



# partnership

with the needy

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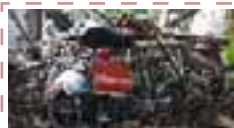
## Lebanon

life after war



Ongoing crisis  
Darfur

Pages 24-25



Earthquake  
Indonesia

Page 38 - 40



Ramadhan  
Food parcels

Pages 36-37

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In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Compassionate.

# Contents

Lebanon / Introduction	3
Lebanon / Middle East crisis	4 - 5
Lebanon / Venturing south	6 - 7
Lebanon / Reporting from Lebanon	8 - 9
Lebanon / Children and conflict	10
Palestine / Middle East crisis	11 - 14
Horn of Africa / Food shortages	15
Indonesia / Java earthquake	16 - 19
China / Tropical storm	20 - 21
India / Floods in Gujarat	22 - 23
Darfur / Ongoing crisis	24 - 25
Darfur / From the field	26 - 29
Iraq / No safe corridor	30 - 31
South Asia earthquake / One year on	32 - 35
Ramadhan around the world	36 - 37
Indonesia / Rebuilding communities	38 - 39
Indonesia / A stitch in time	40
News In Brief	41
Events and dialogue	42
Campaigning for a fairer world	43

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# Lebanon

"There was no traffic on the road heading south from Beirut. No people visible in the many towns and villages we passed on our aid mission. Many times we arrived with food and relief items, expecting people to rush out to receive our aid packages, but no-one came. Some had not had food in twenty days but were still too afraid to leave their homes.

In the southern towns of Nabatiye, Tyre, Qana and Sidon we could hear bombs falling just a few kilometres from where Islamic Relief was distributing aid. It was no surprise that people were too afraid to come out of their homes – and it was no surprise that most international aid agencies were not venturing anywhere near as far south as those cities.

The further south I travelled the more apparent the impact of the conflict on civilian life became. I met families who had fled from the heavily bombed city of Tyre in the south. But in Tyre, I met families who had fled from even further south – because for them, Tyre was relatively safe. Then there were those unable to escape – the sick, the elderly, the disabled, those with no transport, those with large families not wanting to be separated or simply, those with nowhere to go.

Many lives were lost in this tragedy, many homes destroyed, many people displaced or injured and many families separated. The situation in Lebanon was so dire that whenever I thought I'd seen the worst, something else managed to shock me."

Jamsheed Din

*reporting from Lebanon during the height of the conflict in July/August 2006*

# Middle East crisis

## Lebanon



July 2006 saw the small country of Lebanon come under a relentless attack that lasted six weeks and completely changed the life of the whole nation. In a short space of time one million people, nearly a quarter of Lebanon's population, fled from towns and villages in the south of the country, leaving behind their homes, possessions and sometimes even their loved ones.

Throughout the six-week bombardment, Islamic Relief Worldwide continued to work in the south of Lebanon, which came under the heaviest attack. Islamic Relief staff on the ground continued to distribute food, blankets and other desperately needed relief items to those who were unable to flee to safety.

By the time a ceasefire was agreed on 14th August, over 1,000 people, mainly civilians had been killed and thousands more

injured. Houses, schools and hospitals across the country had been reduced to smouldering mounds of rubble and roads and bridges were completely destroyed.

The ceasefire has allowed Islamic Relief and other aid agencies to work more extensively in the region. Most of the families that left their villages have now returned home and Islamic Relief is continuing to work with them, distributing food, clean water and helping them rebuild their lives.

## Azba's story

Azba is 70 years old and lives in Marwahine, south Lebanon. She has a habit of repeating herself, like an old woman used to being alone. Her chin carries blue Bedouin-style tattoos and she walks with the aid of a stick. It was when she was out picking tobacco leaves one day that she first heard the Israeli aircraft. "They told us to leave the village so we left everything at once," she said. "We went running west to Umm Aitout. It took about an hour."

### The explosion

Soon after she left, the bombing started. Azba arrived at the next village and joined her relatives who had hired a car to take them to Beirut. Behind them on the road was a pickup truck, carrying more relatives and neighbours to safety. Suddenly Azba heard an explosion. "The truck was right behind us, but they slowed down. Then we heard an explosion and the truck disappeared. We knew it had been hit," she said. Twenty-three people were killed, including fifteen children.

### The wreckage

In Beirut, Azba sought refuge in a school building where she stayed for a month. When she returned home after the ceasefire, her house was full of rubble and shards of glass. A bomb had torn right through it, leaving gaping holes in the walls. She set about clearing the wreckage on her own and found the spent missile in her kitchen. Despite this, she smiled when she found a bottle of olive oil, pressed from her own olives. "Thank God, He saved my olive oil for me!" she said happily.

### Living in fear

Azba suffers psychologically from shock and grief for her lost relatives and the destruction in her village. She still fears the Israeli presence, despite the ceasefire. She can hear the sound of their planes overhead, she says, and her knees get so weak that she cannot stand. At night she cannot sleep because she is so afraid. "The Israelis are still here. They drive through the village at night and no-one can stop them. They can see us here now," she said, glancing out of the door towards the hills.

### A hard life

Azba was widowed 25 years ago and struggled to raise her three sons on her own. They now live in Beirut and Sidon. One is an officer in the Lebanese army and the other works in the court but both are unable to take leave and help their mother. Her third son is ill and no longer able to work. He also has a wife and four children to support.



### Depending on God

Since the ceasefire, Azba's home has no water or electricity. She borrows water from her neighbours who own a rainwater reservoir. Islamic Relief has also set up an emergency water bladder in Marwahine and 50 other villages to provide clean drinking water. Azba doesn't know how she will repair her home before the cold winter weather sets in. "I'm depending on God," she said. "Perhaps some charitable people will help."

### Food parcels

Despite her age, Azba earns a living by growing and selling tobacco. She also grows wheat and olives to eat. While she was in Beirut, all her food crops withered. "I used to have tomatoes, aubergines, cucumbers and marrows, but they all died," she said. Islamic Relief supplied Azba and 15,000 other villagers with food parcels to help them through this difficult time. However food is not Azba's main concern. When asked what she will do when her food runs out, she replied, "I don't care to eat or drink. May God help me! May God help me!"

### Samina Faiz



# Venturing south

## Lebanon



At the height of the six-week conflict, Islamic Relief was one of the few international aid agencies that continued to work on the ground in south Lebanon, which came under the heaviest bombardment. Working with our Lebanese partner, the Islamic Welfare Association, we delivered food, medicine and other essential relief items to thousands of people in Sidon, Tyre, Nabatiyeh and other southern areas.

### Six-week conflict

During the first few weeks of fighting we delivered daily hot meals to 5,000 people sheltering in schools and community centres in Sidon. These people were from areas further south near the border with Israel and had fled to Sidon which was relatively safe. We also distributed food parcels containing canned meat, rice, beans, tea, oil and sugar to 10,000 people

in Tyre, another 10,000 in Sidon and 3,000 in Nabatiyeh. Thousands of jerry cans to store water, hygiene kits and sleeping mats were also provided for displaced families.

### 48-hour window

On 30th July 2006, the southern town of Qana was bombed, killing around 30 people, over half of them children who



were sheltering in the basement of a building. In the wake of the Qana tragedy, a 48-hour cessation of air attacks was announced which enabled Islamic Relief to deliver much-needed relief to people in towns further south, including Qana itself. When Islamic Relief reached Qana people told us they had not received any food aid for 20 days.

### Permanent ceasefire

On 14th August, the first day of the permanent ceasefire, we immediately started distributing aid south of the Litani River to people who had come under the heaviest attack but had not received any help during the war. In Nabatiyeh, in co-ordination with the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) and the International Red Cross, we supplied 5,000 people with food, clean water and hygiene kits. We also provided people who had lost loved ones in the fighting with materials they needed to exhume bodies buried in mass graves and conduct proper burials.

### Returning home

Since the ceasefire, thousands of families have returned home. This kind of mass population movement, coupled with people's exposure to the elements, can lead to the spread of disease. The lack of access to safe water after the destruction of pipes and sewage systems, has also increased the risk of disease. With little health care or medicine available, a severe lack of water and sanitation facilities could result in a serious outbreak of diseases, especially amongst children.

Islamic Relief has distributed clean drinking water to the people of Nabatiyeh and Marouahine as well as providing 50 water bladders thus providing thousands of litres of clean water to villages in south Lebanon. We have also provided the water pumping station in Bent Jbeil, in the south of Lebanon, with a generator to pump drinking water to 1,500 people.

**Islamic Relief has served over 235,000 people in Lebanon and is continuing to provide emergency relief to those affected by the conflict. To date we have provided:**

- 35,000 hot meals
- 25,800 family-size food packages
- 2,400 family-size hygiene kits
- 2 million litres of safe drinking water



Anwar, aged 15, was supported through Islamic Relief's orphan sponsorship programme. He was killed during an Israeli air raid.

### An orphan's tragedy

On 8th August 2006, an orphan sponsored by an Islamic Relief donor was killed during an Israeli air raid. 14-year-old Anwar, a Palestinian refugee, was sheltering in his sister's house in the Ein Al Helwi camp near Sidon after fleeing from another camp near the heavily bombed southern city of Tyre.

During the night the camp came under heavy aerial bombardment and in the course of the attack an electricity pylon fell on his sister's house. There were 18 people sheltering inside at the time. Most of them were injured including Anwar's 15 year old brother Ahmad.

Anwar died instantly.

Ahmad was taken to the Hammoud Hospital in Sidon with a fractured pelvis and facial wounds. He was given blood transfusions but remains in a critical condition and doctors are still unsure if he will ever be able to walk again.

Both brothers were sponsored through Islamic Relief's One-to-one Sponsorship scheme which allows donors to support orphans around the world. Islamic Relief donors sponsor 700 orphans in Lebanon, all of them Palestinian refugees living in camps in the country. Many of them have been displaced once again by the recent conflict.

# Reporting from Lebanon

## Lebanon

**Jamsheed Din**

**1st August 2006**

Tyre has a population of around 80,000 but only a few thousand remain. The streets are eerily empty, littered with debris from destroyed buildings. I can hear the sound of Israeli war planes and drones hovering above. There is intensive bombing taking place somewhere nearby – I ask a local and he tells me the bombing is only 10 km from where we are.

We travel to a small warehouse where Islamic Relief's food parcels are stored. Nearby is a man working as if it's business as usual. His name is Rizwan Zaker and his stuffy workshop is in the basement of a large building. He is hard at work and dripping with sweat. He is a coffin-maker and this has been his busiest period. He made coffins for those killed in Qana and those who have died in villages and towns further south. I ask him how he feels about what he is doing and the current crisis. He replies, "What can you say when you see all these dead people?"



**Dr Hany El Banna**

**7th August 2006**

When you have indiscriminate bombing, it can kill anyone. The little ones are some of the most vulnerable as they cannot run very fast. The children I met in Lebanon were bewildered by what was happening – the bombing, shelling and shooting. I think these experiences will have a traumatic effect on the future generation.

In Sidon, I met some of Islamic Relief's sponsored orphans. One was a young boy named Bilal. Although he was only eight years old, he spoke confidently and passionately about his expectations of life. He told us, "I have the right to live, nobody can deny me. I have the right to be heard, the right to play, the right to education. I am going to live!"

He gave me hope.



**Samina Faiz**

**23rd August 2006**

The school in Bint Jbeil was eerily silent, the gate and door open, the downstairs classroom a nightmarish mix of brightly coloured children's books and jagged shards of glass. Undersized chairs and tables lay toppled, a gaping hole in the wall letting in the light amongst the dust that covered everything.

Out in the schoolyard I saw a spent missile case, where the children would have come to play. The yard and classroom floors were coated in blackened glass that crunched unnervingly under my feet as I trespassed in the silence. It was horrific, like the scene of a desecration. A cupboard had broken in half, spilling boxes of Scrabble. A poster of a puppy lay on the floor coated in rubble. The phone lay incongruously off the hook, next to a pile of blue registration cards with children's names – Dania, Jamal... How many of these children would be coming back to school?



**Olga Gora**

**7th September 2006**

It was twenty-five days after the ceasefire that these two brothers, Hussein aged 15, and Ali aged 13, were seriously injured. They were searching through the rubble of their home in Zebqine in south-west Lebanon, when the explosion burnt their faces.

They had returned to search for their possessions, as they'd done many times before, this time looking for their school books.

There was no sound when the explosion went off. They saw a bluish-yellow flame and Hussein grabbed at his neck thinking Ali had just thrown something at him until Ali shouted, "Stop it! You're tearing at your skin."

Islamic Relief went to visit the boys when they had just come out of surgery. In the newly regained peace, they had been looking forward to starting school and resuming a normal routine. Now they will have to spend weeks recovering from the ordeal.



A full version of Jamsheed Din's Lebanon blog is archived at [www.bbc.co.uk/birmingham](http://www.bbc.co.uk/birmingham)

To read more first-hand accounts of the situation in Lebanon visit [www.islamic-relief.com](http://www.islamic-relief.com)

# Children and conflict

## Lebanon



For thousands of children caught in the midst of the fighting in Lebanon, the conflict has been particularly traumatic. It is estimated that up to half of those killed, injured or displaced from their homes were children. These stark numbers mask the personal tragedies of the young lives that were lost or thrown into turbulence.

### Too frightened to flee

The high death toll among children is partly due to them being too young or scared to escape during an attack. Many families made long, arduous journeys on foot, with little food or water. Mothers had to make the impossible decision of leaving some of their children behind because they could not afford to take them or because they were too young to travel. In the basements of houses across southern Lebanon, older children were left looking after their younger siblings, huddled together as the bombs fell around them.

### Landmines

One of the greatest threats to children's health and security since the fighting ended has been from unexploded landmines, rockets and cluster bombs. At least 13 civilians have been killed and 53 injured by unexploded ordnance (UXO) since the ceasefire, and this number is expected to rise. Children are particularly vulnerable as they are tempted to play with the small objects that look like balls.

### Hidden wounds

The mental scars caused by the trauma of the war will take longer to heal than the physical wounds. In war, children are forced to experience the same horrors as adults but without the same sense of understanding or context. The impact of these traumatic events is already evident with children sitting quietly, unable to play, or haunted by nightmares whenever they sleep.

# Middle East crisis

## Palestine

The recent escalation of violence in Gaza and the West Bank has cut off thousands of people from humanitarian aid. As the world's attention focussed on the the war in Lebanon, 200 Palestinians were killed and many more were injured. The ongoing attacks have destroyed homes, livelihoods and plunged Palestinian families into further poverty.





Home to 1.4 million Palestinians, the Gaza Strip is one of the most densely populated areas in the world. Many of its residents live in overcrowded refugee camps with no running water or sanitation facilities. Schools are so overcrowded that lessons are often taught in three shifts, in classes of more than 100 pupils.

Humanitarian aid for these people is an essential lifeline but recent border closures have meant that even food and basic items cannot reach them. People are unable to cross the border even to get to work. Gaza has effectively been cut off from the outside world whilst the little savings or land the population owns is fast being diminished.

Since June, Islamic Relief has delivered over 12,000 emergency food parcels to villages and refugee camps in the Gaza Strip. The parcels contain enough food to last a family of seven one month. These distributions will continue in the coming weeks

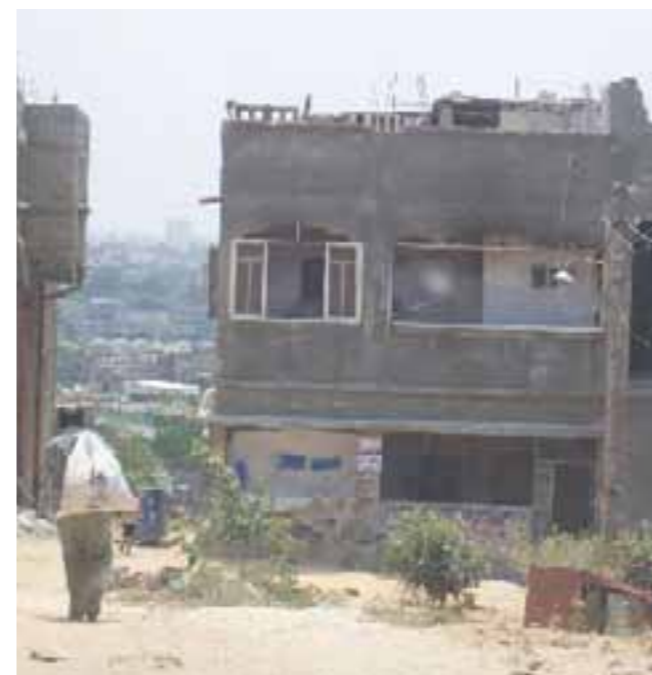


and will also reach over 90,000 people in the West Bank.

Islamic Relief is also supplying the two main hospitals in Gaza with essential life-saving drugs and equipment. As the fighting has intensified these hospitals have seen an increase in admissions but have been working with very limited resources. Medical facilities have also been affected by the destruction of Gaza's power station which has left blood banks and essential equipment unable to operate. Islamic Relief has helped ease this situation by distributing generators and fuel to nine hospitals and health centres in Gaza, as well as to the city's central blood bank.

Many families in Gaza have also received water tanks from Islamic Relief that allow them to collect water when the supply is on and use it later. Even these steel and plastic tanks were unaffordable for many people in Gaza who have had no income for many weeks.

IN JUNE 2006 THE ONLY POWER STATION IN THE GAZA STRIP WAS BOMBED, LEAVING THE POPULATION COMPLETELY DEPENDENT ON POWER SUPPLIES FROM ISRAEL. MOST FAMILIES ARE LIVING WITH ONLY SEVEN HOURS OF ELECTRICITY A DAY AND ONLY TWO HOURS OF WATER.



## Abdullah's story

Wadi El Salqa village is home to 65-year-old Abdullah. The village is in the middle of the Gaza Strip and is often neglected by aid agencies because of its rural location. Although surrounded by beautiful countryside, its residents live in constant fear of conflict and poverty.

Abdullah lives with his wife, three sons and four daughters. He has not finished building the family house because he does not have enough money to complete it. One of Abdullah's daughters has just finished high school but he cannot afford to pay her university fees. Abdullah is determined not to give up on her education and continues to search for a scholarship to pay for the costs.

Like many other Palestinians, Abdullah is highly educated but unable to find a job. "My family has zero income," he said. "No one is working. I am dependent on charities for our survival."

Abdullah discovered that Islamic Relief could offer him help when someone knocked on his door to tell him about the food parcels that were being distributed. "I was happy because it's the first organisation that knocked on my door to offer me something," he said. "Normally I have to go and spend hours visiting organisations to ask for their help." The food parcel that Abdullah received contained enough food to feed his family for a month. "It's a very good package and a kind initiative. Thank you Islamic Relief."



# Food shortages

## Horn of Africa

### Islamic Relief Summer Camp 2006 for Palestinian children

During the summer months, Islamic Relief organises recreational activities for Palestinian children traumatised by the conflict, allowing them to socialise with other children, learn new skills, integrate in wider society and enjoy time away from their everyday environment. In August this year, the Al Basma summer camp hosted over 3,000 orphaned children between the ages of 7 and 18. Ghada Al-Najjar, Islamic Relief's Orphans Activities Co-ordinator in the Gaza Strip, reports on the success of this year's camp.

#### Day one

On the first day children gathered at different points across Gaza City and were collected by buses and taken to the campus. Upon arrival they received new baseball caps and quickly got involved in the various activities on offer, including classes at the high-tech computer labs teaching IT skills. At lunchtime they learned about the importance of healthy eating over sandwiches, fresh fruit and natural drinks.

#### Day two

After a procedural security briefing, the children took part in activities that encouraged participation, learning and enjoyment. These included free playing, scouting, arts and computers. A psychological support corner was also set up where Post Traumatic Stress Disorder screening was undertaken from afar by specialists.

#### Day three

Day three saw a packed programme of events that the children described as fun, interesting and tiring in equal measure! The specially devised activities allowed them to express themselves freely – something that is important for their resilience and ability to lead a more normal life. They also received Islamic Relief t-shirts which they welcomed and wore keenly.

#### Day four

Various educational activities were on offer on day four that stimulated the children. Staff also felt increasingly motivated by the positive response and enthusiasm the children expressed. It was a highly rewarding day for staff, whether they were teaching, playing, talking or just observing the children.

Before the end of the camp, social workers spent time with all the children offering what could be called 'emotional debriefing.' This process helps children incorporate the positive experiences of the camp into their everyday lives and ensures there are no adverse affects from what they may feel were negative experiences.

By the end of the four days, Islamic Relief staff and specialist carers were confident that the children had a great deal of fun in their school holidays and left feeling active, stimulated, happy and positive. Although many started out feeling shy and nervous they were all smiles and giggles by the end of the four days.

*Living in a conflict zone and witnessing extreme violence and aggression has had a traumatic effect on the physical and mental wellbeing of many Palestinian children. These children are cared for at Islamic Relief's specialist centres in Gaza and the West Bank. Some are also supported through our one-to-one sponsorship programme for orphans that ensures all their basic needs are met.*



In our last issue we reported on the Horn of Africa food crisis that was threatening 15 million people. Prolonged drought had left them on the verge of starvation. Worst affected were the pastoralist communities of Kenya, Ethiopia and Somalia who rely on livestock for their income and survival.

Rains brought much-needed relief for the people of Mandera, Kenya, but food shortages continue



In around April 2006, the rains began to fall again bringing some much-needed relief. Many hoped this would signal the end of the crisis but six months later, people throughout the region are still living with food shortages.

#### Kenya

Kenya had good rainfall from March to June but there is still a shortage of food, especially amongst pastoralist communities. The land in Mandera remains parched and most of the rivers and water sources have little or no water in them. This region rarely grows crops even when the rains are good and many communities rely solely on their animals for their livelihoods. Around 70% of these animals died during the last drought and people have not yet been able to replenish them. Without these animals people have no meat, no milk and no way of making a living.

#### Ethiopia

In Ethiopia the rains began to fall in spring but they ended earlier than expected and water levels still remain low. Many areas of the Somali district are facing chronic water shortages and some have already reported shortages of food. The price of cereal at market has begun to rise and this situation is expected to deteriorate further in the coming months as the harvest is expected to be poor.

The food security situation has also been hindered by severe floods that have affected over 90,000 people in the Somali region. The floods destroyed about 8,000 hectares of farmland and killed several animals.



AS THE SAFETY AND WELLBEING OF CHILDREN IS OUR GREATEST PRIORITY, MANY SAFETY PROCEDURES WERE PUT IN PLACE BEFORE THE START OF THE CAMP. SECURE SITES WERE LOCATED, AMBULANCES WERE ARRANGED AND KEPT ON STANDBY AND STAFF WERE TRAINED IN FIRST AID. SOCIAL WORKERS AND ISLAMIC RELIEF STAFF WERE ALSO CONSTANTLY AT HAND TO MONITOR PROGRESS AND DEAL WITH ANY EMOTIONAL OR PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS.

# Java earthquake

## Indonesia



On Saturday 27th May 2006 an earthquake struck the Indonesian island of Java, killing 6,000 people and injuring another 80,000. Measuring 5.9 on the Richter scale, the epicentre of the earthquake was near the southern city of Yogyakarta. Over 1.5 million people were made homeless and many lost their livelihoods. Around 100,000 houses were damaged or destroyed, along with hundreds of schools, roads, wells and sewage systems. The Indonesian government declared a three month state of emergency and said it would take two years to rebuild the affected areas.

Many of those who experienced the earthquake feared another tsunami was coming. They fled to safety as houses began to crumble and collapse around them. In a few short moments their lives were changed forever. They were left homeless, with little or no possessions and dependent on humanitarian aid for their survival.

### Emergency aid

Islamic Relief reached the affected area within four hours of the earthquake, distributing food packages, hygiene kits and blankets to thousands of families in the Bantul district. As shelter was a priority for those without homes, we distributed almost 4,000 tents, prioritising the elderly and young children. In the days following the earthquake our emergency teams supported community kitchens, assisting them in providing food for local villagers.

### Livelihoods

The earthquake had a devastating effect on livelihoods as many people in the region rely on agriculture for their income. In the immediate aftermath those who would ordinarily have been tending to their crops were busy trying to repair their homes. Rice fields were also damaged by the debris from ruined houses, meaning few crops were produced. Islamic Relief's food distributions helped the survivors get through this critical time. Our aid workers also organised local clean-up operations with community members to ensure the rubble was removed quickly.

### Healthcare

One of the greatest threats for earthquake survivors has been the risk of disease from contaminated water as many streams, rivers and wells became polluted with debris. This threat was increased during the rainy season in August which brings mosquitoes, flies and a greater risk of waterborne diseases. Islamic Relief helped

minimise the risk of disease by setting up a water purification system in the Jetis sub-district, enabling residents to access clean water. We also distributed medical aid items worth \$1.6 million, donated by the LDS church in the USA.

### Working with the community

Islamic Relief's rehabilitation work in Java has focussed on working closely with local community organisations. The Indonesian practice of 'gotong-royong,' or communal co-operation, is a tradition that encourages villagers to work together voluntarily on projects such as clearing drains and maintaining public facilities. Villagers also rely on this tradition when seeking help with personal projects such as house-building on the understanding that they will eventually return the favour.

Islamic Relief used the gotong-royong model to help rebuild the areas affected by the earthquake, including the Sumber Agung village. With a population of 15,000, the village was divided into 17 sub-villages consisting of five or six families who worked together on reconstructing their houses and communal areas. Islamic Relief organised these sub-village groups and encouraged discussion between people to help them identify their needs. We also distributed building materials, tools and provided skills-training to help the reconstruction process.

Within a few weeks of the disaster, many villagers had cleared the debris and begun to erect simple houses from bamboo or wood. More recently, they have built public latrines and community wells.

By encouraging villagers to identify their needs and carry out their own reconstruction work, Islamic Relief was able to promote a strong collective ownership over the rebuilt areas. The community's active involvement also led to a sense of achievement and self-empowerment, which are always the aim of Islamic Relief's long-term development projects.

# Java earthquake

## Indonesia

Islamic Relief has been working in Indonesia since 2000 and increased its operations after the devastating tsunami in December 2004. Java is the most populated of the 17,508 islands that make up Indonesia and also home to the country's capital city, Jakarta.

Situated within the infamous 'Ring of Fire,' Indonesia is prone to earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. Java is almost entirely of volcanic origin and contains 38 mountains that have been active volcanoes. At the time of the Java earthquake, scientists had predicted that the eruption of the nearby Mount Merapi volcano was imminent. Local residents had already been evacuated and the unexpected earthquake on 27th May put a considerable strain on local resources.

Java was also affected by a tsunami on 17th July 2006 in which 500 people died. The worst affected area was around the resort of Pangandaran, west of Yogyakarta. The offshore quake caused two metre high waves to crash into the island. Nearly all the buildings along the coast were swept away, including restaurants, homes and small hotels.

Islamic Relief has been planning long-term development projects in West Java for a number of years and initial projects were due to begin in 2007. Recent disasters have led to a focus on providing emergency relief but Islamic Relief remains committed to helping the people of Java meet their long-term needs.



### Sardilah's story

Sardilah, aged 54 (below), lives in the Bulus Kulon village in Java. She was returning home from morning prayers when the earthquake happened. Her first instinct was to escape to open ground but in the panic, a neighbour thrust a three-year-old girl into her hands.

Clutching the young girl, Sardilah decided to go back to her family. Fifteen of Sardilah's relatives were still in the house, including her daughter and her parents. The tremors continued but Sardilah was determined to reach them. "I had to go to the house because my family were there. Even if I died, at least I would have seen my family first," said Sardilah.

"The ground quaked violently beneath my feet, but I held my nerve so I could reach home," she said. When she arrived the house was still standing and her family were in a state of panic, praying for safety. As she entered the house it collapsed and her family was buried under the bricks and wooden beams.

"I held the girl tightly against me to protect her. Blood gushed from a wound in my head. My parents shielded themselves under a table, and my brother under a huge pan. I didn't know what had happened to the others, I was in a panic myself. I felt faint because of my head wound."

Sardilah and her family were pulled out of the rubble alive and the little girl she clutched in her arms escaped unharmed. But twelve people died in Bulus Kulon that day and scores were injured. Sardilah and her family, although injured themselves, gave first aid to others who had more serious injuries.

Islamic Relief aid workers arrived in Sardilah's village within four hours of the earthquake and began assisting people immediately. It was three days after earthquake that other aid agencies arrived with blankets, food and medicines.

"We really benefited from the help Islamic Relief gave us to erect shelters," said Sardilah. "Of course, our lives have not returned to normal, but the burden has been lightened. I don't know how long we will stay in this temporary home. We have cleared the rubble of our house and recovered whatever we could."



# Tropical storm

## China

On 14th July 2006, a devastating tropical storm hit southwest China. According to the Chinese government, 146 million people were affected. 1,000 people were killed and 6 million had to be moved from their homes. The worst hit area was Hunan Province where most of the destruction was caused by the extensive floods and landslides triggered by the storm.



The tropical storm season in China usually lasts from June to September and this year it has been exceptionally devastating with the Chinese government estimating that the economic cost stands at around \$10 billion.

Home to 20% of the world's poor, China is still a desperately poor country where more than 600 million people live on less than \$2 a day. Many families, especially those in the villages, are unable to build houses substantial enough to withstand the force of floods or landslides. The destruction of huge swathes of farmland and paddy fields has also adversely affected the rural poor, many of whom are faced with the prospect of having to leave their villages to search for work in the cities.



Lu Shengyuan's wife speaks to Islamic Relief's Dawud Ma about their situation

### Lu Shengyuan's story

34-year-old Lu Shengyuan lives in Shankou village, near Chenzou city in Hunan Province with his wife, two children and his mother. The violent storm on the evening of 15th July took the whole of the village by surprise. Lu Shengyuan was still working in his grocery store and his wife was in town shopping for wholesale goods, while his children and mother were in the family home. As the waters surged through the village Lu Shengyuan ran back home to find that his seven-year-old daughter had been swept away by the water and his 70-year-old mother was missing. It took him seven hours to find his mother and when he did she had been washed naked by the water. His mother and two daughters were taken to hospital and although recovering well, his youngest child still has terrible nightmares about the floods.

Lu Shengyuan's story is particularly tragic because the family had only just managed to lift themselves out of poverty by working hard and selling goods in their shop. Now with everything destroyed they are left with nothing once again. Their home was completely destroyed and they will have to live in a tent until they can rebuild their house.

After the disaster, Islamic Relief and our Chinese partner, the China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation (CPAF), distributed emergency rations of rice to people like Lu Shengyuan to help them through this difficult time.

ISLAMIC RELIEF AND CFPA HAVE DISTRIBUTED 26 TONNES OF RICE TO OVER 5,000 PEOPLE IN HANUN PROVINCE.



# Floods in Gujarat

## India

Sabeena Malik sits by the rubble of her former home. Very little of the house remains standing. It was destroyed when torrential floods hit the city of Surat, south Gujarat, in August 2006. Sabeena and her family do not want to leave the place they call home because they have nowhere else to go.



Sabeena tells Islamic Relief staff that she risks becoming homeless if she moves from the land she was living on

Sabeena, her husband and four children have lived on the same plot of land in the slum area of Iqbal Nagar for over 17 years. The land is not legally theirs and if they leave they risk someone else taking it. Afraid of becoming homeless, they have been sheltering in what is left of their house, protecting themselves from the rain with plastic sheets.

Around 6 million people have been affected by the floods that engulfed much of western and central India. Heavy monsoon rains in the states of Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Chattisgarh and Orissa forced people from their homes and left many hundreds dead. The exceptionally high rainfall caused rivers to overflow and dams to reach bursting point. Water released from the dams swamped villages, cities and agricultural land. In Surat, where Sabeena lives, around 80% of the city was flooded and around 84,000 people were displaced from their homes. Slum dwellers were worst-affected as they live on the river's edge with very little protection from the surging water.

Although flooding is an annual occurrence in Gujarat, this year's rains caused unprecedented damage. As the flood waters rose to 20 feet, some parts of the city were cut off from help for many days and nearby villages were completely destroyed. Much of the water has now receded but stagnant pools remain. Streams have been contaminated and sanitation facilities have been destroyed. In many areas raw sewage now runs through the wreckage of people's homes. This has already had an impact upon people's health and an outbreak of a rare viral fever has caused hundreds of people in Gujarat to be hospitalised.

As the water levels drop, families such as Sabeena's are returning home to find their houses devastated. Sabeena's priority is now to try and rebuild her home but this could take a long time. Even before the floods the family struggled to make ends meet. Sabeena's husband, Firoz, used to be an auto-rickshaw driver, paying a daily rate to rent his vehicle. But the flood waters swept all the rickshaws away and so he has been left with no work and therefore no income. Although the family have received enough food and relief items to see them through the crisis, they do not have the means to rebuild their home.

*Islamic Relief and its local partners are preparing to rebuild 100 houses in Surat, including the Randher Causeway area where Sabeena and her family live.*

**Danish Aziz**

THIS YEAR, ISLAMIC RELIEF WILL BE DISTRIBUTING RAMADHAN FOOD PARCELS FOR 50,000 PEOPLE IN GUJARAT AND OTHER PARTS OF INDIA, PROVIDING THEM WITH ENOUGH FOOD TO LAST A MONTH.



# Ongoing crisis

## Darfur



On 5th May 2006 a peace deal for Darfur was signed, renewing hope for an end to violence in the war-torn region of west Sudan. Despite this, violence has continued to escalate and many thousands of innocent civilians have been killed or displaced. An estimated half a million people are cut off from aid and many aid agencies have found it impossible to work in the region. Since the start of the conflict, Islamic Relief staff have worked tirelessly on the ground, helping the people of Darfur get through this tragic situation.

### The conflict

The conflict between the Sudan government and rebels started three years ago. Since then it has been estimated by the United Nations that almost 200,000 people have been killed and 2.2 million have been displaced from their homes. Many of these people are living in squalid conditions in overcrowded refugee camps. Atrocities continue to be committed, with villages being looted and women being raped.

Many factions have not signed up to the recent peace deal, and even amongst rebel groups, there is disagreement and fighting. As a result more villages have been destroyed, more people displaced from their homes and more families are unable to access the humanitarian aid they desperately need. The escalation in violence has also pushed displaced people across the border into refugee camps in eastern Chad.



### African Union

In 2004, the African Union force (AU) was set up as part of the African Union Mission in Darfur (AMIS) to protect vulnerable communities from the ongoing conflict. However, since its inception it has been unable to fulfil its role. The 7,000 strong force has not been effective due to its lack of resources and limited mandate. Often all the force can do is monitor the conflict because it lacks the necessary equipment and manpower to intervene and protect communities under attack. At the same time, an agreement has not been reached between Sudan and the international community for UN led forces to take over from the AU .

### Lack of aid

The UN has estimated that the fresh fighting has left half a million people in Darfur cut off from aid. In recent months the number of attacks on aid convoys and workers has risen dramatically and many agencies are no longer able to deliver humanitarian relief. In the coming weeks this could have a devastating effect as Darfur is entering its annual 'hunger season,' the time before the harvests when rates of malnutrition and disease rise.

Internally displaced people living in the many refugee camps in the country have been the worst-affected by the aid shortages as they have little access to food, healthcare, clean water and sanitation. Attacks on aid workers and camp residents have also increased, with women particularly vulnerable to violent assault and rape.



In July, Islamic Relief joined together with seven other aid agencies to call for extra funding for the AU force. Without sufficient resources, the force has not been able to adequately protect the security and homes of the people of Darfur who are losing confidence in it. The force needed over \$270 million extra funding to cover its operations until December 2006 and to increase the number of personnel and equipment it needs to run a successful operation. Extra funding was agreed at the end of July , but it was not sufficient. The AU needs further support from the international community if it is to effectively protect the communities of Darfur from further violence.

# From the field

## Darfur

The camps for displaced people have become a symbol of the Darfur conflict. There are now around 200 camps in the region, some near the border with Chad, others near major towns and cities. The Kerinding II camp in West Darfur was established by Islamic Relief in 2004 and is home to almost 10,000 people.

*Nermin Silajdzic, Islamic Relief's camp co-ordinator, describes life for people in Darfur and the challenges he faces working there.*



### What is life like in the camps?

Life in the camp is very difficult, especially when compared to how people lived before the conflict. A family of about six share one shelter that is 3 x 4 metres, and they all have to sleep together. Some people had been sleeping on the ground for about a year before Islamic Relief distributed mats.

### What is the security situation like?

The number of security incidents within the camps has increased recently, with people being attacked and donkeys being stolen. Men, women and children are all being terrorised by militia groups on a daily basis. Shots are often fired into the air to frighten people as the militia ride by on horses or camels. Parents fear for their children and do not let them leave the camp. Many people have had family members killed or raped when the militia attacked their villages. Now they cannot sleep at night because they know the militia are nearby.

### Are people able to earn a living?

The majority of those living in Kerinding II have no way of making a living and rely solely on assistance from aid agencies and the UN. Some people collect grass and wood from outside the camp and sell it in the market, but leaving the camp is dangerous. Women who do venture out then have to carry sacks of grass to the market, 5 kilometres away in El Geneina city. A sack of grass will earn them 100 Sudanese dinars (that's €0.40) but if it doesn't sell they have to carry it back to the camp and try again the following day.

Recently Islamic Relief has been working to mobilise people into groups like the newly formed Women's Affairs Committee. These committees encourage people to come together and explore ways they can earn a living and support each other.

### How are children coping?

It seems to me that children in the camp have lost one phase in their life – childhood. They are too mature for their age. Earlier I was talking with 20 children from the camp and I noticed how they don't have any desire for toys and playgrounds. They make trucks from old oil cans and play with them in the sand but when I asked what they would like to have the answers were not childlike. A few of the children said they would like to have a bike, a football or a toy but mostly they asked for beds, mosquito nets, blankets, teacups, carpets, clothes, shoes and school bags. One six-year-old girl, Hisham, told me that she would like to receive a blanket to protect herself from mosquitoes and from the cold. She saw Islamic Relief distribute blankets once but she did not receive one.



### Are children able to go to school?

Islamic Relief runs a school that has over 1,800 pupils, mainly from Kerinding II camp. There are 35 teachers but they do not get paid very much so parents often contribute to their salaries to ensure the teachers have breakfast. The school itself does not have benches or chairs and needs more books and teaching materials. Despite this children enjoy school and many of them want to be teachers and headmasters when they grow up.

Islamic Relief is also working to raise awareness amongst parents about the importance of education. Many children do not attend school because they are trying to earn money and girls in particular drop out by the age of 14 or 16 to get married. Islamic Relief staff are trying to get these children back into school.

### Do camp residents have access to health care?

Islamic Relief runs a health clinic that provides essential health care, medicine, antenatal care and health awareness training. Between 100 and 140 patients visit the clinic every day and the 13 members of staff struggle to keep up with the demand. At the moment we are also cleaning up the camp, cluster by cluster, to ensure better hygiene and we regularly distribute soap and other hygiene items to camp residents.



Many elderly people such as Fatima (above) do not know how old they are. They do not have any identity documents and try to determine their age by referring to events such as a famine, drought or war. They had never left their villages until they were forced to flee.

## How do people feel about returning home?

People cannot go back because of the security situation. Of course they would like to go back eventually but they don't know when this will be possible. They are patient people, prepared to wait for the security situation to improve.

The reality is that rural areas in Darfur are very unsafe and many villages have now been claimed by the militia who have been farming on the land. Recently, International Red Cross workers have been helping people restore family relations by training them in how to write messages for their loved ones, establish contact and find out if they are still alive.

## What problems have you faced in Darfur?

The biggest humanitarian problem in Darfur is that there is no freedom of movement because bandits control the roads. This means that humanitarian convoys have not been able to deliver aid in areas of great need. Some people are dying of hunger and sickness because sufficient aid cannot reach them.

We also have a problem with unregistered people living in the camp. There are currently over 8,500 registered people in the camp and another 1,200 or so who are not – plus around 600 who live just outside. These people come to Kerinding II for many reasons, including the fact that nearby camps are very overcrowded, or because they have family in Kerinding II. However as they are not registered they don't have the ration cards they need to get food and other aid items. But people end up sharing their food with them anyway, especially with women or the elderly.

**“The biggest humanitarian problem in Darfur is that there is no freedom of movement because bandits control the roads. This means that humanitarian convoys have not been able to deliver aid in areas of great need. Some people are dying of hunger and sickness because sufficient aid cannot reach them.”**



Atima, mother of nine, lives in Kerinding II camp. Five years ago her eldest son went to look for work in another town and she hasn't heard from him since. She doesn't have the money to go and search for him and has no idea whether he is alive or dead. Atima is divorced and in a very difficult financial situation. She often works in El Geneina cleaning houses or gardening. For this she can earn around 400 Sudanese dinars (€1.60) a day. If she is lucky enough to find work two or three days a week she can manage to feed herself and her eight children but she doesn't earn enough to buy them clothes, or meet their other needs.

## What have you found rewarding?

As a European, I am referred to by the local people as 'havaji' (white man), which is quite endearing. Many people here have never seen a white man, not even on television because they have never had electricity. Young children in particular are amazed as they think that I have been coloured white and after they shake my hand they look at their own to see if the white colour has rubbed off!

I have a good relationship with people here, which I really cherish. I have learned several Masali words, which is the language most people speak, and I can now greet people when I see them. Learning the language is a great way of building trust and it also helps me involve people at every level of our work, from sharing information and planning to making decisions.



## “I want my children to be aid workers”

Fatma, aged 65, has four daughters and one son. She is partially sighted and unable to work. Like so many others, she had to abandon her home when the conflict reached her village. She now lives in Islamic Relief's Kerinding II camp that is home to almost 10,000 displaced people.

“I will never forget the night in January 2003 when our village was attacked,” she said. “They were shooting and burning houses. We ran away from our house but my husband's legs had been wounded. They burned three houses and one of them was ours. The next morning they came back and looted all the cattle and other property that belonged to the villagers.” “Some time later, when the attack stopped, we returned and found my husband. He had to be hospitalised but died seven days later.”

Before the war in Darfur, Fatma's family had a good life. They owned 20 cows, 20 sheep, 12 goats, 4 donkeys, 1 horse and a reasonable amount of land that was suitable for farming. They had also stocked enough food to last the entire family for two years. Today, they have nothing.

“Our life has changed completely. The war that caused us these problems is still going on. Our village is just 15 kilometres away from this camp but we cannot go and visit it. We feel very angry because we cannot go back to our home due to the security situation. Armed militia are everywhere around us. My family cannot go even 1,000 meters away of the camp to collect fire wood and grass.”

Islamic Relief has sent over £2 million worth of food, clothes and medicine to families like Fatma's. In the Kerinding II camp, families are provided with food, plastic sheeting, soap, jerrycans and materials to build traditionally constructed homes. We have also installed water tanks and set up a mobile clinic to try and meet the health needs of camp residents. A school has also been built.

After three hours of schooling in the camp, Fatma's children begin collecting grass from around the camp before taking it to sell in El Geneina, five kilometres away. They use the money to buy additional food required by the family.

“Our lives depend on Islamic Relief,” says Fatma. “We are happy being supported by them because we are taken care of better than people in other camps. We receive extra soap, clothes, shoes, and other items.”

Fatma is still hopeful for her family's future. “I would like my children to be educated and help with humanitarian work, like Islamic Relief's aid workers have been doing,” she said.



# No safe corridor

Iraq



## Widespread poverty

Increasing violence in Iraq has forced people to flee their homes and many have found themselves in temporary camps with limited access to food, water and sanitation. Although Iraq's markets have mounds of fresh fruit and vegetables, most Iraqis cannot afford to buy them and instead have to depend on monthly food rations from aid agencies. Islamic Relief has distributed thousands of food packages to Iraqi families in the city of Qaem who have been displaced from their homes by the fighting.

## No clean water

In many Iraqi cities, water and sewage plants have either been destroyed or neglected causing raw sewage to be dumped into rivers and streams. Across much of the city of Fallujah, people only have water supplies twice a week for two or three hours, forcing them to take water from contaminated streams. To prevent this, we have dug 15 wells in ten different neighbourhoods, with the help of local residents.

## Unemployment

Currently unemployment in Iraq is at around 50% which means many families struggle to meet their basic needs. So far this year we have employed over 30,000 people in cash-for-work schemes, providing them with a source of income. In 13 neighbourhoods in Fallujah, local community members worked to clean and restore public areas and recreational grounds, clearing them of rubbish and making them more sanitary and attractive. The wages they received were often the main source of income for their families and enabled them to meet their basic needs.

## Education

Thousands of Iraqi schools were destroyed in the war and many are barely able to function. Islamic Relief has restored the walls, windows and doors of 16 schools in Iraq, which has increased enrolment rates by 5%. Water and sanitation facilities were also installed in the schools and children were given chairs and desks to work at.

As well as rehabilitating schools, Islamic Relief also educated pupils on hygiene awareness and provided them with hygiene packs.

## Health care

At present, it is thought that one in eight children born in Iraq will die before their fifth birthday. These deaths are mostly caused by preventable diseases such as tuberculosis (TB), diarrhoea and measles. In Baghdad, there is only one functioning TB clinic and it is under-resourced and over-crowded.

Islamic Relief has started work on what will be a fully functioning TB centre in Baghdad that will benefit around one million people. The centre will also provide health and hygiene education services.

## From the field...

The security situation in Iraq has severely restricted aid work. Since 2003, the 'safe corridor' for neutral humanitarian aid has not been respected. At least 72 aid workers have been killed and dozens have been kidnapped or injured. Accessing areas where aid is desperately needed has become very difficult in many of the hotspots. People just cannot be reached in these extremely volatile, difficult and unusual conditions.

Most aid workers here are Iraqi civilians as all the expatriates have left. These local aid workers are facing the same severe living conditions as other Iraqis. Despite this, they are trying to fulfil their humanitarian duty and deliver aid to needy people. They face major obstacles - apart from logistical problems, they are often accused of being allies of the US because they work for an international organisation. Those who work for a faith-based humanitarian organisation also run the risk of being seen as extremists or supporters of the insurgency. Unfortunately when aid gets politicised in this way, negotiating the space in which to operate becomes very difficult.

Aid workers in Baghdad are witnessing horrific incidents on a daily basis. Violence has become part and parcel of their everyday life. Blasts from missiles, roadside bombs or bombed vehicles are normal occurrences, as are killings and kidnappings for ransom - and there is no special protection for aid workers.

As one of my colleagues said, "In the morning, we don't know if we'll survive till night. And at night, we don't know if we'll wake up again."

## Hesham Issa

Programme Manager, Iraq

*An Islamic Relief colleague in Iraq was tragically killed in July 2006. See 'News in Brief,' page 41.*



# One year on

## South Asia earthquake



Last year, on 8th October 2005, a massive earthquake in south Asia left 73,000 people dead and 3.5 million homeless. Islamic Relief was on the ground within hours of the disaster and has since been working to help communities rebuild their lives. Many thousands of people have been given the support, tools and skills-training they need to start earning a living again.

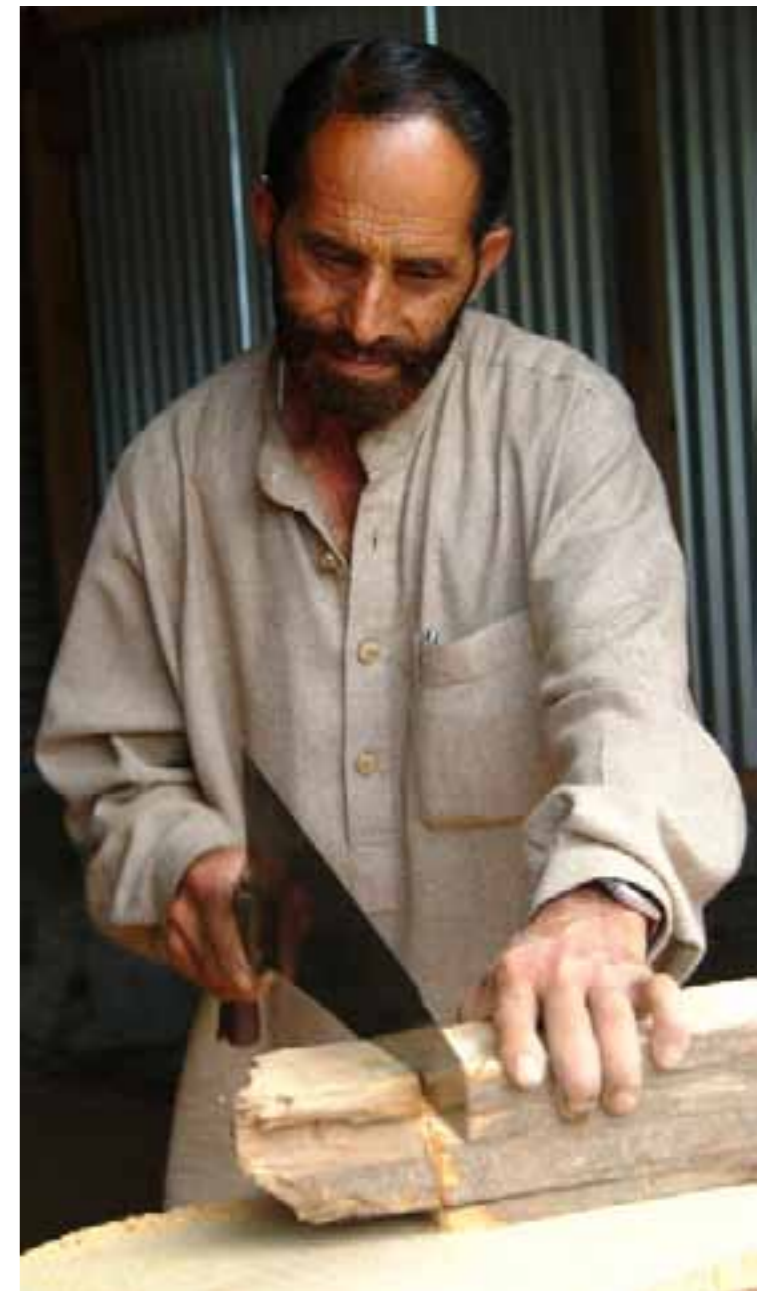
### Livelihood support

The earthquake not only claimed lives and destroyed homes, schools and other buildings but also devastated the livelihoods of entire communities. Shops and offices were reduced to rubble and landslides destroyed much of the agricultural land in the region. After the emergency phase of the disaster, Islamic Relief focussed on setting up projects that would help communities earn a living once again. Our aim was to develop skills within the community that would allow people to be self-sufficient once more.

### Back to business

Islamic Relief has also been supporting and training people to start their own business once again. The skills-training is tailored to the community's needs and includes teacher-training, masonry, electrics, plumbing and carpentry. Some of these skills will also help people build earthquake-resistant homes in their communities.

Our livelihood projects have also focussed on women's needs, particularly those who were widowed in the earthquake and had no way to make a living. Islamic Relief set up women-only groups that provide training in tailoring, farming and handicrafts as well as supplying women with small loans so that they can start their own businesses.



### Tools and training

Islamic Relief set up a number of initiatives including cash-for-work schemes that provided an immediate source of income for many families. We also worked closely with communities giving them the necessary tools and skills to help them return to work. To help agricultural communities rebuild their livelihoods, we distributed seeds, vegetables, tools and oxen for ploughing, all of which were lost in the disaster. We have also vaccinated and de-wormed thousands of animals in the region in order to promote better animal health. This project has so far benefited 165,000 people.

# One year on

## South Asia earthquake



### Working together

Islamic Relief's work in Pakistan and Azad Jammu & Kashmir has always focussed on building community organisations whereby local people come together and organise their own activities. Islamic Relief's role, in addition to setting up the groups, is to provide technical training, tools, expertise and sometimes financial support. Working in this way empowers the community and also ensures that the projects are sustainable in the long-run.

After the earthquake we mobilised new and existing community organisations to focus on rebuilding villages and provided training in house-building, community health, first aid, animal health and income generation techniques. This training is now widely being put into practice.

### Uzma's greeting cards



Uzma lives in the village of Siada, in Dhirkot. She is a member of the local female community organisation that was set up by Islamic Relief long before the earthquake. "The 8th of October changed everything. It was the worse day of our lives," she said.

Islamic Relief's work in the region prior to the quake meant that we were well aware of people's needs after the disaster and able to deliver aid effectively through community organisations. Uzma's community organisation has been trained in producing hand-made cards. Islamic Relief provided the materials, support and venue and the women hope to sell their products at local markets and in larger cities. This will help bring in some extra income for them and their families.

"Whatever we have learnt here, we would like it to continue. Thank you for helping us in such a tough time," she said.

### Khawaja's vegetables



Khawaja lives in a village near Bagh, with his wife and three children. It is a village that Islamic Relief has worked in for many years. Before the earthquake, Khawaja attended an Islamic Relief training course in agricultural skills. He used the knowledge to grow vegetables on his land and produced enough to feed his family and also set up a grocery shop in the village.

When the earthquake happened it changed everything. "The earthquake shattered our lives," said Khawaja. "For the first few months I could not work on my land because I was mourning the loss of my relatives, the loss of my house and dealing with all the miseries that the earthquake brought. During this time the vegetables in the field were eaten by the cattle in the area as no one could pay any attention to them."

Khawaja and his family were provided with emergency food and shelter by Islamic Relief in the immediate aftermath of the quake. When he was ready to start working, we provided him with seeds so he could start growing vegetables again.

"With the constant support of Islamic Relief I have been able to re-start my vegetable shop. I sell the vegetables that I grow on my small piece of land and make around Rs.100 to 200 (rupees) a day. This at least fulfils our basic needs."

Islamic Relief has also provided vocational training for women in Khawaja's village who are now able to make money by sewing clothes. We have also set up a water scheme that means women no longer have to walk miles through the mountains to fetch water every day.



When we met Sajjad he was pacing up and down outside Islamic Relief's health centre in Neelum Valley, waiting for news of his wife who was in labour. A while later he emerged holding a baby boy in his arms. Sajjad was beaming. "This is wonderful! I am so thankful to God and to Islamic Relief for making it happen. This is a great blessing. I don't know what would have not happened if the health clinic was not here."

Islamic Relief's Neelum Valley Health Clinic provides medical care for villagers living in the mountainous region. Many have no other access to health care as the nearest hospital is many miles away. Among other facilities, the clinic has female doctors and midwives, ensuring women have access to good medical care during pregnancy and childbirth.

After the devastating earthquake, Neelum Valley was cut off from the outside world and the Health Centre provided emergency medical assistance to hundreds of victims. Since then it has continued to provide an essential service to the local community.



# Ramadhan around the world



## Afghanistan

YEARS OF WAR HAVE DEVASTATED AFGHANISTAN'S INFRASTRUCTURE AND THE HOMES OF MANY FAMILIES. ACCORDING TO A UNITED NATIONS REPORT, ALMOST A THIRD OF THE POPULATION IS DEPENDENT ON HUMANITARIAN AID. LEVELS OF MALNUTRITION AND POVERTY REMAIN ALARMINGLY HIGH AND PEOPLE STRUGGLE TO ACCESS FOOD AND HEALTHCARE.

60-year-old Mosa Jan used to be a farmer in the Dand district of Kandahar, south Afghanistan. He has six daughters and two sons and together they have survived many years of war and drought. However Mosa's life changed when he stepped on an unexploded landmine that left him paralysed. Although one of his legs could have been cured, there were no health facilities or specialist doctors in the area to help him.

Confined to a wheelchair and unable to work anymore, Mosa spends his days begging in front of the Mirwais Hospital in Kandahar. "I have no other skills I can use to gain the money I need to buy food for my family. Life is deteriorating," he said. Mosa's 12 year old son helps supplement his father's income by working long hours as a shepherd. However food shortages in Afghanistan have led to a sharp increase in prices, leaving many families like Mosa's unable to buy even basic food items.

Mosa's family also struggle to access drinking water as the well in their home dried up in the drought four years ago. They now have to collect water from a hand pump 70 metres away, which adds to their daily chores. With no electricity or money to pay for fuel, Mosa's son has to go out after a long day's work and collect sticks and animal dung to use as fuel for cooking and keeping the family warm during winter.

During the month of Ramadhan last year, Islamic Relief provided Mosa and his family with a food parcel as part of our Feed the Fasting Programme. "I sincerely thank all those who helped us and ask them to continue this assistance," he said.

When asked how he feels about his future, Mosa said, "I pray to Allah to stop this killing in my country. I wish I could feed my children and send them to school. I hope my children have a better life than I have."



UNLIKE MANY OTHER MOUNTAIN COMMUNITIES, LUKOMIR ESCAPED MAJOR DESTRUCTION DURING THE WAR AND IS NOW ONE OF BOSNIA'S LAST REMAINING TRADITIONAL VILLAGES. ITS PICTURESQUE 120-YEAR-OLD A-SHAPED HOUSES HAVE CHERRY WOOD AND CORRUGATED IRON ROOFS AND STONE WALLS. MOST OF THE YOUNGER GENERATION HAVE MIGRATED TO CITIES TO FIND WORK, BUT THE OLDER GENERATION REMAIN.

## Bosnia-Herzegovina

Ismet, aged 61, lives in Lukomir, a small village in the mountains of Bosnia. Located 5,000 feet above sea level, it is the highest village in Europe and also one of the oldest. Home to around 70 people in the summer, its population dwindles to a mere 13 during the winter months. For around half the year the area is completely snowed under and cut off from the outside world, with food being delivered by helicopter.

Ismet and his family are amongst the few who remain in Lukomir during the winter. "I was born in Lukomir and have lived here all my life," he said. "I work as a farmer because that is the only way to make a living here. I have 70 sheep, 2 cows and 3 plough horses."



© Wendell Phillips

In Lukomir, villagers only have access to food if they grow it themselves or buy it from a mobile shop that visits them occasionally. "We are forced to eat it because we have no other option," Ismet said, describing the food he buys from the truck. "It has caused me stomach pain, vomiting and diarrhoea."

The only other food delivery that reaches Lukomir is the Islamic Relief distribution in Ramadhan. Every year, staff at the Islamic Relief Bosnia office ensure the food parcels reach Lukomir before the winter snow begins to fall.

"The Islamic Relief food was very good," recalled Ismet. "It was good quality and lasted us a long time. Everything in the food parcel was useful to us in Ramadhan."

He added, "I'd like to say to the people who sent us food that I am very happy that they knew about us and were thinking about us in Ramadhan. Thank you."

LIKE JANSARI, MANY THOUSANDS OF CHECHENS HAVE ENDURED SQUALID OVERCROWDED LIVING CONDITIONS, LACKING FOOD, MEDICATION, CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION. THE CONFLICT HAS CLAIMED OVER 100,000 LIVES AND LEFT TOWNS AND CITIES IN RUINS. AROUND 3,000 PEOPLE HAVE DISAPPEARED WITHOUT A TRACE AND AT LEAST HALF OF CHECHNYA'S PRE-WAR POPULATION IS NOW EITHER DISPLACED OR DEAD.



## Chechnya

Jansari is a 74-year-old widow who lives alone in a Chechen village at the centre of the conflict with the Russian Federation. In 1995, her husband was found dead in a local river. Her grief was so overwhelming that she didn't think she'd survive it. Then, three months later, her only son, aged 32, disappeared without a trace.

Jansari was left alone in her home with her grief and memories. The following year, the house was destroyed by a direct shell hit. Forced to move into an abandoned barrack, she lived in fear as

the bombs fell around her for the next six years.

Three years ago, Jansari was able to move into a trailer donated by the head of the local administration. "It's much more comfortable in the trailer than in the barrack," she said. "There is some space for the furnace."

Although the furnace is one of her most valuable possessions, it fills the trailer with smoke making it hard to breathe. She also finds cutting firewood extremely painful as she has a large tumour on

her hand. There is nobody to help her with these chores, although neighbours sometimes visit and bring food.

When Islamic Relief staff visited Jansari on Eid, the Islamic festival at the end of Ramadhan, she said, "I didn't expect anyone to come to me." She invited her guests inside and they were shocked to see the cold, bare, stained walls of the trailer where this frail old woman lived alone in such squalid conditions.

Jansari tried to hide her tears as she thanked her visitors for coming and bringing her a food. "I would never think anyone would remember me - all my relatives are dead. May Allah reward you

and your families for your work."

It was all she could say before she broke down and cried.



# Rebuilding communities

## Indonesia



Islamic Relief has constructed 194 earthquake-resistant houses in Suak Pandan village for those made homeless by the tsunami

Suak Pandan was one of the many villages severely affected by the tsunami in December 2004. Out of its 720 inhabitants, 278 died and the rest were made homeless. Buildings, roads and bridges were destroyed and the once beautiful coastal village became a swamp littered with debris.

In the past 18 months, this devastated Indonesian village has been transformed by the local community with the help of Islamic Relief. *Sbah Ahmed* reports from Aceh Barat and explains why rebuilding communities involves more than just constructing houses.



Every single house in Suak Pandan was destroyed by the tsunami waves. The village was completely submerged in water and residents were forced to seek shelter in temporary accommodation after losing their homes. The entire area became a large swamp and even accessing it was difficult because its roads and bridges were destroyed.

Islamic Relief began the challenging task of cleaning the area by working closely with the local community. Before any reconstruction work could begin, the area had to be drained of excess water – a laborious task that required a great deal of manpower. Islamic Relief provided “cash-for-work” opportunities for local residents through a project funded partly by the DEC, CAFOD and the UNDP. Residents worked towards rehabilitating their village and felt they were making a positive contribution whilst earning a much-needed income.

After the three-month cleaning operation, Islamic Relief engineers worked with local villagers to construct 3 kilometres of road and 6 bridges that would allow access to the area. They then prepared the land for house construction, raising it above sea level and putting floodgates in place to control high tides and prevent future flooding. Work then began on building houses, installing water supply systems and sewage facilities for the entire village.

A year and a half after the tsunami almost wiped Suak Pandan off the map, the village now has newly constructed roads and bridges, 194 earthquake-resistant houses, two community centres and a marketplace for village traders – all with their own water supply, sanitary facilities and drainage systems. Islamic Relief is also building a school and a health clinic in the village.

Islamic Relief’s work in Suak Pandan is driven by a commitment to meet the long-term needs of the community. Building houses is often seen as the main priority after a disaster but this on its own does not ensure long-term sustainability. In order to rebuild a community, villagers need more than just shelter – they need a source of income, access to basic facilities and perhaps most of all, they need to be involved in the reconstruction and decision-making process.



The people of Suak Pandan now not only have a home to return to but feel they are part of an active community that is working towards its own development. The village is also starting to recover economically from the devastating impact of the tsunami. Islamic Relief’s newly built marketplace is ready for trade and many women have been trained in producing handicrafts they can sell. Over 50 women form part of this co-operative and now have a small shop in the centre of Meulaboh where they can sell to a wider market and earn a more substantial income from their craft.

Plans are also underway to provide villagers with interest-free loans they can use to start up small businesses. A Village Development Committee will be established and trained to implement and manage all recovery activities in Suak Pandan, so that when Islamic Relief finally leaves, the community is able to sustain itself. In the long-term, it is these initiatives that will give people returning to Suak Pandan the confidence that life in their village can return to normal again.



# A stitch in time

## Indonesia



A sample of the kasab work produced by the women of Suak Pandan.

### Home at last

Yusniar is married with four children and lives in Suak Pandan village. Her husband worked as a farmer and she made small embroidered items to supplement his income. When the tsunami happened, the family home was washed away. They took refuge at the office of the village leader, along with 30 other people. At night the men had to sleep outdoors while women and children slept inside, cramped together. Eventually the family moved to barracks where they lived for one year before moving into a new home built by Islamic Relief.

Yusniar's is one of around 200 families who were given a new earthquake-resistant house by Islamic Relief. In a village where every single home was destroyed, the house handover ceremony was a much anticipated and joyous occasion.

### Back to work

Since the tsunami, Yusniar's husband has not been able to work on his farm as the land was severely damaged. Instead he runs a small kiosk selling food and drink. In the early days after the disaster, the kiosk was busy as there was lots of activity in the area. Now there are not so many customers. The profit they make is usually just enough to cover the family's basic living costs, including schooling, but sometimes even this can be a struggle.

### Women's support

Yusniar continues to produce embroidery items, known locally as 'kasab.' This traditional craft is popular with Acehnese women, many of whom acquire the skill at a young age. They produce items like cushion covers and ornate wedding decorations, usually for their own use but occasionally for sale.

When Islamic Relief began its livelihood support work in Suak Pandan, women skilled in kasab were encouraged to set up a co-operative to help organise the production and sale of their products. Yusniar was selected as the leader of Women's Kasab Co-operative and Islamic Relief provided materials and training in marketing and business management.

### Fair trade

The co-operative now has 52 members who contribute a monthly sum into a communal savings account and use the money to buy materials. As each member works on their individual products, their profit depends on how much they can produce and sell. The co-operative is now making a significant profit each month and although the return is not regular, it helps women supplement the household income.

Yusniar is hoping to eventually expand her business so that she can contribute more towards her household expenses. Islamic Relief is helping the co-operative market their products more widely and recently some samples have been sent to the UK. If there proves to be a wider market for hand-made Acehnese crafts, these products can be sold according to fair-trade principles, ensuring a good profit for the women of Suak Pandan.

*Recently, three women from the Suak Pandan co-operative have been employed as Trainers by Islamic Relief. They have conducted kasab training in Banda Aceh and Aceh Besar, allowing women in villages there to also benefit from selling their products.*



# News

## In Brief



### Prime Minister of Lebanon thanks Islamic Relief

Senior Lebanese officials including the Prime Minister Fuad Siniora met with Dr Hany El Banna on 25th August 2006. The meeting, held at the Prime Minister's office, focussed on the humanitarian crisis in the country, with Dr Hany briefing Mr Siniora on Islamic Relief's aid distributions and ongoing activities. Dr Hany added that Islamic Relief would continue to work with the people of Lebanon even after the current emergency. Mr Siniora told Dr Hany, "We appreciate your initiatives and your efforts to help those that are suffering from this war."



### Pakistan government awards Islamic Relief

On 6th June 2006, General Pervez Musharraf presented Islamic Relief

with an award in recognition of its efforts after the earthquake on 8th October 2005. The 'Star of Dedication' Award was presented to Islamic Relief's country director in Pakistan, Mr Adil Al-Mahi.

The awards were given to humanitarian organisations and individuals who assisted those affected by the earthquake. Upon receiving the award Mr Al-Mahi said, "This is an acknowledgement of the tremendous work of Islamic Relief's Pakistan staff. The team has worked tirelessly to help the survivors of the earthquake."



### Islamic Relief colleague killed in Iraq

Our dear colleague, Ali Abbas, worked as a driver for Islamic Relief Iraq. He was taken from his home in Baghdad, on Friday 21st July 2006, and killed. He was confirmed dead the following day.

Born in Baghdad, Ali worked with a local NGO supporting children suffering from cancer before he joined Islamic Relief Iraq as a volunteer in 1997. Based on his commitment, sincerity and reliability, he was hired as a full-time employee in April 2005.

Ali's colleagues found his energetic nature very inspiring. In spite of his prosthetic lower leg, he never allowed his physical disability to prevent him from achieving his potential. His close colleagues say he was characterised by patience and perseverance.

Ali is survived by his two wives and seven children. He will be deeply missed.



### Asian Jewel Awards

Islamic Relief's president, Dr Hany El Banna, was awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award at the Asian Jewel Awards held at the Grosvenor House Hotel in London on 8th July 2006. The award recognised Dr Hany's commitment to humanitarian work and his

establishment of Islamic Relief. Although the awards are chiefly given to Asians, an exception was made to honour the global impact of Dr Hany's efforts over the past two decades.

# Events

## and dialogue



### World Economic Forum

Islamic Relief's president, Dr Hany El Banna attended the World Economic Forum on the Middle East, in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt on 21st May where he made a presentation during the C100 meeting. At the Forum, he met with President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz of Pakistan and Prince Turki Al-Faisal, head of the group, with whom he had a discussion about religious and inter-cultural dialogue.



### President of Cultural Council, Iran, visits Islam Relief Deutschland

During his visit to Islamic Relief Deutschland, the President of the Cultural Council in Iran, Dr Hummion Hemmati, talked about the importance of humanitarian and relief work. He appreciated the role Islamic Relief plays in relieving the suffering of people worldwide. He also thanked Islamic Relief for its relief efforts in Bam, Iran after the devastating earthquake that hit the region on 26th December 2003.



### Meeting with British ambassador to Lebanon

On 23rd August 2006, Dr Hany met with the British ambassador to Lebanon, James Watt in Beirut and briefed him on Islamic Relief's work in Lebanon. The ambassador expressed concern for the people of south Lebanon and praised Islamic Relief for working in the region from the start of the conflict.

### Forthcoming conference on HIV/AIDS

Dr Hany El Banna met with official delegates in Yemen between 23rd and 28th June 2006. He met with the British Ambassador of Yemen, the US Ambassador of Yemen, the Minister of Social Affairs and Labour, the UN Resident Co-ordinator in Yemen and representatives of many international NGOs and agencies such as the Charitable Society of Social Welfare.

During these meetings Dr Hany discussed the role of the World Humanitarian Forum and a forthcoming conference in South Africa on HIV/AIDS. He also attended the worldwide conference on 'Democracy, Political Reform and Freedom of Expression' where he met with representatives of many countries including Syria, UAE, Oman, Somalia and Kuwait as well as the Prime Minister of Yemen.

Similar discussions were also held in Bahrain with the Al Eslah Society, the Head of the Islamic Association and in Qatar with the Minister of Awqaf, Sheikh Yusuf Al Qaradawi and representatives of other international organisations.

# Campaigning for a fairer world

### Protecting civilians in Darfur

Islamic Relief has been highlighting the plight of civilians caught up in the Darfur conflict by working closely with the Advocacy Coalition for Darfur, headed by the International Crisis Action Group. We released a joint press statement with seven other leading aid agencies including Oxfam and Christian Aid in July 2006, calling for extra funding for the regional force in Darfur to protect innocent civilians from the escalating violence. Islamic Relief's advocacy team have also met with a representative of the International Commission of Peace to discuss our future involvement in peace-building initiatives in the region.

### Lebanon ceasefire campaign

As the war in Lebanon intensified, Islamic Relief joined together with other leading aid agencies to call for an immediate end to the hostilities. A coalition of aid agencies, human rights groups and others united under the banner of the Ceasefire Today Coalition ([www.ceasefiretoday.org](http://www.ceasefiretoday.org)) and called for Parliament to be recalled so that there could be a discussion on plans for a permanent ceasefire in Lebanon.

On 3rd August five aid agencies, Islamic Relief, Christian Aid, Oxfam, Save the Children and World Vision, held a joint press conference in Beirut to highlight the devastating impact of the conflict on the Lebanese people and to urge the British government to support calls for a ceasefire. Islamic Relief was the only aid agency at the conference that was working in south Lebanon at the time and so was able to describe both the humanitarian situation there and the difficulties in delivering aid.

### World Humanitarian Forum

The World Humanitarian Forum is working to create an NGO-friendly environment, building and strengthening partnerships in the worldwide humanitarian sector and helping Muslim organisations rise to meet international standards.

Following on from its initial workshops held in 15 countries, the World Humanitarian Forum was officially launched at the WHF Steering Committee meeting held in London, UK on 2nd May 2006. Key organisational decisions were discussed such as the proposed structure, logistics and future direction of the Forum. Subsequent meetings have also been held and it was decided that the Forum will be registered with the UK's Charity Commission.

For more information about the Humanitarian Forum please visit: [www.humanitarianforum.org](http://www.humanitarianforum.org)

### Islamic Relief joins gender debate

Islamic Relief has recently joined the Gender and Development Network (GADN), a group of around 200 leading practitioners, academics and consultants working on gender and development issues. The GADN has been active in advocacy and awareness-raising on gender and development issues since it was founded in 1985. Islamic Relief's membership of the network is part of our wider aim of addressing gender issues both within the organisation and more widely in terms of our work in developing countries.

### NGO Consortia meeting

The International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA), InterAction and the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response organised a meeting with the heads of 25 NGOs, including Islamic Relief, in Geneva where they discussed the topic, "Enhancing the effectiveness of humanitarian action; a dialogue between UN and non-UN humanitarian organisations." The aim of the meeting, held on 12th to 13th July 2006, was to strengthen NGOs engagement with and participation in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee. Islamic Relief was represented by Dr Hany El Banna.



# MDGs

## Millennium Development Goals

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are eight ways to improve the lives of many millions of people in some of the world's poorest countries. These goals were developed by the UN in 2000, with the aim of achieving them by 2015. They are supported by states, non-governmental organisations and individuals.

Islamic Relief supports the MDGs and many of our projects around the world are contributing towards this global humanitarian project.



1

### ERADICATE EXTREME POVERTY AND HUNGER

Around the world, one billion people live on less than \$1 a day and more than a quarter of children under five in developing countries are malnourished.

**Target:** Reduce by half the proportion of people living on less than \$1 a day and reduce by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.

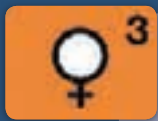


2

### ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION

115 million children of primary school age are not in education. Most of these children are from the poorest families where the mother has had no formal education herself.

**Target:** Ensure that by 2015 all boys and girls can complete a full course of primary education.



3

### PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER WOMEN

Gender equality is a human right and at the heart of the MDGs but often girls are left behind in education, employment and decision-making.

**Target:** Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education.



4

### REDUCE CHILD MORTALITY

Every day 300,000 children under 5 die, that is 11 million children a year. Most of these deaths are caused by diseases that can be easily treated with inexpensive drugs.

**Target:** Reduce by two thirds the mortality rate of children under five.

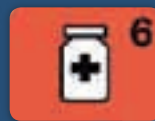


5

### IMPROVE MATERNAL HEALTH

More than half a million women a year die during pregnancy or child birth, and many more women suffer serious injuries which if untreated can cause life-long pain and humiliation.

**Target:** Reduce by three quarters the maternal mortality ratio.



6

### COMBAT HIV/AIDS, MALARIA AND OTHER DISEASES

20 million people have already died from HIV/AIDS and malaria continues to kill one million people a year.

**Target:** Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS, malaria and other major diseases.



7

### ENSURE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

In sub-Saharan Africa, 42% of people do not have access to safe drinking water.

**Target:** Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes, reverse the loss of environmental resources and halve the number of people without access to safe drinking water.



8

### GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR DEVELOPMENT

Over 185 million people worldwide are not in work; just under half are aged between 15 and 24

**Target:** In co-operation with developing countries, develop and implement strategies for decent and productive work for youth