

## Some Deserving Causes for Zakat/Voluntary Charity

There are a number of urgent causes for support this year and these are:

- [Rohingya Muslims](#)
- [Palestinians](#)
- [East Africa](#)
- [Syria](#)
- [Bangladesh](#)

## Rohingya Muslims

Rights groups say they are one of the most persecuted communities in the world - they were made stateless in 1982, and deemed to be illegal immigrants from Bangladesh (BBC World Service - 4 June).

In an interview with the BBC, a Rohingya Muslim woman stated: "This week I have only had three meals. But I am living alone. It is much worse for some of the families with 10 or 11 mouths to feed. Death would be better than this life." She had lost her husband and newly born baby a few weeks earlier.

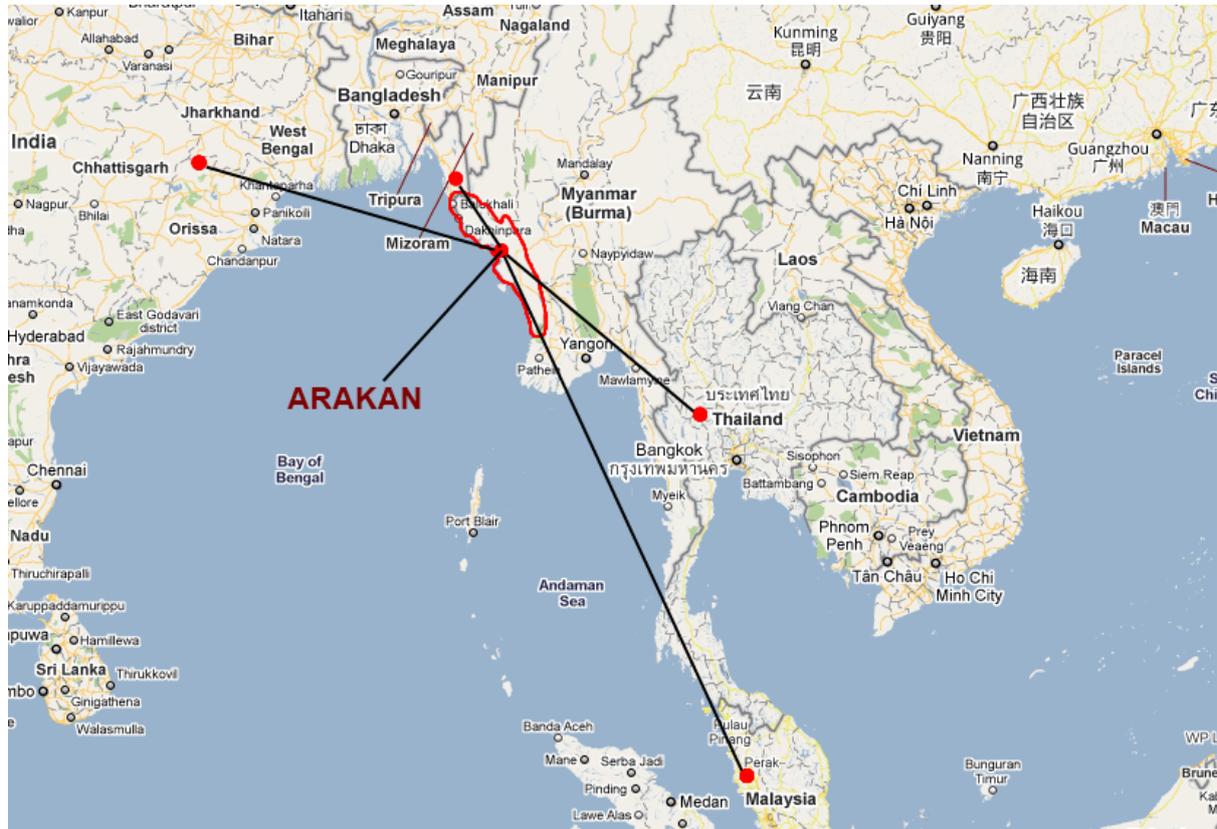


*(Rohingya Muslim protesters gather in front of a United Nations regional office in Bangkok, Thailand to call for an end to violence in neighbouring Myanmar.).*

## Who are the Rohingya?

The US Campaign for Burma states:

"The Rohingya are a Muslim ethnic minority living in northern Arakan state in western Burma. They face religious discrimination at the hands of Burma's military regime, which doesn't recognize the Rohingya as citizens of Burma. The regime does not consider the Rohingya people as one of 135 legally recognized ethnic minority groups in Burma, leaving the Rohingya stateless, homeless and rights-less.



"The Rohingya are denied fundamental human rights and freedom, and the military regime consistently perpetrates human rights violations against this vulnerable population. The regime refuses to issue identification cards to Rohingya, which are necessary to be able to travel, as well as to obtain passports and enrol in higher education. They are denied land and property rights and ownership. The land on which they live can be taken away at any given time.

"Furthermore, the Rohingya are victims of modern-day slavery – forced labour. These people are forced to work without pay on construction sites for roads, railways, and building army barracks. Because they are forced into these construction projects with no compensation, they cannot generate any income to feed themselves and their families. In addition, their non-legal status makes it extremely difficult for the Rohingya to find employment. Acute and chronic malnutrition is rife among the Rohingya minority.

"Land confiscation has become a common practice, as the regime forces the Rohingya to evict from their lands in preparation for international development projects such as gas/oil pipelines and hydropower plants.

"As if their home government does not treat them badly enough, the Rohingya do not find welcome in other countries where they seek refuge. Hundreds of thousands of Rohingya have fled Burma to Bangladesh, Thailand, and Malaysia to escape persecution and adversity only to fall into even greater trials. Currently, over 30,000 Rohingya live in squalid refugee camps in Bangladesh where they are denied access to food supplies, medical aid, and education. Sexual violence against women remain prevalent."

<http://uscampaignforburma.org/learn/conflict-and-human-rights/14-learn/132-rohingya.html>

### Major abuses committed recently (and in Ramadan)

There are reports of widespread killings, torture, and rape. There is no independent confirmation of the claims of extra-judicial killings and other abuses - journalists are denied access to the area. Burma denies its security forces are responsible for human rights abuses.

Al-Jazeera reported on Wednesday that Human Rights Watch released a 56-page report on the violence in Burma's western Rakhine state, sometimes known by its colonial name, Arakan. The report accuses the Burmese security forces of participating in the rape, murder and displacement of Rohingya Muslims in the region. (Al-Jazeera - 1 August 2012)

The *New Statesman* on 30 July 2012 stated:

"In June, a devastating cycle of violence spiralled out of control in Arakan State in western Burma. Sparked by the rape and murder of a Buddhist Rakhine woman allegedly by Muslim Rohingyas, decades of racial and religious hatred erupted into several weeks of sectarian violence in which hundreds were killed, dozens of villages torched and at least 90,000 people displaced. Both communities committed violence, but the Rohingyas were the primary victims.

"The effects were seen far wider than Arakan State. Throughout Burma, and among Burmese exiled communities abroad, including in the UK, blatant and shocking anti-Muslim racism came to the fore with threats against Rohingyas as well as those who campaign for them and crude comments on social media depicting the Rohingyas as "Bengalis" and "terrorists".

"Back in Burma, as the violence subsided, the security forces began a violent crackdown going house to house arresting Rohingyas who have now seemingly disappeared without charge and without trial. Those who could flee had nowhere to run except the jungle. Those who could not flee faced jail or death. This is a human rights and humanitarian catastrophe in the making.

"Underlying this entire issue is the question of citizenship. The Rohingyas have lived in Burma for generations, but under the 1982 Citizenship Law they are not recognised as citizens. The Burmese government, and many in Burmese society, describe them as "illegal immigrants". For years, they have faced severe restrictions on marriage, movement, education and religion in Burma, because they are deemed "foreigners". They are among the most persecuted, marginalised people in the world.

"Bangladesh, however, will not take them either. Although an estimated 200,000 Rohingya refugees have lived in dire conditions along the Bangladesh-Burma border for years, Bangladesh refuses to give sanctuary to any more. Those fleeing the current crisis have been turned back from the border, sent to face an uncertain fate. Those who have escaped from

Burma on boats have been turned away from Bangladesh's shores, often to die in stormy seas or be shot at by Burmese troops.

"In early July, President Thein Sein escalated the crisis even further, by reportedly telling the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees that his government will not recognise them. On the same day Britain opened a trade office in Naypyidaw and the US lifted sanctions, Thein Sein wanted to hand the entire ethnic group to the UNHCR to look after until they could be resettled in a third country. He described the 800,000 Rohingyas in Burma as "a threat to national security".

## **Palestinians**

Palestinians live in either the West Bank, Gaza or in numerous refugee centres in neighbouring countries. Statistics of poverty vary - but one thing is clear - at least 50% of Palestinians are suffering from poverty. Many relief agencies and human rights organisations place Palestinian poverty at much higher levels.

The *Palestinian Monitor* reports (18 December 2008) that over half of the Palestinians live in poverty - half of the population in the West Bank and nearly 80% of the population in Gaza.

The Canadian International Development Agency reports that almost 58 percent of Palestinians live in poverty, and about half of this group lives in extreme poverty. About 50 percent of Palestinians experience or risk experiencing food insecurity. Food insecurity is particularly severe in Gaza, where the majority of the population relies on humanitarian assistance to survive. The rate of chronic malnutrition in children under the age of five has increased, reaching almost 10 percent, and the mortality figures for children under the age of one and under the age of five have each increased by about 30 percent. Anaemia is common, with 55 percent of children under the age of three affected by the condition. Among pregnant women, the rate is 36 percent—46 percent for nursing mothers.

### **78 percent of Jerusalem Palestinians living in poverty**

Ma'an News Agency

May 23, 2012 - 12:00am

<http://www.maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=487435>

JERUSALEM (Ma'an) -- A report released this week by an Israeli human rights organization reveals that 78 percent of Palestinians in Jerusalem live below the poverty line.

According to the [report](#) by the Association for Civil Rights in Israel, extreme poverty and high unemployment rates in East Jerusalem are a direct result of decades of Israeli policies which have stifled the economy in Palestinian areas.

"More and more Palestinian families in Jerusalem are caught in the cycle of poverty not by chance but rather as a result of policies," ACRI Attorney Nisreen Alyan, who co-wrote the report, said on their website.

Over 84 percent of Palestinian children live below the poverty line and there has been a 10 percent increase in overall poverty rates since 2006, ACRI said.

The report found that over 85 percent of Palestinian women and 40 percent of men do not participate in the work force and Palestinian schools have a dropout rate of 40 percent.

"Palestinian residents in Jerusalem find themselves stuck between a rock and a hard place," Ronit Sela, one of the reports' authors, told Ma'an.

"For 45 years, Palestinian residents have been left out of a decision making process which works directly against their interests," she said.

Finding themselves involuntarily under Israeli control, Palestinians in Jerusalem do not play any part in policy-making in the city, even though Israeli authorities have an obligation to uphold their rights, Sela added.

Once a center for Palestinian political, economic, religious and cultural life, the "effects of annexation, neglect, rights violations, and the completion of the Separation Barrier have led to an unprecedented deterioration in the conditions" of East Jerusalem.

There are around 360,882 Palestinians in Jerusalem, or 38 percent of the city's population.

Israel has occupied East Jerusalem since 1967 and formally annexed the area in 1980 after passing the 'Jerusalem Law'.

Jerusalem is one of the key final status issues in any future peace agreement.

[http://www.americantaskforce.org/daily\\_news\\_article/2012/05/23/78\\_percent\\_jerusalem\\_palestinians\\_living\\_poverty](http://www.americantaskforce.org/daily_news_article/2012/05/23/78_percent_jerusalem_palestinians_living_poverty)

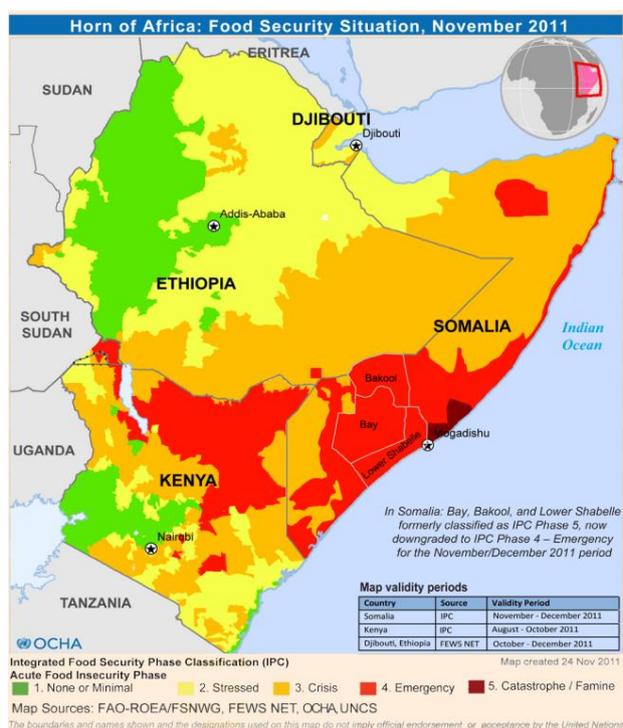


*The 'Separation Wall' cutting through Abu Dis. The Wall is one of the factors that is in the way of a proper functioning Palestinian economy.*

## **East Africa**

Islamic Relief USA states: "Millions of people across East Africa are still suffering from the effects of the worst drought in 60 years. With malnutrition a chronic problem in the region, more than 13 million people were hit hard by the drought, with Somalia, Kenya and Ethiopia among the countries impacted the most severely. Without water, crops failed, livestock died and food prices skyrocketed. Throughout the second half of 2011, famine spread through southern Somalia, taking its highest toll on children. Now, rains have begun to alleviate the drought, but food is still in short supply. Meanwhile, flooding has added to the suffering of displaced families, and illnesses have begun spreading rapidly through the weakened population."

**Somalia is one of the poorest countries in the world, devastated by poverty, high food prices and recurrent droughts.**



**United Nations Development Programme:** "The magnitude of human suffering is alarming. Millions in the region are facing severe food shortages. Disproportionately affected are children –their mortality levels are truly shocking. The impact of the drought is exacerbated by high food prices and limited coping capacity of vulnerable populations. Access problems persist in Somalia and there has been a significant increase in refugees fleeing to neighbouring countries, leading to overcrowding of existing refugee camps.

### Update:

The combination of a massive scale-up in humanitarian assistance and an exceptional harvest have helped relieve famine conditions in Somalia, but interrupting assistance **can result in setbacks**, according to **an analysis report** released by the Food and Agricultural Organisation's Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit (FSNAU) and the Famine Early Warning System (FEWS NET).

“The gains are fragile and will be reversed without continued support,” said Mark Bowden, the UN Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia, who also serves as the Resident Representative for the UN Development Programme (UNDP).

The latest data shows that 2.34 million Somalis still need life-saving assistance. In southern parts of the country, 1.7 million people need food, clean water, shelter and other assistance just to survive. Mortality rates remain among the highest in the world.

“We need to use this temporary relief from the worst of the crisis to focus our efforts on life-saving assistance, while building up people’s ability to cope with future drought – and thereby reduce their dependence on aid,” said Bowden. “Recovery is only possible after August if the rains are good and other external factors, such as conflict, do not hamper the progress made so far.”

## **Syria**

### **Syrian refugee crisis: we can't feed our people, say advancing FSA rebels**

- [Martin Chulov](#) in Antakya
- [guardian.co.uk](#), Thursday 2 August 2012 20.58 BST

Abu Hamza, a Free Syrian Army colonel from the Jebel al-Zawiya district south of Idlib, told the Guardian that neither the FSA nor local communities could provide shelter or food for the thousands of displaced civilians being forced to sleep in fields or on the streets of towns and villages.

More than 250,000 refugees are believed to have fled Aleppo in the past fortnight, with large parts of the city of 2.5 million people now empty.

"We can't feed them," he said. "We need help. We don't even have food for our own families, or for ourselves. We cannot survive for much longer under these conditions. We are talking a few weeks."

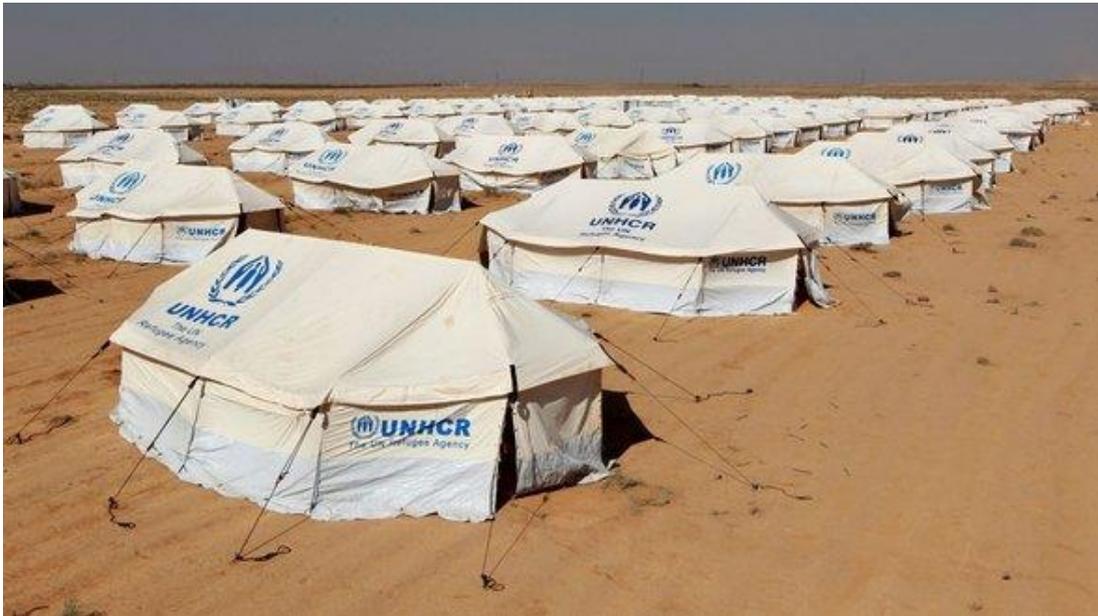
Refugee numbers continue to swell:

The Associated Press - 10 August 2012:

"A rising tide of civilians fleeing Syria's violence is hitting four neighbouring countries where almost 150,000 are being helped in camps run by the UN refugee agency and its partners, officials said Friday.

"That figure counts only Syrians who have registered or are in the process of registering as refugees. Officials acknowledge the real number of Syrian refugees is likely above 200,000 since tens of thousands are believed to have not yet registered with authorities.

"In late June, UN agencies estimated they would need \$193 million to help 185,000 refugees from Syria by the end of 2012.



Syrians need assistance during their war with the Assad Government. There is the issue of humanitarian aid and there is also the issue of aiding the 'rebels'.



Please, **donate what you can to help today.**

- \$20 per month can provide 48 large blankets.
- \$55 can distribute blankets for 5 refugee families.
- \$100 can provide kitchen sets for 5 families.
- \$345 can allocate a tent or shelter to one refugee family.
- \$1,000 can deliver 10 survival kits, each containing a blanket, mattress, kitchen set, stove and soap.

(Source: UN Refugee Agency)

*Syrian refugees arrive in northern Lebanon. ©Reuters/Afif Diab.*

## **Bangladesh**

Bangladesh is one of the world's most densely populated countries with 150 million people, 49 percent of whom live below the national poverty line. In addition, the country has child malnutrition rates of 48 percent, the second highest in the world.

The population in Bangladesh is predominantly rural, with almost 80% of the population living in the rural areas. Many of them live in remote areas that lack services such as education, health clinics and adequate roads, particularly road links to markets. A low estimate of 20% of the rural poor is in chronic poverty. They suffer from persistent food insecurity, own no land and assets, are often uneducated and may also suffer serious illnesses or disabilities. Another 29% of the rural population is considered moderately poor. Though they may own a small plot of land and some livestock and generally have enough to eat, their

diets lack nutritional values. As a result of health problems or natural disasters, they are at risk of sliding deeper into poverty. Women are among the poorest of the rural poor, especially when they are the sole heads of their households. They suffer discrimination, have few earning opportunities and their nutritional intake is often inadequate.

This is a Muslim country that needs our assistance.