

Annual Report 2021: Islamic Relief helps millions in a year of hunger, conflict and Covid-19



PUBLISHED JUL 19, 2022
BY [ISLAMIC RELIEF](#)

In 2021 the world faced a raft of challenges, from new and ongoing conflicts and a sharp rise in hunger, to the prolonged effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and climate change. In the face of these challenges, Islamic Relief assisted over 11 million people in 36 countries.

We also saw the quality of our work and our accountability to the communities we serve recognised by recertification against the prestigious Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) – the most robust independent audit offered in the humanitarian sector.

Despite the worldwide economic uncertainty, our supporters continued to give generously, raising £183 million for our life-saving and life-changing work around the world.

Thanks to our committed donors and partners, and our dedicated staff and volunteers, 2021 was another year of vital, impactful activity and growth from one of the world's largest relief and development charities.

Our Annual Report, published today, shows how Islamic Relief continued to assist vulnerable people affected by crisis, while helping individuals and communities take significant steps towards self-reliance.

“If 2020 was the year in which we were first confronted with the challenges of Covid-19, 2021 was when the profound and lasting human and economic impact of the pandemic became clear for all to see,” says Waseem Ahmad, our CEO.

“Supporting those worst affected has been at the heart of Islamic Relief’s work, alongside responding to the climate emergency and the enduring effects of protracted crises and conflicts in places like Yemen, Syria, Afghanistan and beyond.”

Spending £84 million on almost 430 emergency projects in 2021, Islamic Relief responded swiftly and effectively to some of the world’s most devastating crises, including earthquakes in Indonesia and Pakistan, floods in Bosnia and Herzegovina and a cyclone in Somalia.

The global food crisis dramatically worsened in 2021, with conflict, climate change and forced migration leaving millions more people hungry. In response, we delivered more than 200 food aid and food security interventions last year, helping to feed millions of people, including hundreds of thousands each month in Yemen alone.

We were steadfast in our support of the people of Afghanistan as their world was turned upside down by drought, conflict and political change. Our staff remained on the ground, distributing food packages and other vital aid across 6 provinces, including healthcare delivered through mobile health teams.

Continually adapting to changing local and national restrictions around the pandemic, we strived to ensure our life-saving aid could continue to reach those in need safely.

In 2021, we also continued building community resilience, helping people in areas prone to natural disasters to be better prepared to cope with future extreme weather events.

In line with our global strategy, we continued to spend more on longer-term projects to make a lasting change in people’s lives, investing £71 million into long-term interventions to help lift communities out of poverty.

These included providing cows in Chechnya and beehives in Jordan to give families a source of reliable income. We also carried out vocational training in Bangladesh to help those often excluded from the workforce, such as older people, earn a living.

“With my earnings, I can support myself with everything I need. I am now living a happy life,” says Fatima, 61, who received a cow and chicken from Islamic Relief and supports herself by selling their produce.

In 2021, we helped more than 103,000 children and adults access life-changing education, and provided healthcare for more than 3 million people.

The generosity of our donors helped us provide access to clean water, sanitation and hygiene facilities for over 775,000 people, and enabled us to support a record number of vulnerable children – more than 80,000 through our orphan sponsorship programme.

Islamic Relief continued to advocate on social issues around the world, spending £1.6 million on pushing for social justice.

Through campaigning and practical community projects, we faced the climate crisis head on, supporting almost 320,000 people to adapt to climate change challenges. We also launched 3 research and policy papers packed with insights into climate-induced migration, and adaptation.

In November, we ensured decision-makers heard the voices of communities on the frontline of the climate emergency, delivering 10 events in and around the climate summit, COP26.

In 2021 we also continued campaigning for the rights of women and girls, working to end harmful practices and inequality. More than 100 projects tackled gender-based violence and we remained tireless in our efforts to shift community attitudes and practices away from female genital mutilation/cutting, and early and forced marriage.

Islamic Relief also offered a lifeline to those forced to flee their homes for safety, helping refugees around the world meet their basic needs, as well as supporting them to begin rebuilding their lives.

The quality of our work and the accountability of Islamic Relief as an organisation was recognised by recertification against

the CHS. It affirms that we continue to manage our resources effectively, designing programmes that create a positive impact and listening to the communities we serve.

As we look back on the milestones of 2021, it is with an awareness that there is still so much that needs to be done. At Islamic Relief, we are more inspired than ever to continue assisting people in need, wherever and whenever they need us most.

Our most sincere thanks go to our generous donors and partners for their continued support in these challenging times.

Read more about how your support has made a difference to the lives of millions of vulnerable people around the world in Islamic Relief's 2021 Annual Report.

Help Islamic Relief continue its vital work assisting and empowering the world's most vulnerable people. Donate now.

Islamic Relief is a faith-inspired, development and humanitarian agency working to transform and save the lives of some of the most vulnerable people in over 40 countries. Islamic Relief assists people according to need and does not discriminate in any way.

Set up in Birmingham in 1984 by a group of volunteers, we have assisted over 117 million people all over the world. We're saving lives and empowering people to lift themselves out of poverty in over 40 countries – from Bangladesh to Bosnia, Pakistan to Palestine, Kenya to Kosovo. Islamic Relief is on the ground in some of the world's most dangerous and difficult places – including Syria and Yemen – strengthening the most marginalised communities to withstand conflict and natural disasters and to build a brighter future. We also support vulnerable people in the UK in partnership with local charities and organisations.

Press release distributed by Media Pigeon on behalf of Islamic Relief, on Jul 19, 2022. For more information subscribe and [follow](#) us.

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