

Islamic Relief reaches more than 1 million people with Ramadan food packs



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More than one million people around the world have benefited from Ramadan food packages distributed by Islamic Relief Worldwide during the holy month in 2021 – one of the largest Ramadan food distributions in the organisation’s 37-year history, despite the huge challenges of Covid-19.

Packs containing essentials such as sugar, beans, dates and oil have been distributed in more than 30 countries, including Yemen, Sudan, Mali, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Bosnia and Myanmar. Distributions were done outdoors with social distancing, masks and other measures to protect against Covid-19.

To mark Eid al-Fitr, this week a further 70,000 people will also receive gift packs containing items such as food, clothes and school supplies.

“Global hunger is at extreme levels, with more than 270 million people going to bed hungry every night. The Covid-19 pandemic is entrenching poverty and exacerbating inequality, and vulnerable people around the world need our support now more than ever. “While international governments fail to tackle this crisis, Muslim communities all over the world continue to show incredible generosity. This is a difficult time for everyone but this Ramadan we’ve been able to reach an extraordinary number of people. Thanks to donations from the Muslim community, we have ensured that more than one million people have received food to get them through the holy month of Ramadan. “As we join Muslims around the world to celebrate Eid, we are calling for greater united action to help end global hunger – not only through short-term food parcels but through greater investment in long-term

livelihoods and addressing the inequality that pushes people into starvation.”

Conflict is one of the biggest drivers of hunger. Islamic Relief has distributed special Ramadan food parcels to more than 100,000 people in Yemen, where almost half of children (46.5 per cent) are suffering from stunted growth due to chronic malnutrition. Despite this, the international community recently cut aid to Yemen.

Dr Asmahan Albadaani, who coordinates Islamic Relief’s nutrition programmes in Yemen’s Hodeida governorate, said:

“Malnutrition is our biggest problem here and the number of cases and deaths among children increases every day. But the real figures are much higher because many deaths occur in remote villages and are not even registered. Food prices have drastically increased and a bag of bread that used to cost 2 riyals now costs 20. Only rich people can afford to buy food and some of the poorest families do not eat for days. This week alone I have seen five children who were so thin they were just skin and bones.”

In Lebanon, more than 70,000 people have received Ramadan food packs, including Syrian refugees and Lebanese families. Islamic Relief teams there have witnessed a massive increase in people requesting food aid since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, which has pushed many people deeper into poverty. One in five Syrian refugee families in Lebanon have lost their income during the pandemic and 49 per cent are now in acute food crisis. Huge inflation and rising food prices mean that most people cannot afford basic supplies.

As well as food, this year Islamic Relief has been providing impoverished families with cash, so they can buy what they need most.

In Bangladesh, Islamic Relief provided Ramadan packs to almost 90,000 people – including poor rural communities and Rohingya refugees. In rural areas, a new project has provided 1,500 families with US\$23 each to spend during Ramadan.

“The cash distribution has been a huge success and has been

very popular with communities. Providing people with cash means enabling people to have choice and dignity. They can choose what to buy – the type of food they like or clothes for their children. They know best what they and their families need, so we are giving them the means to afford that.”

Islamic Relief is calling on rich nations to increase funding for projects that address the global hunger emergency, and to provide long-term investment in alleviating poverty. We urge governments to enhance efforts to end conflict, including pressuring all parties to heed the UN Secretary General’s call for a global ceasefire, and ensure that humanitarian assistance is allowed to reach people in need.

In 2020 Islamic Relief’s Ramadan distributions reached more than 900,000 people.

At the end of 2020 the UN estimated that 270 million people were either at high risk of, or already facing, acute levels of hunger. Despite this, the 2021 global food security appeal is still only 5 per cent funded.

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