



# Ramadan Action Guide:

Advocacy Resource  
on Hunger and Poverty

*Those that give their wealth for the cause of God  
can be compared to a grain of corn which brings  
forth seven ears, each bearing a hundred grains.*

– The Qur'an, 2:261

# In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

## Think

### Awareness: The Scope of Hunger

#### Global

- An estimated 1.02 billion people in the world are undernourished.
- Every five seconds, a child dies from malnutrition and hunger-related causes.
- Poor nutrition and calorie deficiencies cause nearly 1 in 3 people to die prematurely or have disabilities.
- Hunger and malnutrition kills more people than HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria combined.

#### Domestic

- In the United States, 1 in 4, or 16.7 million children, live in households where people have to skip meals or eat less to make ends meet.
- 49 million people – up from 36 million in 2007 – are threatened by hunger and 37 million (1 in 8) depend on food banks and charities for food.
- In January, 2010, 3 in 7 Americans reported buying less food or worrying about going hungry; 3 in 5 households with children said they lived paycheck to paycheck and 1 in 2 said the recession had impacted their ability to provide food for their families.

## Care

### Compassion

Ramadan is the time to increase service to those who are less fortunate and an opportunity to reinforce the spiritual reasons for fighting hunger and poverty. It is also an ideal time to educate the diverse Muslim-American community. The hungry and poor should be, and always are, emphasized in supplication during Ramadan. As we experience hunger, the best way to follow that spiritual experience is through action on behalf of poor and hungry people.

In the spirit of Zakat, your mosque or organization can hold an event highlighting issues related to hunger and poverty. These gatherings may provide leaders and members of other faiths an opportunity to visit your establishment. With minimal effort, your mosque can partner with other groups for fundraisers, food drives or advocacy efforts.

*“They will ask you about almsgiving. Say, ‘Whatever you bestow in charity must go to parents and to kinsfolk, to the orphans and to the destitute and to the traveler in need. God is aware of whatever good you do.’”*

– The Qur’an, 2:215

## Act

### Advocate

#### Write or call your members of Congress

Communication with your members of Congress is most effective if it is personalized and makes a specific request. Letters from constituents have an impact on the political process, especially when they are received in numbers or are printed in the local paper.

#### Ask a question at a Town Hall Meeting or Candidate Forum

Candidates running for office or re-election have an interest in responding to your concerns. Going to an event where a candidate is speaking provides a unique opportunity to get them to take a stand on an issue.

### ADVOCACY RESOURCES

**ONE** offers educational resources on global hunger; materials to help you call, write, and meet with elected officials; and ideas for mobilizing your community. Website: [www.one.org/us/actnow](http://www.one.org/us/actnow)

**The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR)** has developed a fact sheet on U.S. hunger and provides tool kits with instructions to help you call, write, and meet with elected officials for policies that affect hunger and poverty. Website: [www.cair.com](http://www.cair.com)  
Contact: Corey Saylor, (202) 488-8787

**Feeding America** is the nation’s leading domestic hunger-relief charity. They offer resources for advocacy on U.S. hunger, materials to help individuals call and write elected officials, and a tool to find your local food bank. Website: [www.hungeractioncenter.org](http://www.hungeractioncenter.org)

## Act (cont.)

The media are often at these events and cover the questions asked. By presenting questions, you have the chance to influence the candidates, educate others in the room and reach a variety of media sources.

### Meet with your federal, state, or local elected officials

Your greatest opportunity for success comes when you work in coalitions. A member of Congress will respond positively to an interfaith lobby/awareness day that brings together constituents of varying faiths to talk about the importance of tending to the needs of hungry and poor people. Another way to make such efforts fruitful is by drawing attention to a specific event. One effective tactic is to organize an interfaith hunger awareness event and invite an elected official to speak.

It is important to show that you are looking for a sustained effort on the part of your elected officials. The specific issues may be complicated, but speaking about them doesn't need to be.

## Educate

### Public Awareness

The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) works closely with interfaith communities around the country to enhance interfaith understanding. Understanding and respecting each others' faiths is essential to living and working together peacefully.

"Muslims Care: Promoting Volunteerism for A Better America" is a campaign designed by CAIR to encourage individuals in the muslim community to reach out to their neighbors and make a positive contribution to the society at large. The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said, "He who has enough food for two, let him invite a third, and he who has food for four, let him invite a fifth or a sixth." CAIR provides resources on how to plan or join an event already taking place in your community.

Website: [www.cair.com/muslimscare](http://www.cair.com/muslimscare) • Contact: Corey Saylor, (202)-488-8787

### Organize Campus Action

Thousands of Muslim-American students have capitalized on their powerful positions as agents of change. They have been successful in galvanizing their communities to understand the needs and responses to the unjust realities of poverty and hunger that millions face at home and abroad.

The Muslim Students Association (MSA) organizes fast-a-thons during Ramadan. This program challenges muslims and members of other faiths to donate the money they would have spent on food that day to a food bank. Each year, about 250 campuses participate in this nationwide program. The MSA also created the National \$1 Campaign, which calls on all muslim students to donate \$1 for orphaned children and advocate for quality healthcare for the underserved. Donations are given to Islamic Relief USA and the UMMA Clinic.

Students can make a large impact against hunger by utilizing their talents and energy towards an important cause. New initiatives can be created to include not just college students, but also students at Islamic elementary/high schools, and Sunday schools.

Website: [www.msanational.org](http://www.msanational.org)

## What can I call, write, and ask about?

**U.S. Hunger:** In August, Congress is finalizing its review of the federal domestic child nutrition programs, including school breakfast and lunch, Summer Food and WIC programs. President Obama has requested \$1 billion a year for the next 10 years to improve these programs and ensure our children have enough to eat where they live, learn and play.

When kids do not have the proper nutrition, academic performance declines and rates of obesity, behavioral and other health problems rise.

**Ask your elected officials to improve federal nutrition programs so more hungry people have access to the food they need. If Congress has already voted on child nutrition, ask if they voted for the additional \$1 billion and thank them if they did.**

**Global Hunger:** President Obama recently announced a development initiative to comprehensively address global hunger through investments in sustainable agricultural development, nutrition, safety nets, and emergency humanitarian response. Robust funding for global development is critical to U.S. foreign policy and our shared future with people and nations around the world. Learn more about the President's budget at [www.one.org](http://www.one.org) and the Global Hunger and Food Security Act at [www.friendsofwfp.org/currentlegislation](http://www.friendsofwfp.org/currentlegislation).

**Ask your elected officials to support the president's request for global hunger and development programs and to pass the Global Hunger and Food Security Act.**

# Act (cont.)

## Serve

### Coordinate Food Pantry/Shelter Efforts

Your mosque can coordinate its efforts with local charitable institutions to better leverage your collective efforts to serve hungry and poor people. You will learn a great deal about your community and find that you can have a significant and lasting impact.

Feeding America—the Nation's Food Bank Network—is the largest charitable hunger-relief organization, serving 25 million low-income hungry people in the U.S. To access free food for your charitable efforts and learn more about your local food bank, visit their website at [www.feedingamerica.org](http://www.feedingamerica.org). Enter your zip code to find your local food bank.

### Volunteer at Islamic Relief USA's Day of Dignity 2010

In the spirit of Ramadan, Islamic Relief USA hosts "Day of Dignity," where communities around the country come together to provide services to homeless individuals and families in need to promote their well-being. "Day of Dignity" is a grassroots effort coordinated by thousands of volunteers who distribute clothing, hygiene items, toys and food, and provide free health screenings. Every year, the "Day of Dignity" provides services to over 25,000 individuals in need throughout the U.S.

"Day of Dignity" allows community members to provide services to their neighbors in need and creates an opportunity for individuals from a variety of communities to work together.

Atlanta, GA: August	Irvington, NJ: Sept. 25	New York, Manhattan: Oct. 10	Portland, OR: Sept. 26
Baltimore, MD: Sept. 4	Elizabeth, NJ: Sept. 26	New York, Brooklyn: Oct. 9	Seattle, WA: Nov. 20
Boston, MA: Oct. 16	Flint, MI: August	Newark, NJ: August	Washington DC: Nov. 20
Chicago, IL: August	Fort Thompson, SD: June 19	Las Vegas, NV: Dec. 4	
Dallas, TX: Aug. 28	Kalamazoo, MI: Sept. 25	Philadelphia, PA: Aug. 22	
Detroit, MI: Aug. 21	Minneapolis, MN: August	Phoenix, AZ: Dec. 4	

Website: [www.IslamicReliefUSA.org](http://www.IslamicReliefUSA.org) • Contact: Karim Amin, (703)-370-7202, [karim@IslamicReliefUSA.org](mailto:karim@IslamicReliefUSA.org)

## About the contributors:



**Islamic Relief USA** incorporated in 1993 in California with its headquarters now outside Washington, DC. Islamic Relief USA is a non-profit, humanitarian organization striving to alleviate poverty and suffering around the world. Islamic Relief USA operates a wide variety of projects, in education, water, sanitation, income generation, orphan support, health, nutrition, and emergency relief. [www.IslamicReliefUSA.org](http://www.IslamicReliefUSA.org)

the alliance



toendhunger

**The Alliance to End Hunger** engages diverse institutions in building the political and public will to end hunger. The Alliance develops innovative partnerships among our members; political commitment among our leaders; and global connections among groups working to end hunger worldwide. [www.alliancetoendhunger.org](http://www.alliancetoendhunger.org)



CAIR

**Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR)** is a nonprofit grassroots civil rights and advocacy group. It is America's largest Islamic civil liberties group, with regional offices nationwide and in Canada. CAIR's headquarters is in Washington D.C. [www.cair.com](http://www.cair.com)



**ONE** is a grassroots campaign and advocacy organization backed by more than 2 million people from around the world who are committed to the fight against extreme poverty and preventable disease, particularly in Africa.

At **ONE**, we achieve change through advocacy. We hold world leaders accountable for the promises made to the poorest people, and we press these leaders to support better policies and more effective aid and trade reform.

**ONE Sadaqa** is a part of **ONE Sabbath**, which rallies individuals and organizations of all faiths to address the challenges of extreme poverty and global diseases such as AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. [www.one.org](http://www.one.org)



Muslim Public Affairs Council

**Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC)** is a public service agency working for the civil rights of American Muslims, for the integration of Islam into American pluralism, and for a positive, constructive relationship between American Muslims and their representatives. [www.mpac.org](http://www.mpac.org)



**Islamic Society of North America (ISNA)** is an association of Muslim organizations and individuals that provides a common platform for presenting Islam, supporting Muslim communities, developing educational, social and outreach programs and fostering good relations with other religious communities, and civic and service organizations. [www.isna.net](http://www.isna.net)