is very dangerous when such disparities are there in society.

**Islamic Relief USA:** *What is your message for donors?*

**Khan:** My message to the donors would be something I periodically say: Charity is one big circle and it goes around. If you are ever, God forbid, in

a position that you are entitled to someone else's charity, then there will be a lot of people that will be standing behind you. I encourage them to donate. It is not just donations but it is a development of society and community. It helps save countries and communities all together.

**Islamic Relief USA:** *What is your message for beneficiaries that are going through difficult times?*

**Khan:** My message—I do not think they need my message, honestly speaking. They are the ones that are giving us the message that they need help. To give us that message, I think it takes a great deal of pride to admit that you need someone else's charity. So my message to them is whatever way we can be there for you, we shall try to be there for you. I am wishing them all the best.



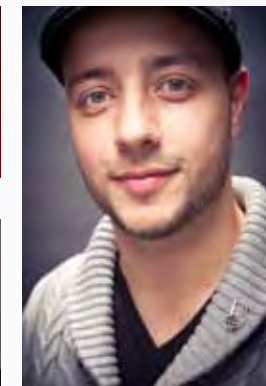
HANAN TURK    MO AMER    MUSTAFA HOSNY    IRFAN MAKKI



THE NARCICYST    MAHER ZAIN    PREACHER MOSS    OMAR OFFENDUM



ZAIN BHIKHA



MAHER ZAIN



PREACHER MOSS



OMAR OFFENDUM



YOUNIS KHAN



Alman Nusrat

**Islamic Relief USA:** *How's your experience been so far working with IRUSA?*

**Alman Nusrat:** Alhamdulillah with the tour you visit a new city every night, and every night you are reminded

of the blessings that you have. I just love being here and working with Islamic Relief because that reminder is just priceless. Meeting those people is priceless. Just seeing them smile to give something to someone is amazing. I love to see that smile; I love to see that heart. And alhamdulillah, a majority of these donors have been sisters. Just to see all of these women are coming together to help these people, it is so inspiring.

**Islamic Relief USA:** *What is your message for beneficiaries that are going through difficult times?*

**Nusrat:** My message to the beneficiaries is alhamdulillah that Allah (swt) is with you. In one of my songs I say: "A little child crying all night, no family around, nothing in sight, enveloped in darkness he's lost sight but he finds in his heart a light that shines."

You don't know what you are worth, but you are worth a lot. Allah (swt) is proving that He loves you with all of these people coming together to just help you.

**Islamic Relief USA:** *What have you learned from this tour?*

**Nusrat:** My sister recently gave birth to my first niece, alhamdulillah. I know she will be growing up in a world where there are terrific brothers and sisters raising money and doing things and making a change in this world. So I am just honored to be here.





# OUR VOLUNTEERS MAKE A LASTING DIFFERENCE



IRUSA President Abed Ayoub (left) and then-Volunteer Coordinator Nazia Hossain (right) present the Presidential Volunteer Service Award, signed by President Obama, to a volunteer in 2012.



Volunteers distribute hygiene kits, clothes and more at the 2012 Day of Dignity event in The Bronx, New York City.



Disaster Assistance Response Team volunteers help out after Hurricane Sandy in New York in 2012.



Nazia Hossain was in high school the first time she heard about Islamic Relief. When workers visited her area of Texas, she would hold donation boxes and pass out fliers. She did this for a few years.

last year to become full-time coordinator for her children. In any one year, she estimates that 3,000 to 4,000 people are volunteering for Islamic Relief USA—from distributing fliers to serving the homeless on Day of Dignity to responding when tornadoes or hurricanes strike.

Volunteers are all ages—older mentors offer years of skills and experience, while the youth have always lent a dynamic energy that is vital to Islamic Relief.

Then one day, she and a friend got the idea to try to run a mini orphan drive and to each get a child sponsored for each day in Ramadan. She passed her goal, with 33 orphans sponsored.

“Without the volunteers, there would be no Islamic Relief,” said IRUSA co-founder Anwar Khan. “We have extremely hard-working and loyal volunteers—they’re our ambassadors and emissaries on behalf of those who have no voice.”

The next year—now working for Islamic Relief—she worked with student associations and together they secured sponsorships for 427 orphans.

And the next year, she ran a national campaign that found sponsors for more than 1,200 orphans sponsored.

That’s more than 1,600 children with more food to eat, warm clothes to buy, a better chance to go to school and more access to the doctor when they were sick. It happened because of the help of Allah, 1,600 generous sponsors, many volunteers—and one person behind it who took things one step at a time and did what she could to make a difference for children in need. It just shows what a difference each person can make.

Hossain served as Islamic Relief USA’s first national volunteer coordinator until she left

**TO JOIN ISLAMIC RELIEF’S  
COMMUNITY OF VOLUNTEERS  
VISIT [IRUSA.ORG/VOLUNTEER](http://IRUSA.ORG/VOLUNTEER)**



DART volunteers give support to neighbors in crisis.





# HE NEEDS

*You*

Somewhere in the world, there is an orphan waiting for your help. This child has already suffered the trauma of losing a parent and now faces the daily struggles of just finding the basics needed to survive. Your donation can give him or her nutritious food, warm clothing, and access to education and medical care. Your simple gift can provide these basic necessities—basics that can make the difference between a life of struggle and a life of hope and dreams.



1

SPONSOR AN ORPHAN OR  
DONATE TO THE ORPHAN FUND.



2

SPREAD THE WORD AND ASK YOUR  
FRIENDS TO CARE FOR A CHILD TOO.



3

MAKE A LASTING DIFFERENCE IN YOUR LIFE—  
AND IN THE LIFE OF A CHILD WHO NEEDS YOU NOW.

# SPONSOR AN

# ORPHAN TODAY!





## DREAMING EVEN BIGGER

Twenty years ago in California, our founders dreamed big. They dreamed of helping people all around the world ... of being a resource people turned to when they needed help ... of serving as the link for those who wanted to provide that help.

In 2013, at Islamic Relief USA, we're still expanding on the dream.

Current leaders see Islamic Relief USA continuing to expand our international work, reaching out more to help our neighbors at home, and expanding on development programs here and abroad.

"We want to empower people—not just help them in an emergency, but empower them so they don't get into an emergency," said co-founder Anwar Khan, current Vice President of Fund Development.

---

*"We have a lot to share, and we have a lot to do.  
And I believe we are the untapped talent in this society."*

—IRUSA President Abed Ayoub

---

May Allah guide us and assist us in this journey. And may He help us work together with you to reach and help as many people as we can.

*Thank you for being part of our story.*





*Thank you  
for making a  
lasting difference.*



# ISLAMIC RELIEF USA

P.O. Box 22250, Alexandria, VA 22304 • 1.855.447.1001 • [info@irusa.org](mailto:info@irusa.org)



# IRUSA.ORG

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A BETTER WORLD.

FRIEND US ON:



FOLLOW US ON:

