

Providing relief and
support through every
difficulty since 1997



ISLAMIC RELIEF IN THE **OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY**



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Islamic Relief is a faith-inspired humanitarian and development agency working to save and transform the lives of some of the world's most vulnerable people. Established in the UK in 1984, we work in over 40 countries, assist people according to need, and do not discriminate in any way.

Since 1997 we have been providing humanitarian relief in the Occupied Palestinian Territory as the communities we serve have struggled with the devastating effects of occupation, blockade and recurring conflict. Wherever possible we work through local partners as part of our efforts to strengthen civil society, concentrating on inclusion of all ages and abilities. Our Gaza team are among the first to respond to emergencies with lifesaving aid. To reduce suffering, we empower local people to prepare for emergencies and respond effectively when they happen.

Many Palestinian families depend on external aid for day-to-day survival. We provide them with food, clean water, safer homes and support for vulnerable children, while our integrated approach to all these different areas of support helps families break out of aid dependency. Islamic Relief empowers people to achieve sustainable livelihoods, supports education, and engages young people in trying to build a future free from poverty.

Since 1997 Islamic Relief has invested almost £109 million in humanitarian and development programmes to support the Palestinian people.

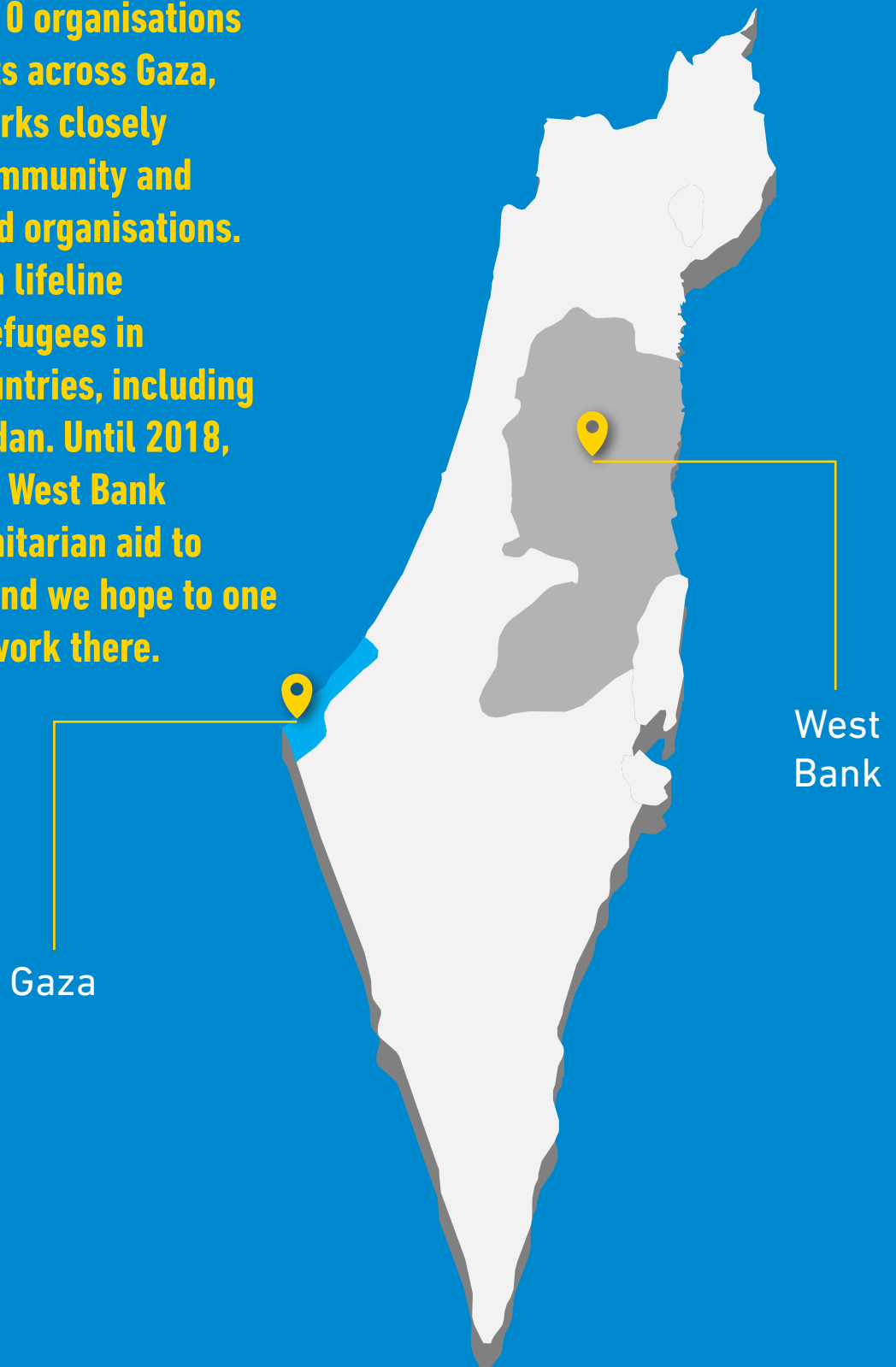
“The Russul centre, which Islamic Relief established in Nussairat, is considered to be an innovation lighthouse where it takes care of the most marginalised children. It embraces a unique approach that targets talented children with different interventions that add value to their and their community's life.”

The Middle Area Parents Council, Gaza.

Cover: Lamar, 11, attends an Islamic Relief educational club for disadvantaged children in Gaza and now achieves top marks in science. Read her story on page 22.

WHERE WE WORK


Partnering with 10 organisations to deliver projects across Gaza, Islamic Relief works closely with the local community and community-based organisations. We also provide a lifeline for Palestinian refugees in neighbouring countries, including Lebanon and Jordan. Until 2018, we worked in the West Bank delivering humanitarian aid to 100,000 people and we hope to one day resume our work there.



COURAGE IN THE FACE OF A COMPLEX CRISIS



In a special event held by Islamic Relief in Gaza, some of the orphaned children we sponsor join their families in celebrating all they've achieved despite the challenges they face.



The Occupied Palestinian Territory has been under Israeli occupation since 1967 and this has had profound effects on every aspect of daily life. Palestinians face restrictions on travelling to work and school, visiting their relatives and going abroad. Externally imposed restrictions often dictate whether they can earn a living, access their farmland, attend a protest and even receive water and electricity.

Each part of the territory has its own unique story of suffering. Conditions are particularly dire in Gaza, which is almost totally cut off from the rest of the world. Children here have never met their relatives in the West Bank. They have never known the Gaza of past times that I so vividly remember, with its thriving industries producing and exporting textiles, furniture and tiles. Its beautiful citrus farms, industrious fishing boats and busy construction sites. The throngs of tourists filling its gorgeous beaches are long gone.

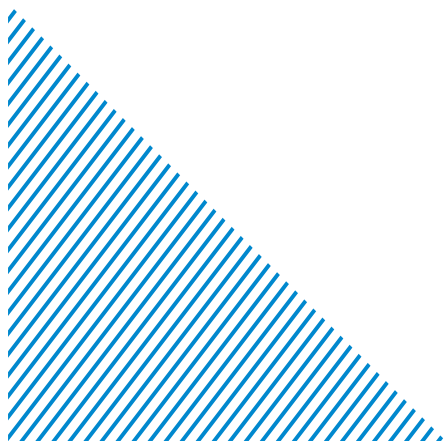
Young people have experienced devastating violence due to military assaults on civilians. Deprived of their right to free movement, they know travelling may prove impossible. With youth unemployment at a record high and no chance to work abroad, most are really struggling to hang on to hope.

But it is not only young people who are struggling to deal with Gaza's collapsing economy. Many parents are unable to provide for their families while the most vulnerable – including older people, people with disabilities, widowed women and orphaned children – are pushed to the brink of survival. Dependency on aid is an everyday reality, and psychological disorders are rife.

Islamic Relief has been working in the area for more than two decades, doing all we can to help. We provide poor families with food and shelter. We support entrepreneurial individuals, especially young people, to set up small businesses so they can earn a living. We improve the wellbeing of children, especially children with disabilities. And we strengthen much-needed civil society by working closely with community organisations and service providers.

However the suffering here will not end until the root causes are addressed. Islamic Relief therefore continues to call on the international community to do more to ensure the blockade is lifted and the occupation ended. Only then can the courageous people of the Occupied Palestinian Territory rebuild their communities and work towards a safer, more stable future.

Muneeb Abu-Ghazaleh
Country Director
Islamic Relief Palestine



HUMANITARIAN NEEDS IN GAZA



Population of Gaza:
over **2 million**

70% of people under
30 are unemployed



53% of the population
live below the poverty line

80% rely on external
aid to survive



27% of families live in
homes that are hazardous
to their health

68% of the population can't
be sure where their next
meal is coming from



Over **20,000**
children are orphans

“I CANNOT IMAGINE MY LIFE WITHOUT ISLAMIC RELIEF’S SUPPORT”



Um Fathi’s children are sponsored by Islamic Relief, which means she can take care of their needs and send them to school.

“It was three years ago that my husband passed away at work. I could not believe it. I have five young children and no source of income. The economic situation in Gaza is so difficult that no-one could help us. Our relatives can hardly provide for their own families. I was frustrated, penniless and depressed.

“Since Islamic Relief has been sponsoring my children, thank Allah, I can take better care of them. We are completely reliant on the sponsorship. You cannot imagine my children’s happiness the day we receive sponsorship funds. I go to the supermarket and, without going into debt, buy the food we need and then cook their favourite meals. The funds also pay for their school uniforms, stationery and transport. Education is so important to us and my children are all excellent students.

“This month I bought a battery to install alternative lighting in our home as we only get eight hours of electricity in Gaza. It means we no longer have to struggle in the dark and the children can study. Islamic Relief has illuminated not just our house but also our souls. Thank Allah for all the good people who support those in need. I cannot imagine what my life would be like without Islamic Relief’s support.”

“Islamic Relief has illuminated not just our house but also our souls.”

A LIFELINE FOR **100,000 PEOPLE** IN THE WEST BANK



Children at play in
the West Bank.



Islamic Relief began working in the West Bank in 2002, serving on average 100,000 people a year in a region where 2.5 million rely on external aid.

Our programmes supported vulnerable children, provided livelihood opportunities for women, improved access to food through agricultural projects, equipped health clinics and hospitals to provide lifesaving medical care, distributed food for Ramadan and qurbani and ensured children in remote areas had access to education.

In 2014 Islamic Relief was designated a terrorist organisation by the Israeli authorities, and this forced us to scale down our operations in the West Bank before suspending them completely in 2018. Since then, Islamic Relief has been working tirelessly to challenge the allegations. Until a resolution is reached, the ban impacts our efforts to help.

Families of orphaned children who relied on sponsorship to cover the cost of living have been left without a source of income. Patients in need of dialysis, surgery and medical care have struggled to access the treatment they desperately need. The quality of education in rural areas has suffered, farmers have been unable to grow sufficient food for their families, and Islamic Relief's staff in the West Bank have lost their jobs.

Islamic Relief has been working tirelessly to challenge the Israeli authorities' baseless allegations against us so we can resume our lifesaving work in the West Bank.

OVER TWO DECADES OF LIFESAVING AND LIFE-CHANGING SUPPORT



1997:

Islamic Relief begins providing Palestinian families with small business loans so they can earn a living amidst increasing instability in the region.

1998:

With funding from the UK Department for International Development (DFID), we set up two educational centres in Rafah and Deir Balah, Gaza, serving vulnerable children including those with disabilities.



2008:

Within hours of the start of a devastating 22-day conflict in Gaza, Islamic Relief begins distributing desperately needed aid and is one of the few agencies to remain on the ground throughout the crisis.

Following the 22-day conflict in 2008 Islamic Relief delivered a £30 million emergency response and reconstruction programme in Gaza that included restoring intensive care and emergency departments in nine hospitals.

2012:

As part of our emergency response to the escalation of another conflict, we deliver £1 million worth of medical supplies to hospitals which allows them to treat incoming casualties.



2014:

In response to conflict once again, we reach over 15,000 displaced Palestinians with emergency aid including food and water, provide medical equipment to hospitals and help children get back to school.

“From day one of this brutal conflict, Islamic Relief has been supporting hospitals and families uprooted by the fighting, providing clean drinking water and food to help people break their Ramadan fasts,”

Mohammed, Islamic Relief aid worker on the ground in Gaza, July 2014.



2015:

Another round of conflict pushes an estimated 30,000 families into poverty. In response we launch a £1 million recovery project to help rebuild shattered lives, providing access to food, education and healthcare as well as building resilience to face future conflicts.

2018:

Over 50 Palestinians are killed by gunfire, including an eight-month-old baby, and more than 2,700 people are injured in largely peaceful protests. Islamic Relief provides lifesaving medical supplies to support hospitals in Gaza as they struggle to treat survivors.



2019:

Islamic Relief responds to increased hostilities in Gaza with urgent support for civilian casualties and infrastructure. We provide urgent medical supplies that allow hospitals to treat the sick and wounded, help children go to school and ensure people can continue to earn a living.

2020:

Islamic Relief responds to the Covid-19 outbreak in Gaza by working to prevent its spread and providing additional support to families at greater risk. We deliver food vouchers to tens of thousands of people losing out on paid work due to the pandemic. Hospitals, health centres and quarantine centres receive essential equipment and our teams disinfect schools and hospitals to reduce the risk of infection.



2021:

More than 250 people in Gaza are killed during a devastating 11-day conflict that also destroys more than 1,000 homes. We provide food vouchers and bedding, and begin rebuilding and repairing homes, schools, and healthcare facilities.

ISLAMIC RELIEF'S PROGRAMMES



A child plays in a ruined building in Gaza following another escalation in conflict, 2015.

Lifesaving humanitarian assistance

Islamic Relief is a lifeline for thousands of Palestinian families whose lives are impacted every day by the protracted crisis. Responding swiftly to emergencies, we distribute much-needed aid such as medicine, food and water as well as clothing, shelter and personal hygiene items. We help local people to better protect themselves from disasters, working closely with communities to build their resilience. Families pushed to the brink by poverty receive social assistance and support with access to food and safe shelter. Islamic Relief also sponsors thousands of orphaned children, helping to meet their basic needs and making sure they can go to school.

Youth-centred community development

In the face of soaring youth unemployment, our youth-centred community work is helping young people enter the world of work, earn a reliable living, and raise their living standards. Our Islamic microfinance grants enable young entrepreneurs to start up microbusinesses, supported by training, coaching and mentoring. Focused on enabling young people to achieve their potential, we develop apprenticeship and internship opportunities and boost access to high-quality technical and vocational education and training. We are proud to inspire young people to play a vital role in developing their communities.



Islamic Relief helps young people access the world of work in Gaza, where youth unemployment is at a record high.

Life-changing child welfare interventions

Islamic Relief's child welfare programmes transform the lives of many vulnerable children. We sponsor over 7,000 orphaned children in Gaza, giving their families a regular stipend towards their basic needs and schooling. Seeing education as essential to building a brighter future, we improve access to quality preschool and education and support schools with water, sanitation and hygiene interventions. Child protection is an important feature of all our work in Gaza, and we also provide vital counselling and support services to vulnerable children.

Islamic Relief social worker Eman Jaber talks to Halima at her home in Gaza.



"I don't like anybody hitting me," says Halima, who after the death of her father experienced abuse at the hands of her uncle. Her mother, Um Mustafa, says that her brother-in-law regularly hit her and her children. They lived in the house of her husband's family and had nowhere else to go. But when she found he had tied Halima up with electrical wires and beat her, she took her children and fled.

Um Mustafa's family were finally safe from domestic violence but without a family breadwinner she struggled to pay the rent. They had no refrigerator, gas or furniture. And Halima continued to suffer the effects of trauma. She wet the bed, hit her siblings, ripped out her hair, and ran away when she was afraid or angry.

Islamic Relief began sponsoring Halima by providing a regular stipend towards the family's basic needs. We regularly visit sponsored children at home to check on their welfare and on one such visit our social worker realised Halima needed additional support. Enlisting the support of psychosocial specialists, we helped her come to terms with her past trauma.

Later, when Islamic Relief took the family on a rare picnic to one of our gardens in a bid to uplift their spirits, Halima finally opened up to her mother about her grief for her father.

"I am so happy and thankful for your support and kindness," says Um Mustafa. "I hope you will continue your care and kindness with Halima so that she can live a normal life like other children."

"Some of the young children we sponsored many years ago have now graduated from university or received training and internship opportunities through our programmes. As far as they can remember, Islamic Relief has always been a part of their life."

Eman Al Madhoun, Islamic Relief Orphan Sponsorship Officer in Gaza

EMERGENCY RELIEF IN EVERY CRISIS

Islamic Relief has been a lifeline in the Occupied Palestinian Territory for over two decades. As well as responding to emergencies with lifesaving humanitarian relief, we provide a safety net for families in dire need.



Through every devastating conflict for over 20 years, Islamic Relief has remained on the ground to help vulnerable people. Our humanitarian programming includes directly supporting Gaza's struggling health sector by equipping hospitals and health centres with lifesaving medicine and medical supplies.

AN UNPRECEDENTED CRISIS

Two men overlook a destroyed building in Gaza during a severe May 2021 escalation in the conflict.



In May 2021, an 11-day escalation in the conflict caused devastation in Gaza. Over 250 people were killed – including 66 children – and nearly 2,000 residents were injured.

Rockets destroyed 300 buildings, including more than 1,100 housing units. Thousands more homes were damaged, as were several hospitals and primary care centres.

The conflict exacerbated the ongoing challenge of the Covid-19 pandemic, with social distancing becoming harder for displaced families, a pause in testing and tracing, and a delay in the arrival of vaccines.

Islamic Relief faced major challenges in responding to the emergency. Unlike other periods of violence that Gaza has witnessed, this time the whole of the Gaza Strip was crippled.

During the escalation, we coordinated with suppliers so that we could be ready to help as soon as it was safe to do so.

We were soon able to provide urgent food supplies, bedding and medical aid to those affected, but border closures and the fact that many main roads were blocked with rubble complicated relief efforts.

A photograph showing a man with a white beard and glasses, wearing a grey tunic and a white cap, walking towards the camera on a path covered in rubble and debris. In the background, other people are visible, and the scene is set in a damaged urban environment with damaged buildings.

A man walks amid rubble following an aerial bombardment of Gaza in May 2021.

Coping with the long-term fallout

While providing emergency relief was our top priority, it was clear from the scale of the devastation that a long-term strategy would be necessary.

Some of those injured now live with long-term disabilities that require medical rehabilitation, while the psychological impact of the crisis on the population is thought to be severe.

Even prior to the latest escalation in conflict, many children had experienced severe trauma and struggled with their mental health, requiring counselling and other support. We continue to support special education centres and provide counselling to affected families.

We have also begun repairing damaged homes, schools, and healthcare facilities, as well as providing them with the equipment they need to run smoothly.

Going forward, we plan to support the repair of water systems so that homes can be reconnected to water supplies.

We also want to expand our existing projects in Gaza, which are a lifeline for many people.

Islamic Relief is determined to help those affected by the escalation in the conflict to rebuild their lives.



Men pick their way through debris during an escalation in May 2021.



Once it was safe, we supplied medical aid, food and bedding to people during the May 2021 escalation.

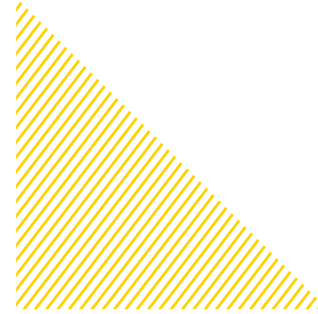
ON THE FRONTLINE OF THE COVID CATASTROPHE IN BLOCKADED GAZA

Islamic Relief
staff prepare
food packs for
poor families
during the
Covid lockdown
in Gaza.





Covid-19 restrictions left kindergarten teacher Alaa out of work.



With its dense population and collapsing economy, Gaza is in danger of being overwhelmed by Covid-19. Its health sector is at breaking point, with a severe shortage of specialist staff and medical supplies. Electricity and water are also in short supply.

Islamic Relief is at the forefront of responding by disinfecting schools and hospitals and raising awareness of the virus to reduce the spread. We are also providing medical equipment and hygiene kits to hospitals, health centres and quarantine centres.

The restrictions introduced to tackle coronavirus have pushed many of the poorest families even deeper into poverty. Among them is Alaa, a kindergarten teacher who previously took part in Islamic Relief training to improve preschool teaching.

"I am the sole breadwinner for my family. I don't get paid much but I don't ask others for help," says the mother-of-two. The Covid restrictions have left her out of work and although she has tried to find another job, it is harder than ever as many others are in the same position.

"I don't know when I will return to work. I don't know what to do if the coronavirus pandemic lasts for months."

University graduate Wassim, 25, has also found himself without an income, with devastating consequences for his family. The little he earned as a barber covered their basic expenses and paid for medical treatment for his wife, who has epilepsy, and his father, who has cancer.

"With coronavirus everything stopped," he says. "I don't have the money to buy the necessary medication. My soul is tired. I am afraid for my children and I am afraid of losing my wife and my parents."

Islamic Relief is easing the suffering of tens of thousands of people like Alaa and Wassim by providing food vouchers. The Covid-19 crisis is not yet over, but we will continue to support the people of Gaza through every crisis, as we have done since 1997.

SAFE HOMES FOR SURVIVING WINTER



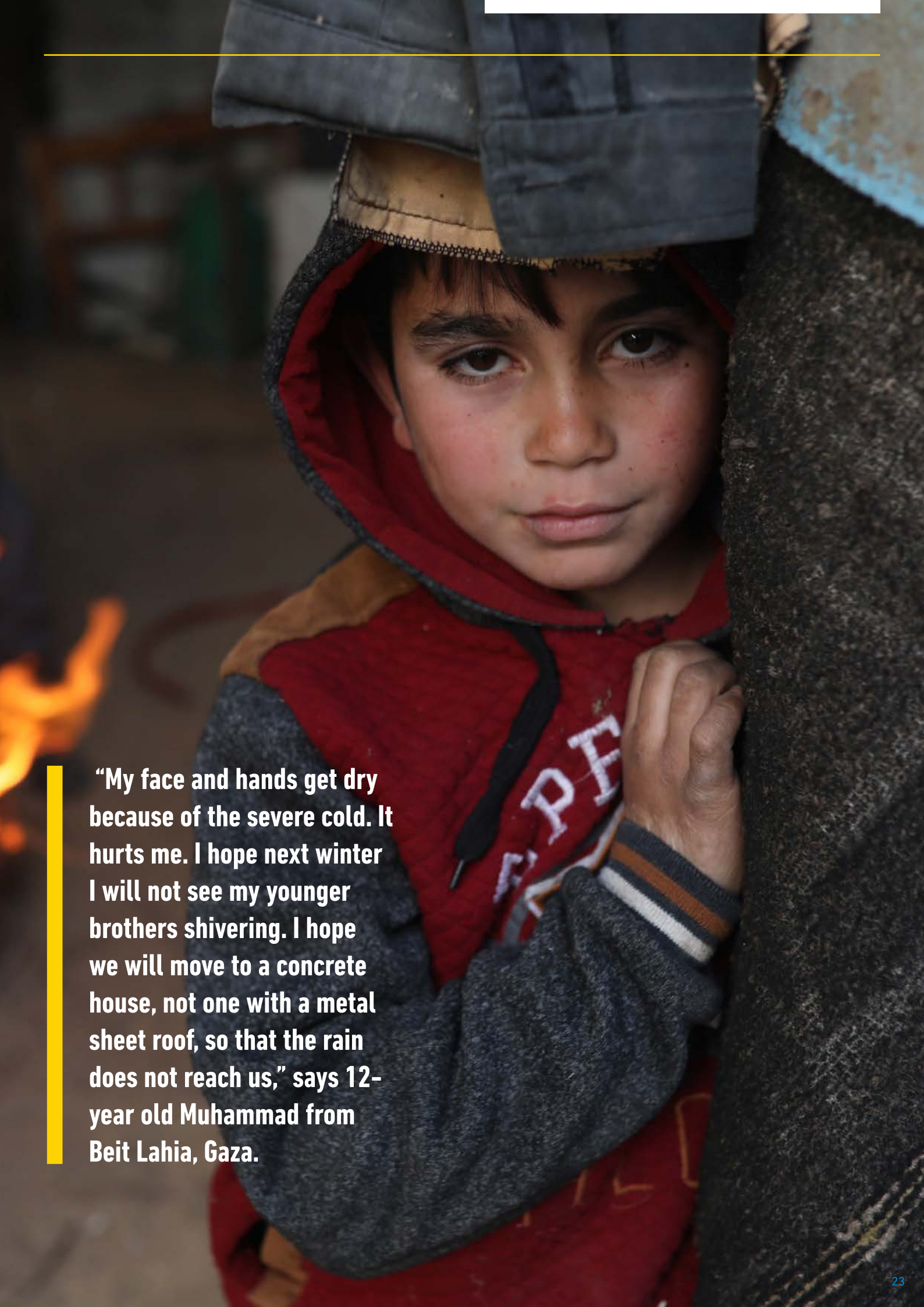
Winter rain has broken Um Yasser's rusty refrigerator and washing machine, and damaged her children's schoolbooks.

"My children wish the winter season never comes. It is the season of suffering because of the condition of our house," says Um Yasser, whose children wake up in the night to rain dripping on them in winter. Every year winter brings misery for over 8,000 families like Um Yasser's in Gaza. Living in hazardous and inadequate homes, they struggle to keep warm and safe.

"Our windows were shattered by shelling and we couldn't repair them," she adds, describing her home with its tin sheet roof and cracked walls. Um Yasser's anxiety increased every year with the onset of winter - she dreaded her home being flooded and her children falling ill again. But she could not afford the repairs since her husband and eldest son are too sick to work and she cannot find a job.

Islamic Relief repairs damaged homes like Um Yasser's in time for the winter season. From fixing roofs and repairing toilets, securing windows and improving electrical wiring, we make sure homes are habitable and safe. We also provide essential items like furniture, hygiene kits and schoolbooks. In addition hundreds of people receive mattresses, blankets, pillows, gas heaters and cookers through our annual winter survival programme.

Islamic Relief's winter survival programme helps families get through the most difficult time of year.

A close-up portrait of a young boy with dark hair and eyes, looking directly at the camera. He is wearing a red hoodie with a grey jacket over it. His hands are clasped together near his chest. The background is dark and blurry, with a bright orange flame visible on the left side. A yellow vertical bar is on the left side of the text.

“My face and hands get dry because of the severe cold. It hurts me. I hope next winter I will not see my younger brothers shivering. I hope we will move to a concrete house, not one with a metal sheet roof, so that the rain does not reach us,” says 12-year old Muhammad from Beit Lahia, Gaza.

NUTRITIOUS MEALS FOR CANCER PATIENTS



Oncology patient Um Fayeque receives nutritious meals in hospital, thanks to Islamic Relief.

Patients need nutritious meals to help them fight disease, says Dr Sa'd Al Ramlawi, pointing out that additional worries about where their next meal is coming from can have serious health implications.

"It is difficult for their relatives to bring them food, and most are from vulnerable families in the Gaza Strip. They cannot provide food due to their limited income. This stress negatively affects patients' health," he says.

Islamic Relief provided cancer patients with hot and nutritious meals three times a day to help their recovery. "The meals were varied and especially suitable for us oncology patients," says Um Fayeque. "I ate all my meals because they were clean, healthy and excellent quality. I hope that support for cancer patients in Gaza will continue, as this improves our psychological condition a great deal."

"My body is very tired. I sometimes sleep on the way to the hospital," says Um Fayeque. She was already exhausted by her battle with cancer when the coronavirus pandemic reached the Gaza Strip. When movement restrictions tightened further to slow the spread of the virus, Um Fayeque was unable to access treatment in Jerusalem.

Her health deteriorating, she now spends most of her time alone in a hospital in Gaza, where medical supplies regularly run out as the collapsing economy has forced hospitals to cut back. They can no longer provide medication and meals for inpatients like Um Fayeque.

"We buy medicine at our own expense and this is very costly. Food is very important, it helps us to withstand disease. Our families have to bring us three meals a day from home. This increases the financial pressure on them."



At home, Um Fayeque with some of the medicines she has to take as she undergoes cancer treatment.



“I thank Islamic Relief for this kind initiative and all projects dedicated to alleviating the suffering of Gazan patients, especially oncology patients.”

Dr Sa'd Al Ramlawi



Working through the Covid-19 pandemic, Islamic Relief staff distribute food to hospitals across Gaza.

OPPORTUNITIES AND INSPIRATION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Children and young people face enormous challenges in Gaza. Poverty and trauma prevent some from going to school, whilst soaring youth unemployment leaves many young people unable to earn a reliable living. Islamic Relief is by their side, improving access to high-quality education and nurturing livelihoods.




Better prospects for Gaza's schoolchildren

"The first time I put my eye to a telescope, I didn't want to close my eyes," says 11-year old Lamar from Gaza, where schools are typically overcrowded and ill equipped. "There is no telescope at our school but we went on a trip to the university laboratory and were able to do scientific experiments."

Lamar is enrolled in Islamic Relief's educational clubs that are unlocking the potential of schoolchildren in Gaza. The clubs use practical and entertaining teaching methods to help children find solutions to community issues.

"When I went to school the next day my teacher asked me to explain it to my classmates. I got full marks [in science]. I want to be a scientist... to discover a drug for cancer. This will make me happy because I will be able to treat many people all over the world."

Islamic Relief is committed to raising the educational prospects of Palestinian children. Our work includes improving the learning environment in Gaza's kindergartens and we have trained hundreds of teachers and principals. We are also supporting schools with access to better facilities including clean water, while our counselling services have helped tens of thousands of children cope with the challenges of growing up in Gaza.



"I feel like a young scientist and this motivates me."

ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT FOR NEW GRADUATES



Haya's initiative
a speech
is improving
lives of children
with cerebral

"The blockade has impacted every aspect of the Gaza Strip's fragile economy. Unemployment rates have soared to unprecedented levels, especially for young people, leaving even highly educated graduates unable to find work. Through my work with Islamic Relief I hear young people expressing their despair and exhaustion - Gaza's youth feel they cannot use their skills and knowledge.

"At Islamic Relief we are doing our best to change that. As well as helping young people to set up viable micro-businesses and developing apprenticeship and internship opportunities, we are improving the quality and availability of technical and vocational education and training. We hope to empower young people to earn a reliable living and make a positive difference in their communities."

Mohammad Abdel Majeed Ismaeel
Child Welfare Worker
Islamic Relief Palestine



ernship as
therapist
ing the
children
bral palsy.

**Haya and Nebal
work with a child
at the Mabaret
Phalestine Society
Association for
Children.**

"I was worrying a lot and that affected my health," says Haya, from Gaza, whose family are all out of work. She is fighting cancer and could not afford to travel to the West Bank for radiation treatment. But then Haya took an internship funded by Islamic Relief at the Mabaret Phalestine Society Association for Children.

"I was extremely happy to have an income to cover the treatment I need. My job has given me hope that I will recover from cancer," says Haya, who now provides speech therapy to children. The association she works for helps children with cerebral palsy with day-to-day care, physical and rehabilitation therapy, and education. "When I meet the children I forget my own suffering and do my best to help them," she says.

Nebal also joined the centre's internship scheme, which provided placements for 13 talented medical graduates. Previously unable to secure a job, she had been working for three years as a physiotherapist.

"Every day I do physiotherapy work with five or six children. I am so proud of what I am doing to give hope to families when they see their child's condition improve," she says. Nebal used her first salary to repair her home and is helping to support her three brothers complete their studies.



It is not only the young people that are benefiting from the internship programme at the centre. Programme Manager Jamila Elaiwa says, "We were about to close a department because we don't have the money to pay staff. Islamic Relief came at the right time. They helped us carry on serving children with cerebral palsy, develop our staff and expand our services."

A SAFETY NET FOR VULNERABLE CHILDREN



An assessment of children's health, family income, living conditions and protection needs identifies those who are in greatest need of sponsorship. Children with disabilities receive specialist equipment, medical treatment and therapeutic services, and they benefit from fun activities to improve their wellbeing.



The protracted humanitarian crisis has had a devastating impact on children in Gaza and the West Bank, with more than half of them reliant on external assistance to survive. Many children live in inadequate homes and cannot access quality healthcare, education or protection. Those who are most vulnerable, including orphans and children with disabilities, suffer the most.

"Children make up almost half the population of Gaza, and the challenges they face are immense," says Yasmeen Alashi, an Islamic Relief Orphan Welfare Officer. "Movement restrictions prevent safe access to school. Classrooms are overcrowded. Learning hours are reduced. Some have had their homes demolished while others live in dire conditions in which they cannot study. And in the West Bank many areas lack a primary school because of the restrictions on construction."

Islamic Relief's orphan sponsorship programme has been assisting vulnerable children in the Occupied Palestinian Territory since 1986. To date, we have sponsored over 15,000 children in Gaza and the West Bank, ensuring they have access to nutritious food, clean water, a safe home, education and healthcare.

Thanks to the generosity of our donors we sponsor over 7,000 Palestinian children at any one time, providing consistent support throughout their childhood. Inspired by Islamic teachings on the importance of caring for orphans, the programme is part of a global operation that cares for over 70,000 children worldwide.

"Sadly we are witnessing malnutrition, psychological problems, school dropouts, child labour, substance abuse and early marriage among the most vulnerable Palestinian children. They have been exposed to so many cycles of violence that it has taken a toll on their physical and mental health. There is also an increase in violent behaviour among adolescents."

Samya Abu Watfa, Islamic Relief Orphan Welfare Officer

“I NEVER LET MY DISABILITY STOP ME FROM SUCCEEDING”



Mohammad, aged 17,
is an orphan from
Gaza sponsored by
Islamic Relief.



"I have lived with loss several times in my life. My dad passed away and I lost my sight when I was young. But I never lost my resolve or let my disability prevent me from developing myself or my community.

"I don't ask others for help if I can do something myself. Every morning I make my own food and prepare for school like my sisters and brothers. When I want to hail a taxi, I try several times before asking someone to assist. Once a week I play football.

"Thank Allah, I am one of the top students at my school and I get the highest grades. I adore the Arabic language and that encourages me to write. Recently I got first class in a story-writing and poetry competition at the Gaza governorate level.

"After the death of my father, Islamic Relief sponsored me. The support pays for my basic needs, covering the cost of transport and everything I need for school."

PARCELS OF JOY FOR RAMADAN AND EID



Every year Islamic Relief provides vulnerable families in Gaza with food parcels during Ramadan and qurbani meat on Eid al-Adha. These annual gifts provide relief to those who struggle to find enough food with which to break their fast or mark the Eid festivals. Wherever possible, we integrate our seasonal food distributions with other humanitarian and development programmes, so we can reach the families of sponsored orphans for example.

Every year, our Ramadan and qurbani programmes provide food to over 200,000 people in Gaza, easing their worries about where their next meal is coming from.

“The Ramadan packs lift our spirits,” says mother-of-five Ne’ma, who received a family food parcel from Islamic Relief in Ramadan. She and her family live in gruelling poverty in Gaza, where they share a single room. “Our economic condition is too desperate; we cannot move to another home because there is not enough money to pay the rent or to purchase food and medicine.”



“I woke up early to come to get new clothes for Eid,” says 10-year old Alaa, who is sponsored by Islamic Relief. Since his father died, our orphan sponsorship programme has been his family’s only source of income. The programme is often integrated with other Islamic Relief projects including Eid gifts, which put smiles on the faces of vulnerable children during the festivals. As well as choosing new clothes, children like Alaa receive items such as school bags, toys and sweets.



“My children have been hoping all year to eat kebabs. They were waiting for this day,” says Haidar, 51, as he prepares the qurbani meat he received from Islamic Relief. Since poor health forced him to give up work, he has only a weekly food voucher worth around \$40 with which to feed his 12 children. “Mostly we eat unhealthy food. We cannot buy meat, chicken or fresh fruit – this negatively affects the health of my children. God bless all the donors of Islamic Relief.”

VITAL SUPPORT FOR PALESTINIAN REFUGEES

Beyond the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Islamic Relief supports Palestinian families in neighbouring countries like Lebanon and Jordan. Our work includes providing safe homes and shelter, winter survival items, access to education and healthcare, as well as mental health services for vulnerable children.



Palestinian children receive specialist support at Islamic Relief's early intervention unit in Saida, Jordan. The unit provides physiotherapy, speech and occupational therapy services as well as special education and psychotherapy.

Sawsan, 55, gives her children a freshly cooked meal after receiving qurbani meat from Islamic Relief. The family live in Al Baqaa camp in Jordan. Set up as an emergency camp in 1968, Al Baqaa is now one of the country's largest refugee camps and is home to nearly 120,000 Palestinian refugees.



OUR IMPACT IN NUMBERS

Islamic Relief began working in the
Occupied Palestinian Territory in 1997.
Since then we have:



Supported around six million
people



Delivered programmes worth
almost £109 million



Repaired and restored over
1,500 homes in Gaza



Provided clean drinking water
to over 1 million people in
schools and health facilities



Supported over 300,000
children and sponsored over
15,000 orphans



Delivered Ramadan and
qurbani food to around
200,000 people a year



Helped over 2,000 families to
earn a reliable living

PROGRAMMES THAT LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND



Recognising Heba AbuJarbou's significant contribution to driving positive change within the humanitarian sector, the Start Network announced her as a Change Maker of the Year 2020. The quality assurance officer for Islamic Relief in Gaza is passionate about protection and inclusion. She drives forward initiatives to ensure people at risk – including those with disabilities, older people, women and children – are involved in our operations.

THANK YOU TO THOSE SUPPORTING OUR WORK IN GAZA

Islamic Relief's vital work in the Occupied Palestinian Territory is made possible by the generosity of our supporters, donors and partners around the world. We warmly thank the individuals, businesses and institutional donors for their support for our operations, which are a lifeline for so many vulnerable people.



“Finally, Ahmed is able to take his first steps,” says Ahmed’s mother as the eight-year-old walks using the equipment Islamic Relief installed at his school in Gaza. As well as equipping physiotherapy rooms at two special needs schools, we furnished classrooms and libraries and provided equipment and games to assist children with disabilities. “Joy fills my heart. Praise be to God.”



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