



Yemen

Annual Report 2019

Responding to the world's worst humanitarian crisis



Message from the CEO

Five years since the conflict began in Yemen, its people remain gripped by one of the worst humanitarian crises in decades. Every day, almost 16 million people wake up hungry. Without food assistance this would jump to 20 million overnight.

Even basic supplies are so scarce or expensive that families can't put food on the table and mothers are so malnourished they cannot breastfeed their babies. These children, so weakened by hunger, are perfect prey for diseases like cholera and diarrhea which drain them of the little strength they have left.

In Yemen today, thousands of children are hovering on the brink between life and death. By the time their families get them to one of the more than 50 emergency nutrition centres we run they're too weak even to cry. No child should have to experience this and I'm haunted by the suffering I saw in their eyes during a visit to the country last year.

The medicines work well but as soon as the children go home, they fall victim to the cycle of starvation and disease again. When they inevitably return for treatment, they arrive that little bit weaker until for many, I fear, time runs out.

In 2019, our teams worked tirelessly to scale up support and I pledged that Islamic Relief will provide an additional USD 7 million worth of aid to Yemen. We also bolstered our partnership with the UN's World Food Programme, and with their help we are now delivering assistance to more than 2.3 million people every month. This is up from around two million in 2018.

We have more than 3,000 staff and volunteers, supporting operations in over 70 per cent of the country - 19 out of Yemen's 22 governorates - dedicated to delivering food, water and medicine.



We also invest in longer-term solutions and I visited a string of solar-powered wells that we run in the Hodeida governorate. There I saw how something so simple can transform thousands of lives. Women and children were no longer endangered by walking for hours every day in search of water in a conflict-zone. With girls in particular freed from this daily burden, I hope that they will soon be able to start going to school.

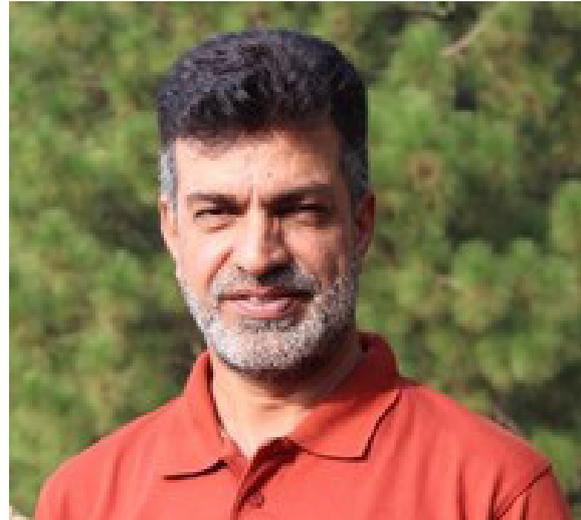
But despite the hard work, the cruel reality is that we simply cannot keep pace with the suffering. Three times in 2019 - in Hodeida province and Nihm district near the capital city - with the help of the UN, we got warring parties to agree to a temporary cessation of hostilities that allowed us to deliver aid to people on the brink of famine. Sadly, these successes are too few and far between, and our staff are constantly having to put themselves in harm's way to save lives. This is the year in which we lost our dear colleague, Hamdi Abo Abdullah Al-ahmad who was killed by a stray bullet whilst out delivering desperately needed aid.

The international community has miserably failed the people of Yemen. History will not forget or forgive us: we have all the financial power, technology and other resources to bring this brutal conflict to an end, but we have not honoured basic standards of humanity and human dignity. Only a just and long-lasting solution to the crisis can bring about change and help to ensure that the people of Yemen finally see an end to their suffering.

Naser Haghamed
CEO Islamic Relief Worldwide

Message from the Country Director:

Yemen's political unrest started in 2011. This accelerated into armed conflict in March 2015, damaging vital but already weak infrastructure and affecting most of the population.



By early 2018, the number of Yemenis in need of humanitarian assistance had climbed to 22.2 million people which is around 75 percent of the population. Women, men and girls have all been affected. From this number, 11.3 million needed urgent lifesaving assistance and 107 of Yemen's 333 districts were considered at high risk of famine.

Currently millions of people are below the poverty line and need humanitarian aid. This includes many children who are losing their lives to violence and hunger. Five years of war in Yemen has paralysed access to basic needs such as food, health, nutrition, shelter, education, water and sanitation and social security networks.

Islamic Relief has eight field offices in the war-torn country. We cover a large geographical area, with over 3,215 aid workers operating in 13 out of 22 governorates. In 2019 we provided immediate and lifesaving humanitarian assistance to over 2.1 million Yemeni people every month. We also eased the suffering of families, reducing their vulnerability and boosting their ability to work and sustain themselves.

We are committed to continue alleviating the suffering of the Yemeni people through improving:

- Food security and livelihoods
- Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)
- Health and nutrition.

We also support orphans and deliver seasonal projects including Ramadan and qurbani food distributions. Our years of responding to this emergency helps us actively learn how best to increase the positive impact of our work, and we've put this into practice in our programming.

We are thankful to local communities and local authorities for their considerable backing and contribution which has made it possible for us to access people in need. And we are also grateful to UN agencies, Islamic Relief partners, and international donors across the world for their substantial support, which has made it possible for us to continue saving lives and easing suffering in Yemen.

Muhammed Zulqarnain Abbas
Country Director Islamic Relief Yemen

Our work in 2019

OVER 3.4 MILLION PEOPLE HELPED IN 17 GOVERNORATES

Years of conflict in Yemen have left millions struggling to find food, water and basic healthcare. Even before the conflict escalated, Yemen was one of the poorest countries in the Arab region. The world's largest man-made crisis has resulted in armed conflict, displacement, risk of famine, disease outbreaks, and severe economic decline. After years of intense conflict, an estimated 24 million people, about 80 per cent of the population, need humanitarian aid to survive - a greater number of people in need than in any other country in the world.

Islamic Relief has been responding to the emergency since the start of the conflict. In 2019 alone we reached more than 3.4 million people through interventions including food aid, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), nutrition and health care, orphan and child welfare, non-food items (NFIs), and livelihoods.



Our focus areas

Food security and livelihoods

Delivered by experienced staff and volunteers, our activities include food distribution, and livelihood and agriculture support.

Emergency food assistance

We provide monthly food rations through in-kind general food distributions, cash/voucher transfers or distributing emergency rapid response mechanisms to newly displaced households.

Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)

We repair and improve water sources, install water supply systems, and deliver cleaning campaigns and hygiene sessions. We have also provided water trucking and trained local people to run their own water management committees to maintain their water facilities.

Nutrition

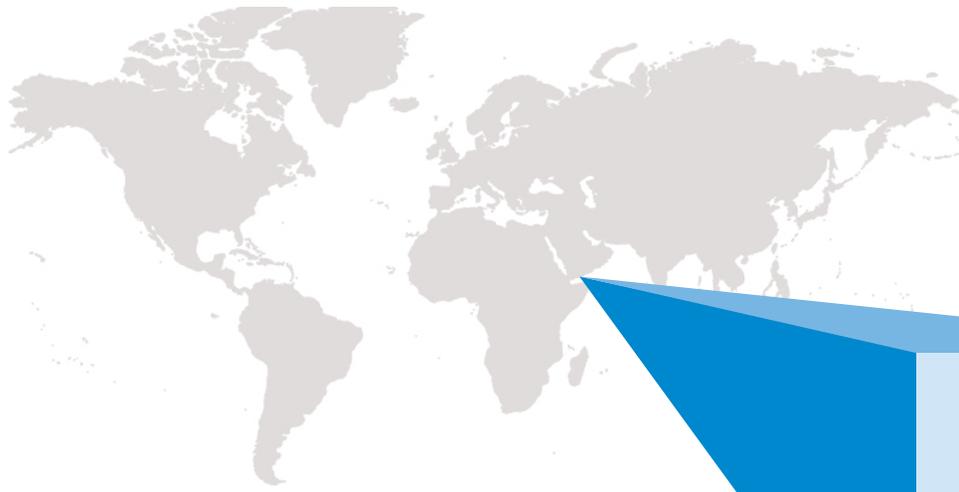
Prioritising children under-five years of age and pregnant and breastfeeding women in displaced and host populations, we provide preventative and treatment nutrition services at health facilities and in the community.

Health

Filling key gaps in healthcare provision, we provide the most vulnerable groups with lifesaving health activity and famine risk reduction services.

Orphan and child welfare

By the end of 2019, Islamic Relief was sponsoring more than 4,000 orphaned children. The regular stipend their families receive helps meet their basic needs, including schooling, and is integrated with other projects.

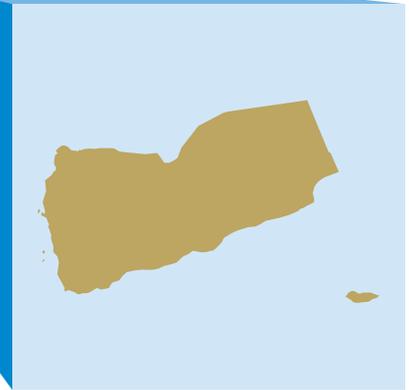


Humanitarian situation

The humanitarian crisis in Yemen remains the worst in the world. The country teeters on the brink of famine and needs in all sectors are increasing.

An estimated 80 per cent of the population – 24 million people – require humanitarian or protection assistance, including 14.3 million who are in acute need. And the severity of needs is deepening, with the number of people in acute need a staggering 27 per cent higher than last year. Two-thirds of all districts in the country are already pre-famine, and one-third face a convergence of multiple acute vulnerabilities.

The escalation of the conflict since March 2015 has dramatically aggravated the protection crisis in which millions face risks to their safety and basic rights.



Islamic Relief Yemen

Established in 1998, Islamic Relief Yemen is part of Islamic Relief Worldwide, which has been delivering humanitarian relief and development programmes around the world for over 30 years.

Islamic Relief Yemen's country office is in the capital city, Sana'a. We have eight field offices in Dhamar, Amran, Aden, Taiz, Hodeida, Sa'ada, Marib, and Raymah. We also have over 315 national and international members of staff and 2,900 volunteers.

Assured of our strong reputation delivering impactful programming, our generous donors have provided valued financial, technical and in-kind support. They include: the UN World Food Programme (UNWFP), The Yemen Humanitarian Fund (YHF), the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), Trocaire, Global Affairs Canada (GAC), the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Humanitarian Funds (OICHF), UKAID, the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC), Radio-help, and Islamic Relief partner offices in the USA, UK, Belgium, Australia, Canada, Germany, Sweden, the Middle East and others.

In addition to delivering lifesaving emergency projects, Islamic Relief Yemen works on early recovery and development interventions, child welfare programmes and seasonal interventions such as Ramadan and qurbani distributions. We are an active member of clusters and coordinate closely with stakeholders including communities, UN agencies, national and international non-governmental organisations, local authorities and civil society.

Our response

In 2019 we continued distributing food and cash/vouchers, reaching over 2.3 million people per month. Our emergency response included helping flood affected people. Within two days, we'd distributed food to more than 1,480 households in Hodeida (Luhaya, AlZaydia, Bajil, Qanawis, and AlHali districts) and 23 in Raymah (AlSalaffya, and Kusmah districts).

And in Nehm, despite continuous battles causing challenges, difficulties, and an unstable security situation, we reached 7,000 people with food support.

Food security

Conflict and insecurity has seen food security across Yemen rapidly deteriorate as livelihoods are destroyed and opportunities to earn a living have been devastated.

Just over 20 million Yemenis (67 per cent of the population) are food insecure – an unprecedented situation and a 13 per cent increase from the previous year. Of these people, 9.6 million are one step away from famine (IPC Phase 4 Emergency) – a fourteen per cent increase from last year and almost twice as much as before the conflict escalated.

In 2019, Islamic Relief provided emergency food assistance to 2,386,262 people in six governorates through general food distribution, cash/voucher transfer network, as well as distributing emergency rapid response mechanisms to newly displaced people.

Saving lives

Islamic Relief Yemen provided humanitarian assistance to 3,407,864 individuals across the country through food security, livelihoods, health, nutrition, orphans and child welfare and WASH projects. We implemented more than 69 projects during 2019.

Sector	Beneficiaries	Projects
Food security	2,386,262 individuals	4
Food security and livelihoods	419,913 individuals	32
Health	22,475 individuals	13
Nutrition	445,152 individuals	4
Orphans and child welfare	57,400 individuals	6
Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)	76,662 individuals	10



Since Ahmed's house was destroyed in the violence, he's been living in a one-bedroomed home with eight members of his family.

Ahmed's story

"While airstrikes were upon us, we managed to escape the village with only our clothes," says Ahmed, who, fled his home in Mandhar village with his family. "We walked a long distance before a stranger showed kindness towards us and dropped us off [Al-Hudaidah city]"

Their home destroyed and all their possessions stolen, the family of nine now rent a one-bedroom house in the city. Ahmed, 55, lives with a disability and has been unemployed for 18 years.

Without any source of income, the family struggle to meet their daily needs, which makes every aspect of life more of a challenge. When it comes to cooking, they struggle to find wood to light a fire and at night their only source of light comes from a single hand torch. Healthcare is beyond their means.

"I can't move my left hand, and I've needed surgery since I suffered from a hernia. My wife has also been suffering from Typhoid fever and I can't afford to pay either treatments," Ahmed explains.

Working with the World Food Programme, Islamic Relief eased Ahmed's difficulties by providing his family with food packages every month. Each is filled with staples such as flour, beans, cooking oil and sugar.

"The food we receive from this programme is really helping us. Without it we would have been facing even more difficulties."

Health intervention

This year, Islamic Relief supported health projects that aim to save the lives of men, women and children – focusing on the most vulnerable groups in host and displaced communities.

We integrated health nutrition and WASH interventions as part of an integrated famine risk reduction strategy. And we helped ensure the sustainability of health units and centres, hospitals, renal dialysis centres, prosthetic and physiotherapy centers and any facility serving the health needs of vulnerable groups. Altogether, we supported 152 health facilities through:

- strengthening the management of childhood illnesses, communicable, non-communicable diseases and reproductive health programmes. This was achieved by building the capacity of the health workers in health programmes and in emergency intervention.
- giving health facilities essential medication, lab solutions and vital medical and non-medical equipment including specific medication for renal dialysis and prosthetic centers. This included providing medical machines required for limb manufacturing, and specialists in surgery, gynaecology, orthopaedics, paediatrics, psychiatry and other key disciplines.

We also provided an incentive to support health workers in continuing their vital work. And by setting up diarrhea treatment centers and oral rehydration centers in high priority areas, and providing around 75 facilities with cholera medication, we responded rapidly to cholera outbreaks.



Samra'a and Malak receiving their wheelchairs.

Samra'a and Malak's story

Aged eleven and nine, Samra'a and Malak have been diagnosed with a brain condition, the cause of which is unknown. The sisters are finding their mobility is increasingly deteriorating, and they struggle with daily tasks such as eating, going to the bathroom and getting dressed.

Their doctor recommended a genetic examination to confirm the cause of the illness, but poverty has pushed this beyond their reach – especially since their father recently lost his job.

Samra'a and Malak each received a wheelchair from Islamic Relief. Enabling the children to move independently once more, the wheelchairs have boosted their mental and social wellbeing as they are now able to resume their studies, play and socialise with their friends.

Nutrition

The nutrition situation in Yemen remains alarming. An estimated 7.4 million people require services to treat or prevent malnutrition, including 4.4 million who are in acute need. This includes 3.2 million people who require treatment for acute malnutrition: two million children under five-years of age and 1.14 million pregnant or breastfeeding women. Five governorates have acute malnutrition rates that exceeds the 15 per cent World Health Organization (WHO) emergency threshold: Al Hudaydah, Lahj, Taizz, Aden and Hadramaut.

Islamic Relief is helping to reduce the morbidity and mortality associated with acute malnutrition among under five-year olds and pregnant and breastfeeding women in refugee, internally displaced and host populations. We provide preventative and treatment nutrition services at health facilities and at community level.

In 2019, we sustained treatment and preventative nutrition services in 155 health facilities and in 725 food distribution points. Consequently, nearly 130,800 acutely malnourished children and mothers were enrolled in a supplementary feeding treatment programme while a preventative supplementary feeding programme helped almost 444,400 women and children.





Sumaia at home with her sibling and parents.

Sumaia's story

"I have difficulty getting enough food for my family," says the father of 16-month old Sumaia. "Sometimes, I cannot provide even one meal a day. It has been very difficult for me to watch my children suffer due to lack of food."

Due to the ongoing conflict in Yemen, hundreds of thousands of citizens are without jobs – including Sumaia's father. With her family struggling with poverty, Sumaia had acute malnutrition until Islamic Relief intervened.

"A woman from Islamic Relief community health volunteers came and knocked at our door. She introduced herself and asked to measure Sumaia's MUAC (Mid-Upper Arm Circumference). She said that my daughter is malnourished and prone to many childhood diseases," says her mother. "At first I felt worried about Sumaia's health situation but then she assured me that this problem can be resolved by taking my daughter to the nearest supported health unit".

Once Sumaia reached Quzan Health Unit, she was admitted and her treatment began. The infant was then transferred to a supplementary feeding programme to continue her treatment. After close observation and the necessary healthcare, Sumaia's health condition has improved significantly. Her mid upper arm circumference, weight and height have all increased and she is now fully recovered.

"I am very thankful to Islamic Relief and their donors for providing such free services. You saved my daughter's life and many others. Thank you so much," says Sumaia's father.



Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)

Over two-thirds of Yemenis (17.8 million people) require support to meet their basic WASH needs - including 12.6 million who are in acute need. Years of underdevelopment, extensive damage from conflict, unstable fuel imports and natural disasters have left water and sanitation systems struggling to provide even minimum services.

Only 22 per cent of rural and 46 per cent of urban populations are connected to partially functioning public water networks, and lack of electricity or public revenue creates significant reliance on humanitarian support.

Over half of all districts (167) are in acute need of sanitation support, and in 197 districts, over 55 per cent of the population has no access to an improved water source.

Islamic Relief has designed and implemented projects to meet the WASH needs of vulnerable populations in the most affected areas. Nearly 155,300 people benefited from our work in this sector during 2019.

Our main activities in this sector lie in rehabilitating water sources, providing water supply systems, and delivering cleaning campaigns and hygiene sessions. We have also provided water trucking to communities, and trained local people to maintain their water supplies through water management committees.



Ghubar, who is the breadwinner for 17 members of his family, now has access to water for his farm.

Ghubar's story

"We used to walk for several kilometers to fetch water and many times we could not get it because of the shortage of fuel," says Ghubar.

Residents of Wadi Alasan had no access to clean water thanks to a lack of a water supply system and an increase in fuel prices which made travelling to find water almost impossible. The area's main well is entirely exposed and therefore a very dangerous option for obtaining water.

"I work as a farmer and I cannot buy water so I had no choice but to ask my family to fetch water from the water well."

Then Islamic Relief Yemen equipped the main water well with a solar energy system, complete with a fence to make it safer. We also constructed a water system which supplied water to twelve villages.

"Now the water arrives at our villages and we do not have to travel long distances to fetch it anymore," Ghubar adds. "We used to wait in queues and still not get enough water but now we finally have access to enough water."

Livelihoods

According to the latest Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) analysis, without humanitarian food assistance about 29.3 million people – (that's 67 per cent of the total population) would need urgent action to save lives and livelihoods.

Food security and livelihoods is a key sector which Islamic Relief Yemen has worked since its registration with the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MoPIC) in 2004. Our major focus is on food distribution, and livelihood and agriculture activities.



In 2019, Islamic Relief implemented a food for asset project and cash for work activities which helped vulnerable people to earn money. This improved their resilience through conditional food assistance in which they worked on rehabilitating or protecting community assets. We also designed a project focusing on boosting the self-reliance of farmers by giving them items such as tools and seeds.



Yahya, 18, helped with the construction of a new road connecting his village to vital services.

Yahya's story

“Many people – especially pregnant women – died on the road,” says Yahya, 18, who lives in Bajil district.

The family breadwinner, Yahya earns no more than 1500 Yemeni Riyal per day transporting people needing medical treatment on his motorbike. But his village is 15 kilometres from the nearest health centre – and it is a hard journey over rough roads.

‘My village lacks the basics including livelihoods, schools, water, health centers, and paved roads.

Some 900 people live in Al-Guraizi village. They struggled to get to the nearest health centre, market and livelihood facilities/ services. In the rainy season, they had to wait up to a month for the unstable roads around the village to dry out – making access to basic services nearly impossible.

In partnership with the World Food Programme (WFP), Islamic Relief intervened to build a new road. It shortened the distance to the nearest facilities to two kilometres, and created many job opportunities for local people.

Now, Yahya is among those hoping for a brighter future and the chance to become self-sufficient.

“My dream is to study and work in the media, to be a productive member of society while shining the light on important events and occasions within our beloved Yemen”.

Orphan and child welfare

In 2019, our orphan and child welfare programme expanded its activities by registering 900 orphans in Sa’ada and Taiz governorates and enrolling them in our sponsorship programme. The total number of Yemen sponsored orphans in the four governorates - Sana’a, Sa’ada, Aden and Taiz - exceeded 4,000 by the end of the year.

The programme provides families with 26 Euros per month to help them meet their food, education, and health needs - and sometimes their shelter needs too. In addition, we also implement projects to improve child protection and early childhood interventions.

The programme has also integrated other projects to support orphans. These include giving educational kits to orphaned children and their siblings, providing vocational training and livelihood support to orphans and their guardians, offering health check-ups, and distributing food and essential winter survival items.





Fadhl chooses Eid clothes provided by Islamic Relief this year.

Fadhl's story

"My father died in 2006 but life was good before the war," says Fadhl. "My brothers used to provide for us, but since the war broke out they don't have regular work."

Fadhl lives with his mother and seven siblings and mother in Sa'ada's Old City. Fleeing the city in 2015, when the family returned to their home two years later they found it in a poor state. Every window was broken, and the second floor badly damaged. They cannot afford the repairs.

"We have only solar energy for lighting, we don't use washing machines and don't watch TV. The solar energy is barely enough for two hours after sunset, so we sleep early," adds Fadhl.

"My three eldest brothers work in a workshop and they struggle to provide us with the basic food we need. Sometimes they don't have any work so they cannot help. They are married and they need to provide for their families as well as us."

The regular stipend the family receive through Islamic Relief's orphan sponsorship programme is a lifeline, helping to meet their basic needs and making sure the children can continue going to school.

"If we did not receive help from Islamic Relief, I would have to stop studying and look for work to help my family. There are many children in the same situation, and some of them face worse conditions than me. Some children do not have food and they had to work, but I am lucky."

Seasonal projects

Through our seasonal projects we distributed food, winter survival items, and Eid gifts.

Ramadan

Our annual Ramadan initiative enables donors to share the joy of the blessed month with those facing hardship. We have delivered Ramadan and qurbani food distribution programmes in Yemen since 1998, and link this with longer-term projects such as food distribution in conflict areas. In 2019, Islamic Relief delivered Ramadan food packs to the most vulnerable families in Sana'a, Aden, Taiz, Amran, and Sa'ada, Alamanah & Dhamar.

Qurbani

Every year we provide the best possible qurbani meat to poor people, in line with Shariah requirements, prioritising the most vulnerable families through rigorous selection criteria. By managing the whole transportation and logistics network, Islamic Relief ensures that animals are transported and slaughtered humanely. Strict hygiene standards cover the handling, packing and distribution of all meat.

During 2019, we distributed meat packs to six different Yemeni governorates: Sana'a, Aden, Sa'ada, Taiz, Amran and Dhamar. We prioritised people affected by the war, displaced and host communities, orphans and vulnerable children, and people with special needs.

Winter survival

In 2019 over 6,760 conflict-affected people benefited from winter survival items such as blankets and heaters distributed in Sana'a, Taiz, Amran, Dhamar and Sa'ada governorates.

Eid gifts

Some 1,800 conflict-affected people in Sa'ada and Taiz governorates received uplifting Eid gifts in 2019.

Fatima's story

"I imagine the smell of hot bread," says Fatima, 40, who relies on charity to feed her children. "It a long time since I cooked, as there is no food to cook."

The forty-year old lives in Sanaa governorate, and due to problems with her spine had to give up her work as a servant.

"None of my children can work and help me. One of my children has epilepsy and is in dire need of treatment but there is no one to help him. I hope to find someone to treat my child.

"Nowadays we depend on generous people and organisations to help us with some food. Many times I have to beg for food to feed my children."

The family get by on rice and kudam, Yemeni bread – but hunger is a regular and unwelcome visitor to their home.

"Sometimes my children do not find anything to eat, so they go to sleep hungry," explains the mother, who has been able to lean on Islamic Relief.

"Islamic Relief registered my two sons to the orphan sponsorship programme. Since then we have been receiving food baskets, money and Eid clothes from Islamic Relief. My children knew that we will receive a Ramadan food basket - they felt happy because we will cook."



Fatima and her children, Wagdi and Shamekh, at our food distribution centre.



Elham receives her family's pack of qurbani meat.

Elham's story

"Eid day is like any other day, we haven't done anything special," says Elham, who lives with her children in dire conditions in Dhamar city. "Our living conditions have worsened since the war [began]."

Unable to make ends meet, the 28-year old relies on charity.

"I rent a three-roomed house, it costs 12,000 Yemeni Riyals per month. We pay for it with help from other people. I collect water from charity water tanks or from the mosque, which is about 30 minutes' walk away. The water is salty but there is no other facility for drinking water." With such daily hardship, there is little respite even during religious festivals, but she dreams of giving her children a joyful Eid.

"We wish to get meat, Eid sweets, clothes for our children. We hope that we can go out with our children for a picnic to cheer them up [But] Eid day is like any other day; we haven't done anything special."

Then Elham received a meat pack through our qurbani distribution.

"We don't usually have meat, only if we received it as a gift. This is the first time. Allah bless Islamic Relief for the generous support, I am truly thankful from my heart."



Islamic Relief Worldwide

19 Rea Street South
Birmingham
B5 6LB
United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0)121 605 5555

Fax: +44 (0)121 622 5003

irw@irworldwide.org

www.islamic-relief.org

Registered Charity No. 328158

Registered Company No. 02365572