



HUMANITARIAN

2024 | ISSUE 83

From
1948
to today

Occupation, massacre,
blockade, embargo, genocide
in Palestine

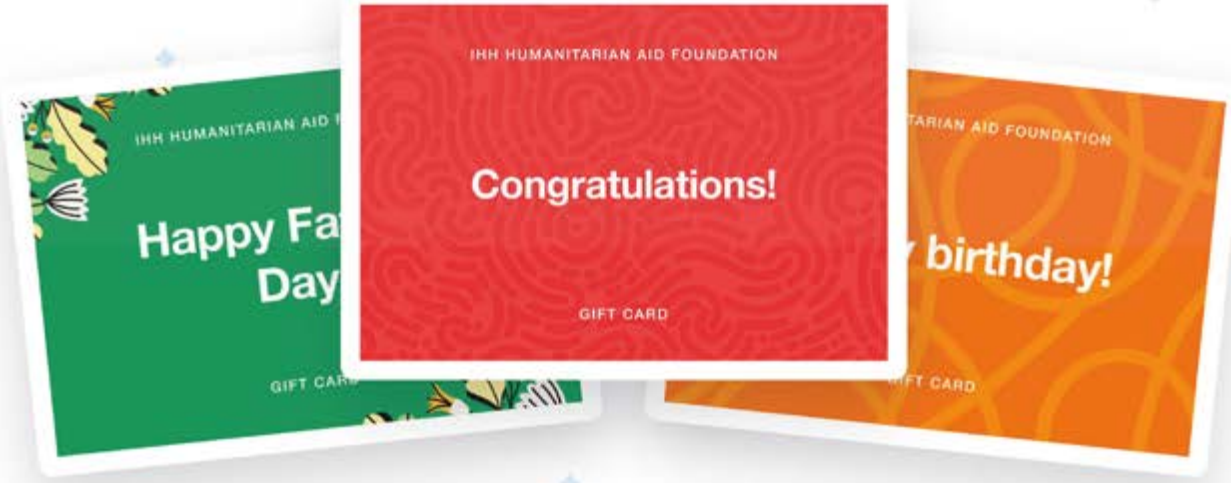




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From Secretary General

Dear volunteers,

The year 2024 is coming to an end as a time marked by heartbreaking humanitarian crises across various countries. While the genocide in Gaza continues with all its brutality as the world turns a blind eye, the civil war in Sudan has caused the largest internal displacement movement in the world. In addition, the devastating floods in Bangladesh and the global decline in aid to vulnerable Syrians have negatively affected millions of people in both countries.

Thanks to our volunteers and donors, our Foundation continues to deliver aid across the world, in regions affected by humanitarian crises, wars and natural disasters in particular. Since 2009, our representative office in Gaza has been actively providing assistance, helping to heal the wounds of the people of Gaza. From the onset of the civil war in Sudan, we have sent the Ships of Goodness to deliver essential aid, enabling millions of people in need to hold on to life. The permanent facilities established in various countries have become symbols of compassion connecting our country with people across the globe. Through the Orphan Sponsorship Program, we also continue to support over 133,000 orphans each month in 43 countries, including our own.

In this issue, you will find in-depth information about the history of occupation in Palestine, the events that unfolded after October 7, 2023, and the ongoing efforts of our Foundation. You will also learn details of our humanitarian activities in various parts of the world, in Sudan and Lebanon in particular as well as our work in the fields of humanitarian diplomacy and international relations. I wish you a pleasant read.

Dr. Durmuş Aydın
Secretary General

On behalf of the Foundation for Human Rights and Freedoms and Humanitarian Relief, owner Atty. Bülent Yıldırım

Editor-in-Chief
Mustafa Özbek

Editorial Director
Serdar Gürçay

Publication Editor
Eren Yeşilyurt
Serdar Kesik

News Analysis
Burak Battal
Kasım Aktağ

Redaction
Ümmühan Özkan

English Content Editor
Mervener Lüleci Karadere

Photo Editor
Burak Berberoğlu

Photo Archive
Samet Köprübaşı

Design
Hüseyin Aydemir

Cover Photo
IHH Archive
AA Archive

Communication
+90 212 631 2121
info@ihh.org.tr
www.ihh.org.tr/en

Address
Ali Kuşçu Mahallesi
Taylasan Sokak No:3
Fatih/Istanbul

2024
Issue: 83

Printed by
Pelikan Printing House



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Floods in Bangladesh Affected 5.6 Million People

In Bangladesh, summer monsoons that brought heavy rains in August, coupled with a surge of water released from dam near the Indian border, resulted in severe flooding that affected 5.6 million people in the eastern part of the country. The disaster, which killed 67 people and left hundreds missing, submerged 11 regions. Thousands of people were unable to leave their homes. Around 1 million Rohingya (Arakanese) living in refugee camps in Cox's Bazar were also affected by the floods.

Floods in Bangladesh Affected 5.6 Million People

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The world's largest internal displacement crisis in Sudan

The ongoing civil war in Sudan between the national army and the Rapid Support Forces has led the country into a deep humanitarian crises. The clashes have caused the deaths of thousands and displaced nearly 12 million people.

The UN stated that more than 25 million people are in need of humanitarian aid. The ongoing violence has resulted in the deaths of over 20,000 people and left more than 50,000 injured.



Reconstruction of Gaza could take 350 years

Since the Israeli attacks that began on October 7, 2023, 82,000 tons of bombs have been dropped on Gaza, an area of 360 km². This is more than five times the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki during World War II. So far, more than 44,000 people have lost their lives and over 105,000 have been injured. The UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres made an assessment of the situation in the region and expressed concern over the suspension of the polio vaccination campaign in northern Gaza. According to the UN, the recovery of Gaza in areas such as economy, trade and construction could take up to 350 years.

Cholera outbreak in Yemen

The humanitarian crisis in Yemen, caused by nearly a decade of ongoing civil war, continues to deepen. Moreover, the growing impact of drought in recent years has depleted water resources and negatively affected agriculture and livestock. More than 23 million people are in need of humanitarian aid. Due to the civil war and drought, at least 4 million people have been displaced. Since March 2024, over 700 people have lost their lives due to a cholera outbreak. According to the UNHCR's Protection Monitoring Update on Internally Displaced Persons, 85% of the Yemeni population is unable to meet their daily food needs.

Tens of thousands displaced in Lebanon

The ongoing economic and political crisis in Lebanon has been severely worsened by Israeli attacks, pushing the country into an unbearable situation. In the attacks that began in October 2024, more than 4,000 people have lost their lives and over 16,000 have been injured. Thousands of people who were forced to leave their homes sought refuge in schools or with relatives while thousands others migrated to different countries.

Kaynak: TRT, AA

All of Türkiye stands for Palestine!

Israel's attacks on Gaza have continued for over a year. In addition to relentless bombardments, Israel have also blocked the entry of humanitarian aid into the region, leaving Gaza facing starvation and the threat of infectious diseases.

So far, at least 44,000 people, the majority of whom are women and children, have been martyred in the attacks, and more than 105,000 have been injured. In the aftermath of the attacks carried out by the occupying

Israeli forces on Gaza, our Foundation organized numerous marches and demonstrations across

Türkiye, in İstanbul in particular, calling for an immediate end to the attacks and for the freedom of Palestine. During these demonstrations, participants

highlighted the occupation and genocide in Gaza and demanded a humanitarian corridor to deliver urgent aid to the region. The international community was urged to take action against Israel's ongoing massacres. Prayers were offered for the martyrs of the Mavi Marmara and those who have been martyred in Palestine to this day.





Freedom Convoy for Palestine

To raise our voices for the oppressed people of Gaza, we organized the “Freedom Convoy for Palestine” to Adana, bringing together thousands of vehicles and tens of thousands of conscience-driven Palestinian supporters of all ages from all over Türkiye. Tens of thousands from all over the country joined the convoy, which departed from Istanbul to join the rally at İncirlik Air Base. Upon reaching İncirlik, participants took part in a massive rally to protest Israel’s attacks on Gaza and the United States’ support for Israel.

Along the route, additional rallies and indoor events were held in cities such as Ankara and Konya with the participants of both convoy members and local citizens.

Demonstrations held for Palestinian martyrs

Together with many other civil society organizations, our Foundation organized marches and demonstrations to honor Ismail Haniyeh and other Palestinians martyred by Israel. Tens of thousands of participants condemned Israeli terrorism during the events.



UN Backs Freedom Flotilla Coalition

In a statement issued in Geneva on April 26, UN special rapporteurs voiced their support for the Freedom Flotilla’s mission to Gaza. They underscored that Israel must adhere to the recent ruling by the International Court of Justice, which mandates unimpeded access for humanitarian aid. The statement noted that the vessels departing from Türkiye are carrying 5,500 tons of humanitarian supplies along with hundreds of international observers bound for the besieged Gaza Strip, and stressed that safe passage must be guaranteed for the Freedom Flotilla Coalition.

Thousands Gather at Resurrection Meetings for Palestine

Our Foundation continues to denounce the attacks of the occupying Israeli forces on Gaza and the broader Palestinian population through a series of public events. Since October 7, 2023, “Resurrection Meetings” have been organized in five cities, calling on the global Muslim community to unite in putting an end to the occupation and ongoing massacres in Palestine.

To date, these gatherings—held in Bursa, Antalya, Ankara, Istanbul, and Nevşehir—have brought together civil society representatives, opinion leaders, academics, bureaucrats, and thousands of supporters of the Palestinian cause. Speakers at the events urged immediate action to end Israel’s 76-year occupation of Palestinian land, the 17-year blockade of Gaza, and the relentless assaults that have continued since October 2023. A heartfelt appeal was made to the Islamic world and to all people of conscience, accompanied by prayers for the Palestinian people and all those enduring oppression.

Orphan Solidarity Night with the Palestinian Agenda in Kayseri

The Kayseri Humanitarian Relief Association organized an Orphan Solidarity Night with a focus on Palestine. In his speech, our General President, Bülent Yıldırım, stated that our Foundation is committed to protecting orphans, children and women in conflict zones and emphasized that everyone has a responsibility regarding Gaza. Yıldırım highlighted that over 133,000 orphans have been received support through the Orphan Sponsorship System of IHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation. He noted that this is a significant number for a civil society organization in the Islamic world, but it is still a small figure compared to the total number of orphaned children worldwide.



1,400 families to move into their new homes in the City of Hope

In collaboration with Qatar Charity, we have completed the construction of the “Hope City” in the Tukli village of the Azaz region in Syria. 1,400 families, who have been struggling to live in makeshift huts and tents in the Babusselam Refugee Camp for many years, have started settling into their new homes.

The Hope City, built on a 280-acre land, was designed based on the families’ every need in mind. The village consists of nine neighborhoods, with a total of 1,400 homes, including 1,200 units of 50 m² and 200 units of 100 m². Additionally, the Hope City features two schools for boys and girls, a kindergarten, a mosque, a community education center, a sports complex, a health center, a multi-purpose conference hall, an administrative building, a police station, and a marketplace with 50 shops.



Sewing workshop established for orphan mothers in Idlib

We have opened a sewing workshop in Idlib to help orphan mothers gain skills and contribute to their family incomes. The workshop produces approximately 300 pieces of women’s and children’s clothing daily, with 18 orphan mothers working there. The clothes made in this workshop are distributed to those in need through our charity stores, which provide free services in Syria.



IHH’s ISTOÇ Representative Office brings smiles to children in Idlib

IHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation’s ISTOÇ Representative Office organized a circumcision event for 200 children and a funfair activity for 500 children in Idlib. Additionally, 1,000 students received school bags and stationery supplies.



Life Begins Anew in Syria

For years, tens of thousands of people endured severe hardship in Aleppo, Hama, Homs, and Damascus under the oppressive control of the Assad regime. Following the regime's withdrawal from these areas, we swiftly mobilized to deliver critical humanitarian aid—including bread, food, shelter, and clothing. Today, our support continues with the provision of flour to local bakeries and supplies for community soup kitchens.

The plight of these communities, who have long struggled to access even the most basic necessities, worsened dramatically with the arrival of winter. Since November 27, we have distributed 800,000 loaves of bread, over 10,000 food parcels, and essential winter items such as tents, mattresses, blankets, and clothing. In addition, preparations are underway for the construction of permanent bakeries and the establishment of more soup kitchens.

Our General President, along with key department leaders, is currently overseeing needs assessments and coordinating air operations directly from the field.



Damascus University Preserves Heirloom Seeds

The Faculty of Agriculture at Damascus University, established by our Foundation in Azaz, has successfully cultivated heirloom seeds in its greenhouses, resulting in its first harvest. All produce from this initial yield was distributed to families residing in tent camps.

Turab Atay, from our Agriculture, Environment, and Climate Change Unit, noted that the project aims to safeguard heirloom seed varieties that are most compatible with Syria's climate. Based on research conducted by students on native seed types, the most suitable varieties were selected and sown. Following the planting process, comprehensive reports were prepared covering rainfall data, soil analysis, and fertilization practices.

HUMANITARIAN DIPLOMACY

We are reuniting families separated by war

Thanks to our humanitarian diplomacy efforts, seven-year-old Hind Yusuf, who had been staying at our orphanage in Syria's Jarabulus city, was reunited with her family. After spending nearly two years in our orphanage, Hind Yusuf was handed over to her relatives through a joint effort involving Turkish and Australian authorities. Hind has now reunited with her grandfather in Australia and gifted her toys sent by her grandfather to her friends at the orphanage.



We opened the Ahmet Sarıkurt Mosque for worship

We opened the Ahmet Sarıkurt Mosque, built in the town of Ihtimlat in Syria's Soran district. The mosque, which can accommodate 600 worshippers at a time, will also serve as a center for Islamic education for children.

Who is Ahmet Sarıkurt?

Born in Istanbul in 1960, Ahmet Sarıkurt dedicated his life to deliver humanitarian aid to the Muslim population in the region following the outbreak of the Bosnian War in 1992. Later, he led IHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation's humanitarian initiatives in Libya, mediating between conflicting tribes and groups, positively impacting thousands of lives. During his tenure at our Foundation, he served as General Treasurer, Vice President for Domestic and Emergency Aid, Vice President for Organizational Development, Vice President for Institutional Relations, and Vice President for Libya Operations. He played a crucial role during the Libyan Revolution, which began on February 17, 2011, in transporting many wounded individuals to Türkiye for treatment. Ahmet Sarıkurt passed away in 2019.



We opened an educational center in Bangsamoro

We opened the Hatice Cemil Atay Educational Center in Bangsamoro, Philippines. Orphans will have a safe space to live and receive an education at this center which includes a school with a capacity for 150 students, a mosque accommodating 160 people, an orphanage for 100 children, a dining hall for 180 people, and an administrative building.

Bangsamoro Autonomous Region Prime Minister Haji Murad Ebrahim and Türkiye's Ambassador to Manila, Niyazi Evren Akyol attended the opening ceremony. Speaking at the event, our Vice President of the Board of Trustees, Hüseyin Oruç, highlighted that this center stands as a symbol of the brotherhood between Türkiye and Bangsamoro.



Hüseyin Sürmeneli Education Center Now Operational in Afghanistan

We opened the Hüseyin Sürmeneli Education Center, comprising an orphanage and a mosque, in Afghanistan's Ghazni province. Built on a 4,000 m2 area, the center includes an orphanage with a capacity for 100 children and a mosque accommodating a total of 200 people.

The opening ceremony was attended by Afghanistan's Minister of Economy Din Mohammad Hanif, our Board Members Cüneyt Kılıç, Yakıp Işık and Emre Kaya, as well as deputy ministers, Ghazni province officials, local community leaders, and residents.

Speaking at the ceremony, our Board Member Emre Kaya stated, "Türkiye and Afghanistan are bound by ancient ties. The orphans of Afghanistan are entrusted to us, and their happiness is our happiness."





We opened the Mevlana İdris Primary School in Niger

Our Foundation has inaugurated the Mevlana İdris Primary School in the Goudel district of Niamey, the capital of Niger. The school, built to honor the memory of the late Mevlana İdris, who passed away in 2022, has a capacity for 150 students. It features three classrooms, an administration office, a teacher's room, three restrooms and a veranda.

Niger's Minister of National Education Dr. Elisabeth Sherif, Türkiye's Ambassador to Niamey Özgür Çınar, local officials, IHH volunteers, and residents of the area attended the opening ceremony.

In Niger, where more than 34,000 makeshift classrooms made of straw are unfit for education, students often study on sandy grounds under extreme heat. These schools, which are vulnerable to rain, dust and wind, also pose a fire hazard. Since 2019, our Foundation has built seven schools in Niger and continues its efforts to construct more schools in the country.



Eye health center in Syria restores sight to thousands

The Idlib Eye Health Center, established in 2021 by our Foundation in collaboration with the International Doctors Association (AID) in Sarmada, Idlib, continues to serve victims of war. In Syria, where healthcare access is severely limited due to the devastating conditions caused by the civil war, the center addresses a critical need. It employs nine staff members, including two doctors, two nurses, two anesthesia technicians, two secretaries, and one cleaning staff member. The monitoring and implementation of services are managed by AID. The center provides free services to those in need and has conducted 19,204 consultations, 3,200 surgeries, and provided eyeglasses to 445 individuals since its opening.



Physical therapy center in Idlib provides healing

The physical therapy and rehabilitation center established by our Foundation in Sarmada, Idlib, in 2020 continues to serve individuals affected by accidents, bombings, or neurological disorders linked to nervous system issues. The center includes three specialized units catering to women, men, and children of all age groups. It provides an average of 1,330 sessions per month, supporting 90 individuals with physical therapy and rehabilitation services. Additionally, the center meets patients' needs for wheelchairs, walking canes and medical diapers. The center employs 10 specialists and supported by 50 interns.



Emergency aid for Bangladesh

In August, a devastating flood in Bangladesh affected 5.6 million people. In response, our Foundation immediately initiated relief efforts and provided 40,000 hot meals, 1,061 hygiene kits, 1,061 kitchen sets and 750 food parcels. Moreover, 2,135 individuals received medical screenings and essential medication support.



INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

“Code of Conduct for Humanitarian Missions” signing ceremony

We participated in the signing ceremony held in Istanbul for the “Code of Conduct for Humanitarian Missions,” prepared by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). The event, hosted by the Turkish Red Crescent, included the participation of 12 NGOs, including the Türkiye Diyanet Foundation and IHH. The Code of Conduct provides guiding principles for coordinating the work of aid actors during humanitarian crises. It aims to be adopted by civil society organizations in Türkiye. The program was attended by IFRC Türkiye Delegation Head Jessie Thomson, Director General for Humanitarian and Technical Assistance at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Korhan Karakoç, and representatives from various civil society organizations.

Our Foundation was represented at the signing ceremony by M. Talha Keskin, Director of International Relations, and Hatice Kübra Koçak, Coordinator of the International Partnerships Unit.



We Participated in the 9th Effective Cooperative Conference for Better Humanitarian Aid Organized by IICO

We took part in the 9th Effective Cooperative Conference for Better Humanitarian Aid, organized by the International Islamic Charity Organization (IICO) in Kuwait. As a key stakeholder in the event, we engaged in critical discussions surrounding the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Gaza. Topics included strategies for delivering aid, the challenges faced in its distribution, the urgent need to meet basic necessities, the impact of forced displacement, and comprehensive approaches to addressing these fundamental issues.

Our Vice President of International Departments, Emre Kaya, delivered a speech highlighting both the challenges and potential solutions in Palestine, the importance of delivering effective and sustainable humanitarian assistance, and the current conditions in Gaza. United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres also addressed the conference through a video message, calling for an immediate ceasefire in Israel.

In the closing session, participating organizations collectively pledged more than \$2 billion in humanitarian aid for Gaza, as part of a global initiative titled “SANAD.”





GNI Delegation Visits Our Foundation and Earthquake-Affected Regions

A delegation from Good Neighbors International (GNI)—one of our valued partner organizations based in South Korea—conducted a series of visits to Istanbul and regions severely affected by the recent earthquakes. The delegation comprised David Kim, Advisory Team Manager; Oliver Choi, Assistant Manager; and Hailey Kim, Social Worker. During their visit to our headquarters, the delegation met with M. Talha Keskin, Director of International Relations, and Mustafa Demir, Director of Domestic Aid and Logistics, alongside coordinators and representatives from both departments. The meetings focused on strengthening existing collaborations and exploring new avenues for future joint initiatives.

The delegation then visited the Tuzla Emre Yerli Disaster Management Center, where they engaged in discussions with our Disaster Management Department. Presentations highlighted the IHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation's disaster response efforts and the educational programs of the Disaster Academy. The visit included a tour of the center's 8,000 m² warehouse, where the delegation received comprehensive briefings on ongoing logistics operations.

Following their meetings in Istanbul, the GNI delegation—accompanied by members of our International Relations Department—traveled to earthquake-affected regions. In Hatay, Kahramanmaraş, Adıyaman, and Malatya, they visited container settlements and residential areas, where they distributed aid materials to communities in need.



Advisor to the President of Kosovo Visits Our Foundation

Donika Kadaj Bujupi, Advisor to the President of Kosovo, visited our Foundation, where she was welcomed by Board Member Osman Atalay. During the meeting, Bujupi and her accompanying delegation engaged in discussions centered on potential joint initiatives in the fields of health and education.

The visit marked an important step toward strengthening bilateral cooperation and advancing impactful projects aimed at fostering meaningful social development.



LEGIS Association from North Macedonia Visits IHH

Jasmin Redjepi, President of the LEGIS Association in North Macedonia, visited our Foundation accompanied by a delegation from the organization. The group was received by Secretary General Dr. Durmuş Aydın, Board Member Osman Atalay, and Mariglen Shehi, Coordinator of the Europe-America Unit.

The meeting served as a platform for exchanging ideas on current and future humanitarian initiatives in the region. It also offered an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of LEGIS's ongoing work and projects in North Macedonia.



Cooperation Protocol Signed Between IHH and MFS-Emmaus

Representatives from the Emmaus International Solidarity Forum (MFS-Emmaus), based in Bosnia and Herzegovina, visited our Foundation. The delegation, led by MFS-Emmaus President Hamzalija Okanović and Vice President Elmedin Skrebo, was warmly welcomed by our Secretary General, Dr. Durmuş Aydın, and our Vice President for International Programs, Emre Kaya.

During the visit, a cooperation protocol and operational project agreement for the El-Yasemin Orphanage in the Idlib region of Syria were signed. The meeting also featured an exchange of ideas regarding the current situations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Palestine, Syria, and the earthquake-affected regions of Türkiye, along with discussions on potential joint projects in these areas.





Our Participation in the 20th International Humanitarian Aid and Development Fair

We attended the 20th International Humanitarian Aid and Development Fair (DIHAD) held in Dubai. The event brought together representatives from NGOs, government institutions, academia, media, and the private sector from 154 countries. With 168 sessions and workshops, and 131 speakers covering various humanitarian aid topics across eight conferences, the fair attracted over 16,000 attendees. Our Foundation was represented by IHH Secretary General Dr. Durmuş Aydın and staff from various departments. During the fair, a workshop was conducted focusing on the current situation in Gaza and our Foundation's ongoing efforts. Onur Şaylan, the Consul General of Türkiye in Dubai, also visited our booth and received detailed information about our activities.

Visit from Copenhagen University College to IHH

A group of 20 students and academics from the Department of International Social Services at Copenhagen University College visited our Foundation. During their visit, our guests had the opportunity to meet with M. Talha Keskin, Manager of the International Relations Department, and Hatice Kübra Koçak, Coordinator of the International Partnerships Unit. We shared insights and experiences from our Foundation's international humanitarian aid efforts with the visitors.



We Participated in the European Civil Protection Forum

We took part in the 8th European Civil Protection Forum held in Brussels on June 4-5. Organized biennially by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid (DG ECHO), the forum brings together experts in civil protection and humanitarian aid, policymakers, NGOs, academics, and private sector representatives from various European countries. The event focuses on enhancing civil protection and emergency response capabilities, while also providing a platform for sharing insights on humanitarian aid. During the forum, our International Relations Department held several productive meetings with various organizations.



We Participated in the International Humanitarian Aid Conference

Our Foundation participated in the Mercy Malaysia International Humanitarian Aid Conference held in Kuala Lumpur. Organized once every five years by Mercy Malaysia, one of the largest aid organizations in the country, this year's event was themed "Humanitarian Development Nexus: Building Resilience, Transforming Lives." The conference, hosted by the University of Malaysia Technology, featured forums, seminars, and workshops.

Hundreds of participants from around the world attended, including Malaysian parliamentarians, civil society representatives, policymakers, academics, medical professionals, and humanitarian aid experts.

During the conference, our Partnerships Coordinator from the International Relations Department, Hatice Kübra Koçak, delivered speeches in two workshops: "Government and NGO Cooperation: The Turkish Experience" and "IHH's Experience in Mental Health." Our Foundation also shared insights on potential future challenges in the humanitarian aid sector during the Grand Forum event, which focused on finding solutions to these challenges.



We Provided Sphere Training to Representatives from Four Countries

We organized a "Sphere Standards Training Program" at our Bayrampaşa Representative Office. Conducted in Arabic over five days, the training hosted 15 participants from four organizations based in Türkiye, Qatar, Kuwait, and Yemen.

The program covered both technical and theoretical aspects of humanitarian aid, including food security, livelihoods, health, protection, water supply, and sanitation. In addition, the training delved into the philosophy behind Sphere, the Humanitarian Charter, as well as monitoring, evaluation, and coordination in humanitarian aid. Practical project activities were also organized to help participants apply the Sphere Handbook in real-world field scenarios.

What Are Sphere Standards?

The Sphere Standards are part of the Sphere movement, an international initiative founded in 1997 by professionals in humanitarian aid. The movement aims to improve the quality and accountability of humanitarian interventions during and after disasters. By uniting local and international NGOs, donor organizations, governments, and private sector stakeholders, Sphere seeks to foster collaboration, share knowledge, and promote best practices in humanitarian response.



IHH and IMU Organized a “Psychosocial Academy Program”

As part of the protocol signed between our Foundation and Istanbul Medeniyet University (IMU), the IHH Istanbul Orphan Unit and Istanbul IHH Youth organized a four-week “Psychosocial Academy Program” for students from the departments of psychology, psychological counseling and guidance (PDR), and social work. The program included visits to families registered in our orphan sponsorship system in Istanbul.

Upon completing the classes, students visited our Headquarters, where IHH Secretary-General Dr. Durmuş Aydın delivered a talk on “Foundation Culture and Volunteer Work.” Psychologist Ayşe Hümeysra Karayel, Coordinator of the IHH Psychosocial Support Unit, gave a presentation on “Psychological Resilience in Volunteer Work.” Additionally, Rumeysa Önal, Organization Officer of the Istanbul Orphan Unit, led a session on “Family Visit Training and Field Work Planning.”

This training program is set to continue for one year, with new educational and field activities planned. The program aims to provide students in social services and mental health fields with practical experience through foundation activities while enhancing the professionalism of family visits conducted within our sponsorship system.



EDUCATION

The Joy of 19,000 Students

With the start of the new academic year, we distributed school bags filled with essential stationery items such as notebooks, pencils, erasers, rulers, and colored pencils to students in need at schools in Syria and Afghanistan. This initiative aimed to create better educational conditions for these children. In total, we brought smiles to the faces of over 19,000 children by providing 14,401 school bags and stationery sets in Syria, and 5,000 in Afghanistan.



Our Research and Rescue Team Ranked First Among 122 Teams

Our Foundation’s search and rescue dog, Bozo, and his trainer, İbrahim Güler, secured first place in the “2024 Canine Search Teams Task and Training Proficiency Exam” organized by AFAD in Ankara. The competition saw the participation of 122 canine search teams. Over the course of two days, both the dogs and their handlers faced a series of demanding tests across various courses, conducted both during the day and at night.



Regional Search and Rescue Drill Held in Samsun

To strengthen the skills and experience of our search and rescue teams, we regularly organize training sessions and drills. Our teams, operating under the Disaster Management Department, recently conducted a regional drill in Samsun, with the participation of 120 volunteer rescue technicians from 15 provinces across the Black Sea region and surrounding areas. The drill encompassed various rescue operations, including urban search and rescue in rubble, water surface rescue, wilderness search and rescue, and aerial line rescue in riverbeds.



IHH Organized the 4th National Search and Rescue Drill

On the 25th anniversary of the 17 August 1999 Gölcük Earthquake, our Foundation organized the 4th National Search and Rescue Drill to enhance preparedness for potential disasters. The three-day exercise saw the participation of 46 teams and 801 volunteer rescue technicians from various cities across the country. Urban, wilderness, water-based, and medical search and rescue operations were conducted throughout the drill.

The drill was based on a scenario involving a 6.8 magnitude earthquake along the North Anatolian Fault in the Marmara Sea. Teams carried out search and rescue operations across designated zones, simulating the aftermath of the earthquake, which resulted in 125,000 severely damaged, 169,000 moderately damaged, and 206,000 slightly damaged residential units.

Simultaneous operations took place in Yeşilköy, Akfırat, Oruçoğlu, Süreyyapaşa, Hacıllı, and Beykoz, all coordinated from the IHH Emre Yerli Disaster Management and Logistics Center in Tuzla. Working around the clock in four distinct regions, our teams operated at full capacity, tackling challenging conditions to ensure preparedness for real-life disaster scenarios.

In response to our Foundation's call, teams from across Türkiye worked rigorously in the simulated earthquake scenarios in Istanbul, continually enhancing their readiness for all types of disasters.

The drill was observed by Istanbul Governor Davut Gül, Düzce Governor Selçuk Aslan, Adalar District Governor Abdullah İnan, our President Bülent Yıldırım, Istanbul AFAD Provincial Director Haluk Özener, AFAD department heads, and other officials, who monitored the activities at our disaster management center.



MEB Coordinators for the Classes Competing for Goodness Project Monitored Our Efforts in Bangladesh

The “Classes Competing for Goodness” project, implemented in collaboration between the Ministry of National Education (MEB) and our Foundation, has been ongoing since 2013. This initiative has supported over 1 million students and thousands of orphaned children worldwide.

In October, the MEB Coordinators for the Classes Competing for Goodness Project conducted an on-site visit to Bangladesh to observe our Foundation’s efforts on behalf of orphans and the field applications of the project. During their visit to the Arakan refugee camps, we provided a comprehensive briefing on our activities in the camps. Together with the delegation, we visited orphaned families, distributed stationery supplies, and conducted Adaq and Aqiqah sacrifices, with the meat being distributed to those in need. Additionally, we organized an orphan festival to ensure that the children had a joyful and memorable day.



Conference on combating addiction held in Antalya

In Antalya, which ranks among the top in Türkiye for drug use, we organized a conference focusing on combating addiction to technology, drugs, and gambling. Speaking at the conference, our Board of Trustees Member Osman Atalay emphasized the alarming levels of substance abuse among younger age groups. He also highlighted the proliferation of synthetic drugs and the urgent need to tighten measures to prevent young people’s easy access to these substances.

Atalay discussed how addictions to technology, gambling, and drugs rapidly undermine individual quality of life and pose significant societal threats and shared potential solutions.

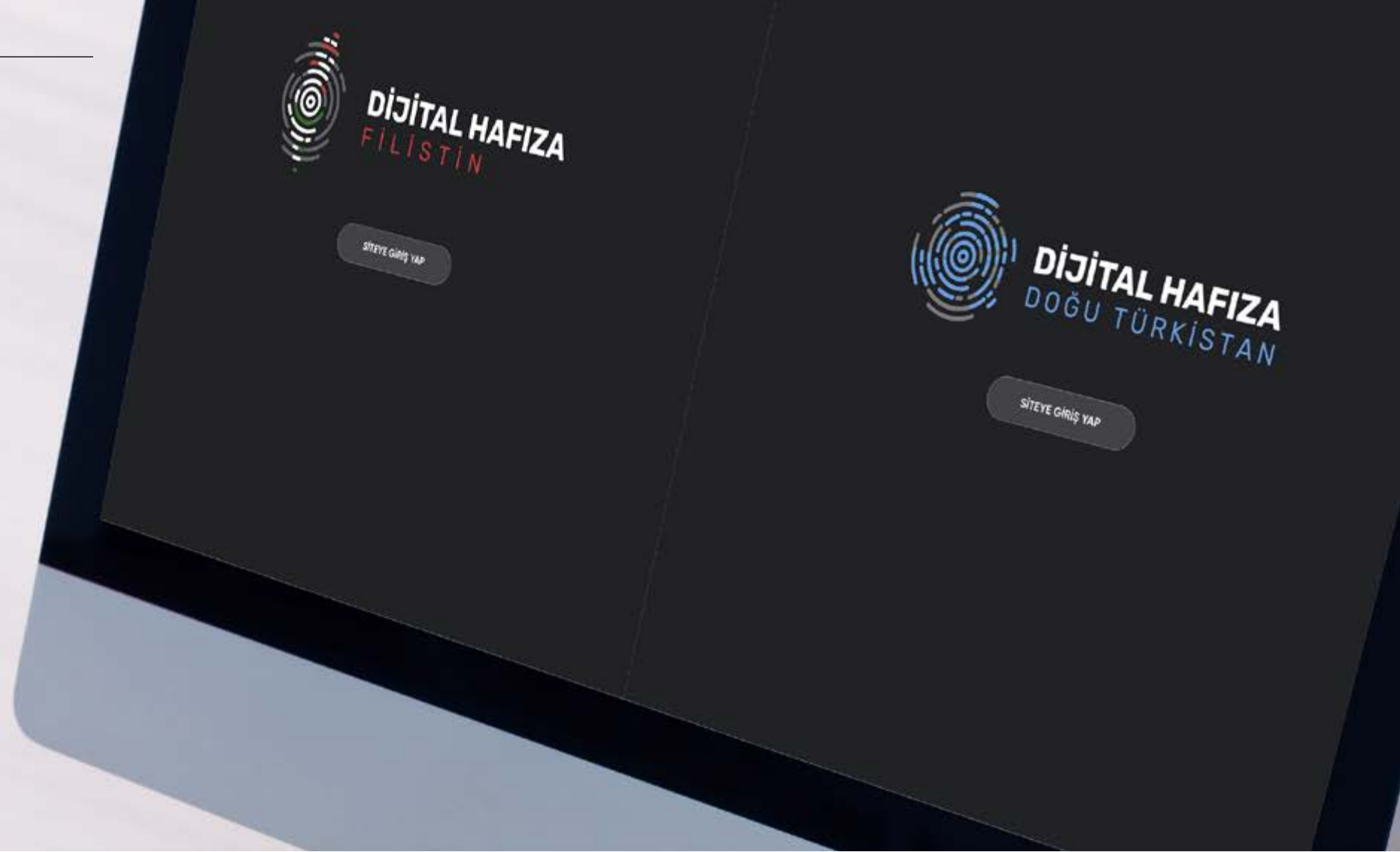


Humanitarian Aid Ship Arrives in Lebanon

A humanitarian aid ship, organized as part of the “Immediate Relief Mobilization for Lebanon” campaign initiated by our Foundation in collaboration with nine other civil society organizations, has successfully reached Lebanon. The ship, carrying 1,000 tons of essential aid materials, including food, hygiene supplies, clothing, and shelter items, docked at the Port of Beirut.

It was warmly welcomed by Turkish Ambassador to Beirut, Ali Barış Ulusoy, AK Party MP Hasan Turan, Chairman of the Lebanon-Türkiye Inter-Parliamentary Friendship Group Hasan Murad, Secretary-General of the Lebanese High Relief Commission Mohammed Hayr, as well as representatives from our Foundation and other NGOs. In his address at the welcome ceremony, Ambassador Ulusoy stated, “Today, we reaffirm that we will not abandon our friend and brother Lebanon, which is enduring an escalating humanitarian crisis and has been subjected to Israeli aggression. This support comes not only from our state institutions but also from our civil society organizations.”





The Memory of East Turkestan Has Been Digitized

Founded in 2021 by our Foundation, the Digital Memory Center was initially established to spotlight the Palestinian issue through digital content creation. Having already produced a wealth of content on Palestine, the Center has launched a new initiative this year dedicated to “East Turkestan.” In a manner similar to its focus on Palestine, the Center aims to draw global attention to the legal, social, and political rights of the East Turkestan people, whose existence is being systematically erased, as well as to preserve their collective memory.

The Digital Memory Center strives to create content that resonates with all age groups and ensures its ongoing availability. It also serves as a digital workshop and a network hub for issues pertaining to both Palestine and East Turkestan. Beyond digital platforms, the Center extends its mission by producing printed materials, with the goal of cultivating a more informed and conscientious society.

What awaits you at the Digital Memory Center?

Palestine



East Turkestan





10th anniversary celebration at Somalia's Faculty of Agriculture

With the support of our Foundation and TİKA, a ceremony was held to mark the 10th graduation anniversary of the Faculty of Agriculture at Zemzem University, established in Somalia in 2014. The event was attended by Somali Minister of Justice and Constitution Hasan Moalim, Turkish Ambassador to Mogadishu Alper Aktaş, our Foundation's Vice President of the Board of Trustees Hüseyin Oruç, TİKA Somalia Coordinator Zafer Ekşi, Maarif Foundation Somalia Coordinator Selçuk Baş, Yunus Emre Institute Representative Gökhan Künarlıoğlu, Directorate of Religious Affairs Religious Counselor Ömer Faruk Arslan, Somali Higher Education Chair Mohamed Abdullahi, former Finance Minister and MP Dr. Elmi Mohamed Nur, Somali Culture and Language Agency Chair Ismail Abdullahi, and Albayrak Exhibition Coordinator Esad Sivri.

Opened in collaboration with TİKA in 2012, the Somalia Agriculture School was transformed into the Faculty of Agriculture under Zemzem University in 2014 and graduated its first students in 2018. The faculty graduated 409 students over the past decade, including 40 students who graduated in 2024. These graduates play a vital role in combating drought by conducting agricultural experiments and analyses in greenhouses established across the country.

After the graduation ceremony, our Board Member Mustafa Özbek inaugurated the laboratory we established for the university's Faculty of Medicine. Additionally, an art and calligraphy exhibition was organized with the support of Albayrak Group and Zemzem Foundation.

Combating Drought: The Faculty of Agriculture in Somalia

Each year, more than 2 million people lose their lives due to drought, disease, and limited access to clean water. The scarcity of water and contamination of existing resources severely affect agriculture and livestock, triggering widespread famine and disease outbreaks. Additionally, the lack of adequate resources and limited awareness of proper agricultural practices and technologies lead to the inefficient use of fertile land.

To address these pressing challenges, IHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation, in partnership with TİKA, launched the Somali Agricultural School Project in 2012. This initiative aimed to empower local communities through practical training in modern agricultural techniques and technological applications. In 2014, the school evolved into the Faculty of Agriculture under the umbrella of Somali Zemzem University. Today, the faculty continues to educate future agricultural engineers on a 10,000-square-meter campus.


2012

Originally founded as a farmer training center, the Somali Agricultural School conducted monthly, bi-monthly, and quarterly courses to equip local farmers with essential agricultural production skills. Through these programs, 500 participants from various regions of Somalia were trained in sustainable, efficient, and high-yield farming practices.

2014

In 2014, to ensure the project's long-term impact and facilitate more professionalized agricultural development, the Somali Agricultural School was restructured as the Faculty of Agriculture at Somali Zemzem University. The faculty was established with the goal of cultivating crops suited to Somalia's climate, providing seed support to local communities, and offering comprehensive training to farming families. This transformation aimed to meet the growing demand for qualified agricultural professionals and to foster a culture of sustainability in Somali agriculture.

AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENTS

Efforts to cultivate a variety of fruits and vegetables brought from Türkiye, including tomatoes, peppers, eggplants, beans, strawberries, melons, pomegranates, oranges, and figs, have largely been successful.


2017
AWARD

The Somali Agricultural School project won first place in the "Humanitarian Aid" category at the Civil Society Awareness Awards organized by AK Party in 2017.


2018
FIRST GRADUATES

The Faculty of Agriculture celebrated its first graduates, with **50 Somali students** starting to serve their country as agricultural engineers.


TECHNOLOGIES USED

The faculty, established based on agricultural faculties in Türkiye, has 15 greenhouses. Additionally, for practical training, students receive hands-on experience with agricultural machinery such as tractors, augers, trailers, sprayers, silage machines, plows, seeders, hoes, and disc harrows, alongside their theoretical education.


2024

To date, the faculty has graduated **409 students** and currently has **1,352 students** enrolled. Practical agricultural training sessions for the local population are also ongoing.

2022

As part of the Faculty's operations, **1,200 chicks**, along with a feed grinder, vaccines, feeders, and drinkers, were sent from Türkiye to Somalia for a newly established egg production facility.



We Built New Structures in Syria Together with Institutions from Bosnia and Herzegovina

The earthquakes that struck on February 6, 2023, also caused severe destruction in the Syrian cities of Azaz and Afrin. In collaboration with Islamska Zajednica Bosna Hersek Rijaset and HO Merhamet MDD Bosna, our Foundation completed the construction of 42 houses for earthquake survivors in Syria and officially inaugurated a mosque with a capacity of 400 people. The inauguration ceremony was attended by officials from the Bosnian partner institutions, along with Yavuz Dede, Member of our Board of Trustees, and Yakup Işık, Member of our Board of Directors, as well as local residents and community leaders.

Delivering the opening remarks at the Bosnian Martyrs Mosque, Ibrahim Malanović, Director of Social Affairs at the Religious Affairs Directorate of Bosnia and Herzegovina, stated, “As the Religious Affairs Directorate of Bosnia, we are honored to mark yet another meaningful inauguration on this blessed day. We will continue to stand by our Syrian brothers and sisters in an effort to alleviate their suffering.”

Kenan Vrbanjac, President of the Merhamet Organization, added that “As reflected in the name of our mosque, the memory of both our Bosnian martyrs and our Syrian martyr brothers will never be forgotten. I extend my sincere thanks to the IHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation and to all my brothers who contributed to this effort.”

Speaking at the inauguration of the Bosna Houses Campus, Yavuz Dede, Member of our Board of Trustees, noted as “Nearly 30 years ago, we delivered the donations and aid from Muslims in Syria and other countries to those in need in Bosnia. Today, it is the people of Bosnia who are extending their help to the people of Syria. I thank the people of Bosnia for supporting these projects. We will not abandon the people of Syria until their suffering comes to an end.”



Bosnia-Herzegovinian organizations opened two schools in Syria

Our Foundation, together with Bosnian organizations Islamska Zajednica Bosna Hersek Rijaset and HO Merhamet Bosna, built two schools with a capacity of 720 students. The school built in the town of Soran, near Aleppo, consists of 12 classrooms while the school in Çobanbey has 6 classrooms. The opening ceremony, held with prayers and sacrificial slaughter, were attended by local community leaders and representatives of civil society organizations.

Kenan Vrbanjac, President of the Merhamet Institution, said during the ceremony that Türkiye has built schools and mosques in Bosnia in the past and added, “We have never forgotten this aid. Today, thank God, we have reached the point where we can help. We will continue to stand by the people of Syria together.”

Mirza Ganic, the Mayor of Visoko, Bosnia-Herzegovina, stated, “After the earthquakes on February 6, we started aid efforts both in Türkiye and Syria. Investments in education are among the greatest investments for humanity.”



International Balkan Forum Held in Istanbul

An International Balkan Forum was held in Istanbul through the joint efforts of our Foundation and the International Civil Society Coordination Association (USKOM). The forum addressed the political, economic, and social challenges faced by an estimated 11 to 18 million Roma people living across various regions of the Balkans and Europe.

The event featured a speech by Osman Atalay, Member of our Board of Trustees, and included discussions on the shared challenges encountered by Roma communities—particularly in the areas of education and housing—along with proposed solutions.

The forum brought together representatives from 21 civil society organizations, as well as politicians, Roma members of parliament, and academics from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Romania, and Türkiye.



RESULTS STATEMENT OF THE FORUM

Key Issues Faced by the Roma Community

- **Discrimination:** Roma communities face mistreatment, prejudice, discrimination, and exclusion in the societies in which they live.
- **Constitutional Issues:** In many countries, the Roma community is not officially recognized as an ethnic minority.
- **Political Representation and Participation:** The Roma community is often underrepresented in government and decision-making bodies, which prevents their issues from being effectively addressed.
- **Education:** The literacy rate within the Roma community is notably low. Many Roma children are unable to attend school. In addition to discrimination and exclusion, poor economic conditions often lead to school dropouts. In some cases, the inability to afford proper school clothing forces children to leave education. Access to higher education for the Roma community is almost nonexistent.
- **Poverty:** Poverty remains one of the most chronic issues faced by the Roma community. Immediate, realistic, and sustainable actions must be taken to address this problem.
- **Unemployment:** Members of the Roma community often work in the informal sector. Due to discrimination and lack of qualifications, they face significant challenges in entering the formal labor market and are subjected to considerable wage inequality.
- **Health:** Although the Roma community represents a higher proportion of the population in some countries compared to the general populace, their life expectancy is often up to 10 years shorter in certain areas. Factors such as a lack of basic health knowledge, inadequate medical services, difficulties in accessing healthcare, and poor living conditions due to low income all contribute to this disparity. Furthermore, most members of the Roma community lack health insurance.
- **Shelter:** The Roma community is one of the most affected by housing issues in the Balkans. They often reside in overcrowded, segregated neighborhoods, typically living in large family units.
- **Public Services:** The Roma community generally has limited access to essential public services, such as water, electricity, and natural gas, in the countries where they live.
- **Women:** One of the most significant challenges within the Roma community is the integration of women into society. Due to a lack of professional skills, Roma women face limited opportunities to join the labor market, with the majority remaining housewives. Comprehensive actions are needed across all sectors, from education to healthcare, to address this issue.
- **Hygiene:** Within the Roma community, the sharing of living spaces by large families, combined with poor economic conditions and a lack of education, prevents the establishment of proper conditions for personal hygiene.
- **Property:** Most Roma individuals living in urban areas reside in informal, slum-like housing. However, many members of the Roma community lack proper documentation for the properties or land they occupy. These settlements are often built on public or private land without the necessary construction permits or title deeds, existing as informal settlements.

Proposed Solutions

- Equal opportunities in education should be provided, with particular emphasis on creating new opportunities for higher education and scholarships.
- New legal regulations should be made to enhance political representation and ensure active participation in decision-making processes.
- The media language used when discussing the Roma community should be improved. Platforms to combat discrimination should be established, and projects that positively depict Roma culture should be developed.
- Inclusive programs aimed at strengthening social solidarity should be created.
- Scientific research institutes focusing on the Roma community should be established.
- Budgets allocated to the Roma community should be increased.
- A coordination office should be established to oversee and coordinate efforts and funding related to the Roma community in the Balkans.
- A legal advisory body consisting of Roma individuals should be created.
- Efforts should be made to establish a term similar to “antisemitism” to address and express the discrimination faced by the Roma community, which will be accepted by the international community.

Prepared by

Osman Atalay, Board of Trustees Member, IHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation
 Mariglen Shehi, Europe-America Coordinator, IHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation
 Riad Domazeti, Researcher, INSAMER
 Yusuf Ziya Dönmez, USKOM

55 NGOs Launch the “They Are Waiting for You” Aid Campaign in Türkiye

An aid campaign titled “They Are Waiting for You” has been launched with the participation of 55 civil society organizations, led by our Foundation, to support regions affected by war and crises. During a press conference held at the Neslişah Sultan Cultural Center in Fatih, Istanbul, our President Bülent Yıldırım emphasized that the goal of the campaign is to ensure that the donations from benefactors reach the urgent needs in war and crisis areas in the most effective way. He also called for both in-kind and financial donations.

The collaboration of these 55 NGOs will enhance the effectiveness and strength of aid efforts in war-torn and crisis-stricken regions such as Palestine, Lebanon, Sudan, Yemen, Syria, Rohingya, and Ukraine.



File: Serdar Kesik

PALESTINE

UNDER OCCUPATION
FOR 76 YEARS
LEFT TO FACE
WAR,
HUNGER,
FAMINE
AND DEATH ALONE



Overview of the **Palestinian Crisis**



The occupying movement that emerged in the late 19th century marked the beginning of a highly critical process for the Middle East and Palestine in particular. During the 1st Zionist Congress, organized by Theodor Herzl and held in Basel in 1897, the agenda of establishing a homeland for Jews in Palestine under legal assurance was discussed. As a result of organized migrations starting from this date, the Jewish population in the region, which was only 15 in 1881, grew to nearly 40,000 by 1914.

The issue of Palestine was left ambiguous in the Sykes-Picot Agreement, signed between France and Britain during World War I, which aimed to divide the Middle East after the war. In 1917, a declaration authored by British Foreign Secretary Arthur James Balfour and addressed to Baron Walter Rothschild, a leading figure of the occupying movement, promised the establishment of a homeland for Jews in Palestinian territories. As the Ottoman presence in Palestine came to an end in September 1918, the declaration was also incorporated into the Treaty of Sèvres, signed after the war. In 1920, Britain established a mandate administration in Palestine, which was officially recognized by the League of Nations in 1922. At the 29th Zionist Congress held in Zurich, Switzerland, in 1929, the phrase "Homeland" in the Balfour Declaration was officially interpreted to mean "Jewish State."

In the years following World War II, the situation in Palestine deteriorated further. Britain referred the issue to the United Nations, initiating the process of establishing Israel. Under the Partition Plan prepared in 1947, Jews were allocated larger and more fertile lands compared to those given to Muslims, despite their smaller population. Britain also announced its intention to end its mandate in Palestine. The plan proposed dividing Palestine into six regions, excluding Jerusalem: three for Muslims and three for Jews, with Jerusalem designated as an international zone. Jewish leaders accepted this plan and began occupying the territories allocated to them. On May 15, 1948, immediately after Britain's withdrawal from Palestine, the establishment of Israel was declared.

Upon the declaration of the establishment decision, the Arab League declared war on Israel. While Palestinians achieve limited success in their struggle under the leadership of Izz ad-Din al-Qassam and Amin al-Husseini, the occupying movement pursued a more organized policy.

After winning the Six-Day War (Arab-Israeli War) in 1967, Israel occupied East Jerusalem, the Golan Heights, the Gaza Strip, and the Sinai Desert, expanding its borders two and a half times in just six days. As a result of these occupations, the living conditions of the Palestinian people further deteriorated.

Since then, Israel has been relentlessly continuing its policy of occupation and destruction in Palestine. With policies such as displacing Palestinians from Jerusalem, destroying historical artifacts that symbolize the Islamic identity of the city, conducting excavation activities beneath Al-Aqsa Mosque, and increasing Jewish settlements, Israel aims to Judaize Palestine.

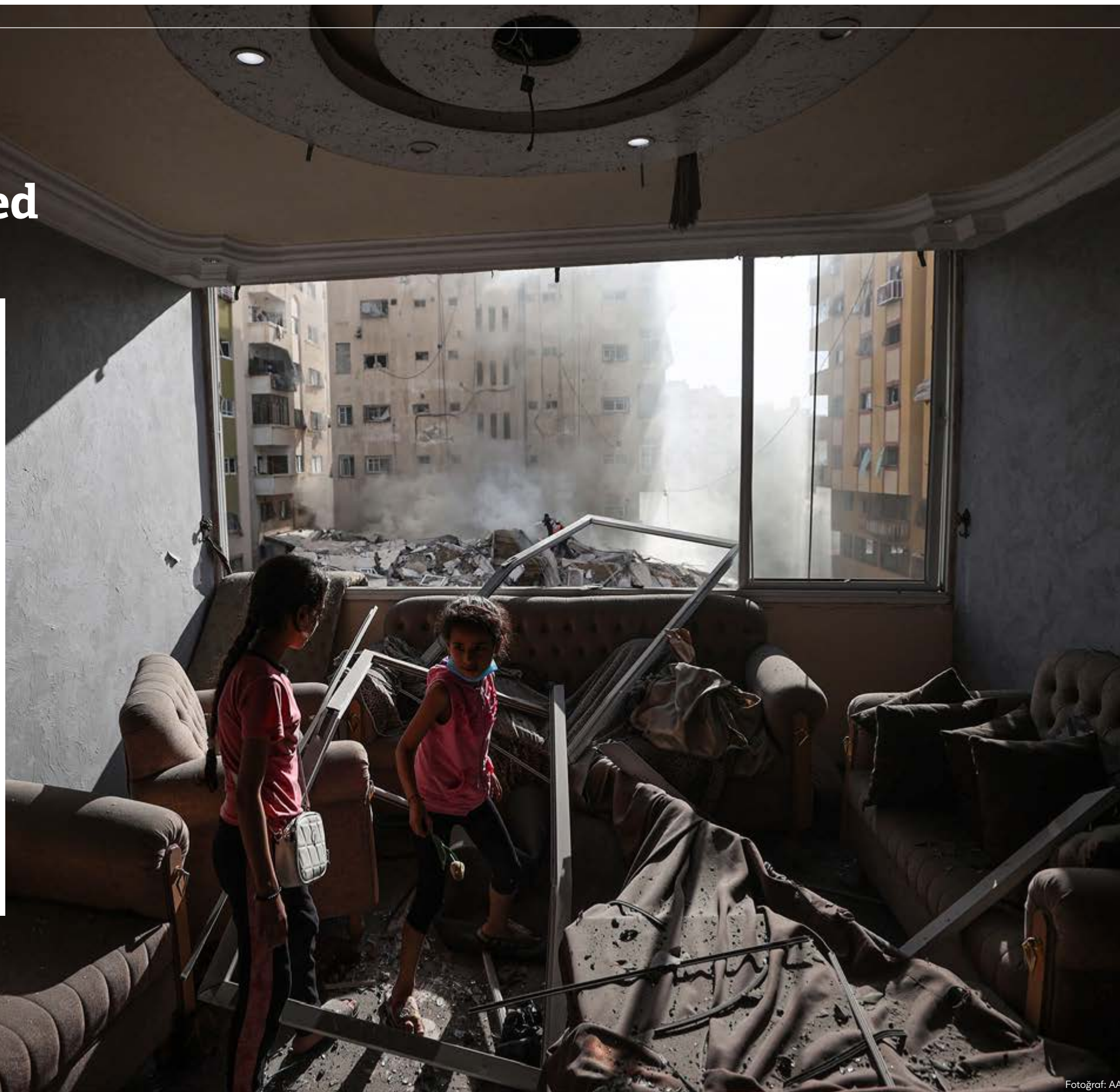
Palestinians today are unable to sustain even their daily lives on their own land. The occupying Israeli administration commits all kinds of unlawful acts, including arbitrary arrests, to intimidate the people and force them to leave Palestine.



What happened on October 7?

The embargo imposed on Gaza for years escalated to a much more severe level with Israel's attacks that began on October 7, 2023. Two million people living in the region were condemned to death. The people of Gaza face the threat of death every moment, not only from bombs but also from hunger and disease. Hundreds of thousands of people whose homes were destroyed migrated to the southern parts of Gaza, seeking shelter in tents, hospitals, and schools. Humanitarian aid deliveries to Gaza, which has been rendered inaccessible by air, land, and sea, are also being blocked. Tens of thousands of people trapped in the northern part of the region face the threat of starvation. Israel does not even allow search and rescue efforts in buildings destroyed by bombings.

Since October 7, 2023, over 44,000 people have been killed, and more than 105,000 have been injured in Israel's attack. Hundreds of schools and hospitals have been destroyed, and food and medical supplies have run out. Today, 2 million Palestinians in Gaza are struggling to hold on to life despite numerous hardships.

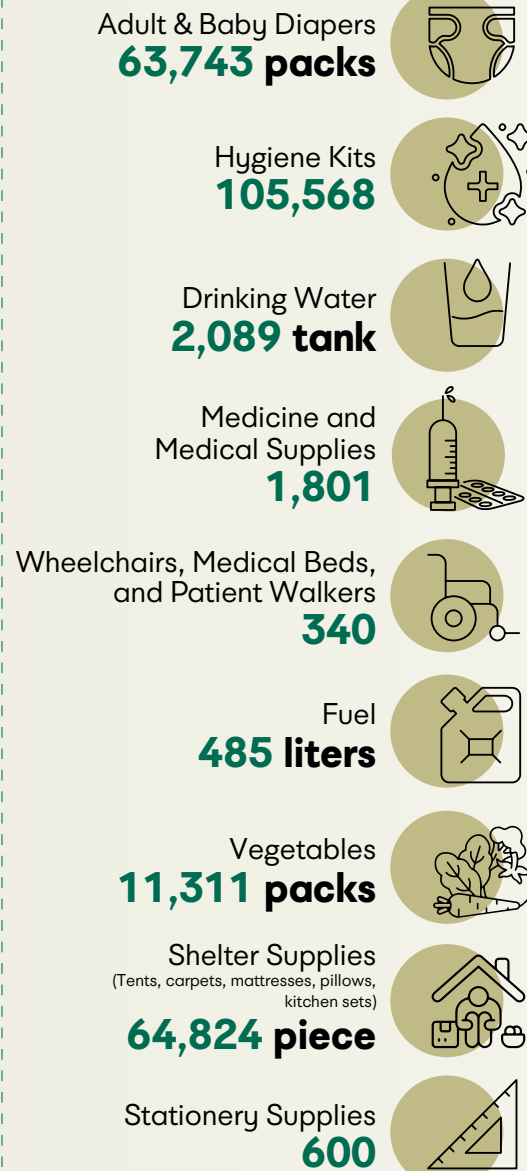


What is IHH doing?

Our Foundation has been continuously conducting humanitarian aid efforts through its Gaza office, which was established in 2009. Since the onset of the crisis, we have been delivering aid to the people of Gaza in every area, primarily food, healthcare, and shelter supplies.

We periodically transport aid materials sourced from Türkiye and other countries in the region to Gaza via Egypt or Jordan. Additionally, in collaboration with the UN, we distribute tens of thousand of hot meals and bread daily.

Aids



Our International Efforts

From Türkiye

In coordination with AFAD, we sent 40 truckloads of aid materials to Gaza. Of these trucks, 35 contained food, various clothing, hygiene products, and other essential supplies while 5 carried nine ambulances. With the support of our donors, we sent 252 truckloads of food, hygiene, and shelter aid by ship to the Port of Arish in Egypt for the people of Gaza. 133 trucks are waiting to enter Gaza. In collaboration with the Kuwaiti relief organization Kuwait Society for Relief, we sent 94 truckloads of food, shelter, and hygiene materials for the people of Gaza.

From Neighboring Countries

The aid supplies, consisting of 1 truckload of clothing, 1 truckload of blankets, and 21 truckloads of food—prepared and ready for dispatch—have been successfully delivered to Gaza. In addition, we have prepared 6 truckloads of hygiene kits, which are also set to be sent to Gaza. These aid materials are being transported to Gaza through neighboring countries.

In Gaza

As the IHH Gaza Representation, in cooperation with the WFP (World Food Program), we prepare 34,000 hot meals daily in our kitchens located in the south and north of Gaza, and distribute 9,100 bags of bread sourced from local bakeries to hospitals, UN-run schools, and shelters in the region.

We have sent a total of 458 truckloads of aid materials to Gaza. Of these, 290 trucks came from Türkiye, 45 from Egypt and 23 from Jordan. The majority of these trucks have reached Gaza while the others are waiting to enter.

WFP



WFP - IHH Collaboration

In January 2024, we, in cooperation with the UN-affiliated WFP, launched a project to distribute hot meals and bread in Gaza. Through this project, we deliver 34,000 hot meals and 9,100 bread packages daily to those in need. During the month of Ramadan, we increased the distribution of 50,000 hot meals daily.

In March 2024, we began distributing special food supplements to reduce health issues caused by malnutrition among pregnant and breastfeeding women and children under the age of five. Through the distribution of Lipid-Based Nutritional Supplements (LNS), we have reached approximately 60,000 pregnant and breastfeeding women and more than 150,000 children under five.

This project also includes the monthly distribution of ready-to-eat meals such as flour, date bars, and canned food to 50,000 families affected by attacks in the northern part of Gaza.

34,000 Hot Meals Daily

In 2016, with the establishment of our Mavi Marmara Martyrs Kitchen, we were distributing 3,000 hot meals daily to those in need in Gaza. After the attacks that began on October 7, 2023, the need for hot meals increased. When our kitchen was destroyed in the bombings, we set up mobile kitchens and began

distributing 34,000 hot meals daily to thousands of people sheltering in schools, hospitals, and camps. Since October 7, 2023, we have distributed a total of 12 million meals. In addition, in the northern region, we distribute 9,100 bags of bread every day.





Freedom Convoy for Palestine

In 2009, we joined the convoy departing from London to break the blockade Israel had imposed on Palestine, alongside hundreds of our volunteers from Türkiye. With dozens of vehicles, we first reached Syria, then Egypt. Despite all obstacles, we crossed through the Rafah Border Gate and entered Gaza. In November 2023, to protest Israel's continued attacks on Gaza and the support it receives from the United States, we set out from Istanbul to the Incirlik Air Base in Adana. Along the way, we met tens of thousands of Palestine supporters and called for a ceasefire in Gaza. Together with conscience-driven individuals from all over Türkiye, we protested Israel and its biggest ally, the United States, in front of Incirlik Air Base.

Demonstrations

In various cities across Türkiye, we have organized numerous demonstrations to raise the voice of Gaza and Palestine, draw attention to the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, and show that our people stand with the Palestinian people. Tens of thousands of conscientious individuals participated in our demonstrations, marching to make the voice of the Palestinian people heard worldwide. Since October 7, we have held hundreds of demonstrations across Türkiye.



Current situation in Gaza

Since October 7, 2023, the occupying Israeli regime has **killed 44,502 people** in its attacks on Gaza, including 17,492 children and 11,979 women, and **injured 105,454 others**.

December 3, 2024



A Crisis Out of Sight: SUDAN

Contents: **Eren Yeşilyurt**
Photography: **Mehmet Eren Metin**



Since April 15, 2023, clashes between the army and Rapid Support Forces in Sudan have left 25 million people, including 14 million children, in need of humanitarian aid. Hospitals, schools and infrastructure in the conflict zones have been severely damaged. This has further worsened the already difficult living conditions in the region.

While more than 3 million people have migrated to neighboring countries, 8.6 million people have been displaced within the country. Millions of people seeking refuge in tent camps, schools and hospital are trying to survive with the aid coming from outside. In regions with heavy migration, access to food, water, medicine and fuel has become increasingly difficult.

The aid with 204 containers by the Ships of Goodness

In 2023, over 500,000 people benefited from the 43 containers of aid sent to Sudan via two ships.

In October 2024, our Foundation, in collaboration with the Kuwaiti relief organization Kuwait Society for Relief (KSR), sent a ship carrying 150 containers (2,422 tons) of humanitarian aid to Sudan. The aid, which will benefit 1.5 million people, includes essential food, health, shelter, and hygiene supplies. In addition, in July, we supported the ship sent under the coordination of AFAD with 7 containers of aid materials. We also sent 4 containers of wheat seeds to support farmers.

Through our IHH Sudan Representation, we have delivered urgent aid to various regions of Sudan since the first day of the conflict, and our efforts are going.

IN 2023



IHH

43 Containers

IN 2024



IHH

4 Containers



With AFAD

7 Containers



With KSR

150 Containers



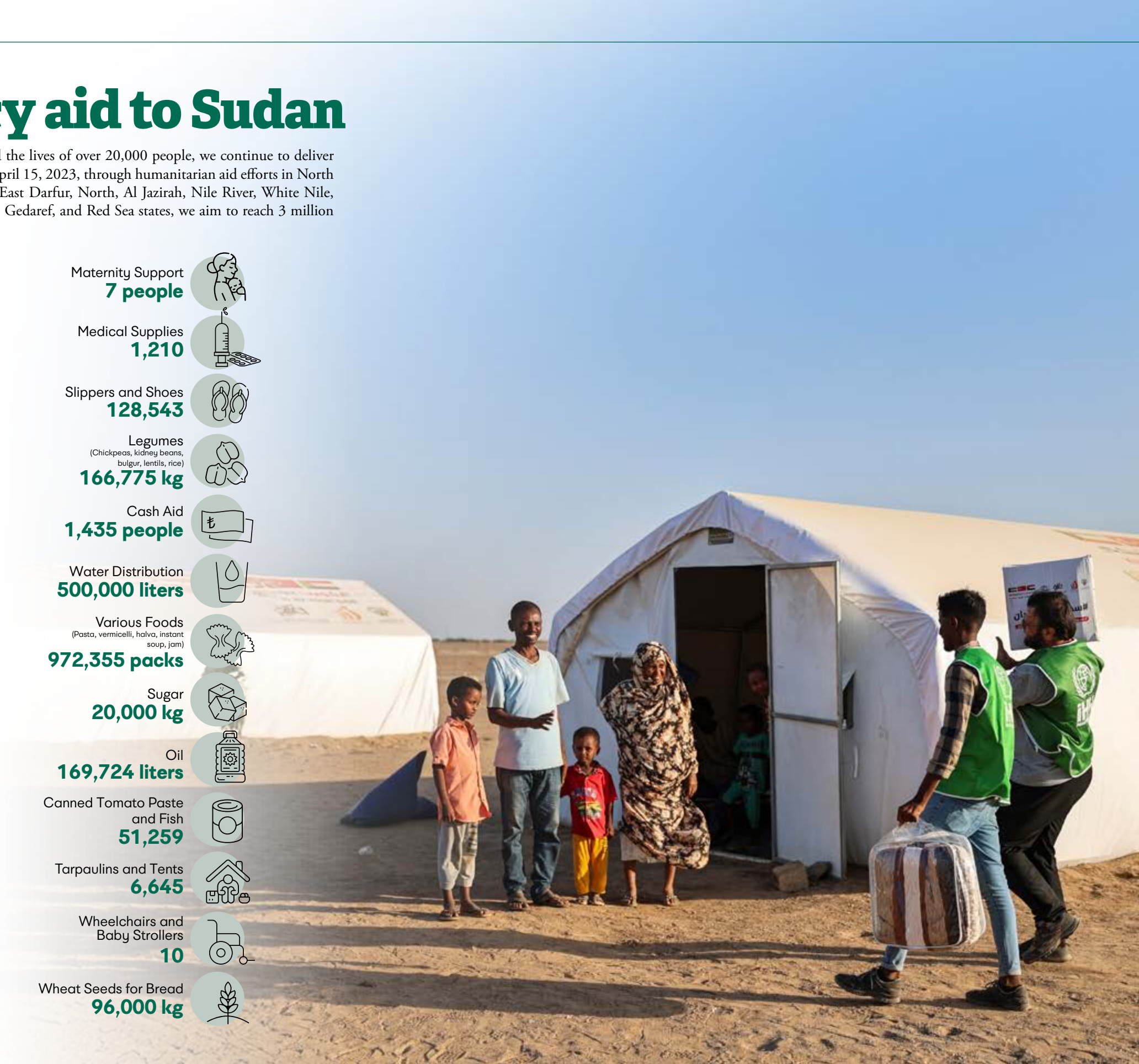
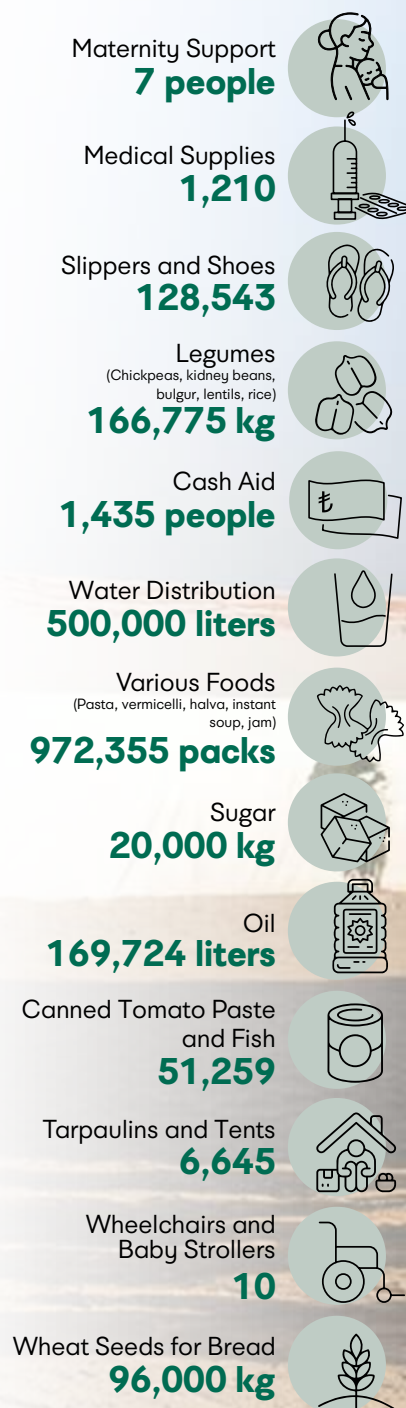
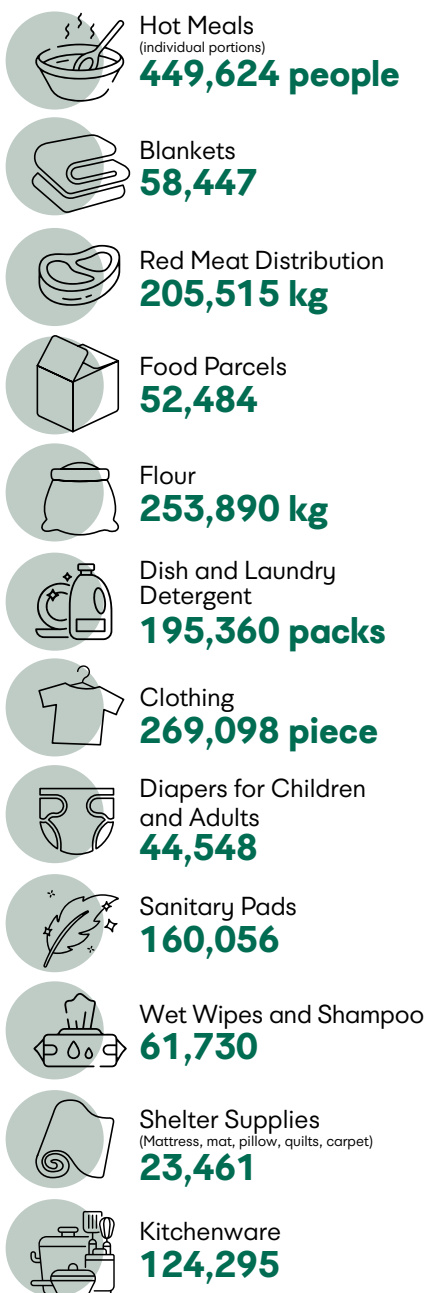
Total

204 Containers

Emergency aid to Sudan

Due to the civil war, which has claimed the lives of over 20,000 people, we continue to deliver aid to Sudan with your support. Since April 15, 2023, through humanitarian aid efforts in North Darfur, Central Darfur, South Darfur, East Darfur, North, Al Jazirah, Nile River, White Nile, Blue Nile, Khartoum, North Kordofan, Gedaref, and Red Sea states, we aim to reach 3 million people.

Aids



Relief Ships Heal Wounds

Mehmet Eren Metin

Sudan, 2024

Since the civil war began on April 15, 2023, Sudan has been experiencing the largest displacement crisis in the world, with approximately 12 million people forced to flee their homes. This figure represents 30% of the country's population. As a result of the ongoing conflict, more than 20,000 people have lost their lives, and 25 million are now in need of humanitarian assistance.

We traveled to Sudan as a four-person team to deliver the aid materials sent by our Foundation to those in need.

Displaced families have been moving to safer areas, taking refuge in schools, hospitals, and tent camps. However, the sheer scale of displacement means that even reaching a camp does not guarantee immediate shelter. In most tents, two or three families share the same space, and some family members are forced to sleep outside.

For one month, we visited those in need across Port Sudan, Kassala, Gedaref, Atbara, and the Northern States. Many had fled their homes months earlier, and numerous families had been separated along the way. Malnutrition and overcrowded, unsanitary conditions have led to the outbreak of disease. In regions with large influxes of displaced people, access to clean water is severely limited, leaving many to drink contaminated water just to survive.

Atbara is one of the areas receiving the highest number of migrants. Officials reported that around 5 million people have sought refuge in the region. In one of the camps there, we met 97-year-old Aunt Shammet. She shared her recent experiences with us in her own words:

"First, they poisoned our water with chemicals. Then they attacked our village and killed my neighbors. We had no choice but to flee. At my age, I had to walk barefoot along thorn-covered roads. Some of us fell ill and died along the way. Our children were left orphaned."

Our mission was to deliver the aid sent by generous donors from Türkiye through IHH to hundreds of thousands of people like Aunt Shammet—because millions of people here survive solely on external assistance. The joy our presence brought was immeasurable.

We saw this joy in the face of Unnab, a young girl who had taken refuge in the courtyard of a school in Port Sudan with her mother and siblings. She told us:

"We've been living in this schoolyard for three months. When the war started, my father put us in a car, but he couldn't come with us. A few days later, we arrived here. When it rains heavily, our bedding gets soaked and we can't sleep. My mom said she'll cook a nice meal tonight with the supplies you brought in the box. You came all the way here for us—thank you so much." We sincerely hope she will be reunited with her father very soon.



Emergency Aid to LEBANON

In Lebanon, a country that has been struggling with economic and political crises for years, living conditions worsened significantly due to Israeli attacks that began in the south of the country in October 2023. Approximately 4,000 people lost their lives in these attacks, and more than 16,000 were injured. Tens of thousands of families living in southern Lebanon were forced to leave their homes, seeking refuge in schools, sports halls, and with relatives.

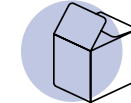
The Israeli attacks destroyed over 40,000 homes and damaged 69,000 others. In Lebanon with a population of 5.3 million, approximately 30% of the population — 1.9 million people — were displaced due to the attacks. Access to basic needs such as food, healthcare, and shelter became increasingly difficult due to large-scale displacement. With the arrival of winter, the humanitarian situation in the country has become even more critical.

What is IHH doing in Lebanon?

We are delivering food, shelter, and hygiene supplies to those in need across various regions of Lebanon. In collaboration with nine NGOs, our Foundation has sent a humanitarian aid ship carrying 1,000 tons of relief materials to Lebanon. The aid includes food, healthcare supplies, shelter materials, clothing, and search-and-rescue equipment, benefiting tens of thousands of people.



Hot meals
2,051 individuals



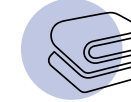
Food parcels
188,785



Various food items
408,244



Obligatory sacrifice
7,987 share



Blankets
22,702



Foam mattresses
27,043



Stoves
1,414



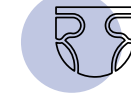
Various textiles
(clothes, underwear, socks, slippers)
256,249 items



Fuel
38,394 liter



Soup kitchen
4,000 hot meals daily



Adult & baby diapers
9,978



Various hygiene products
188,719



Fire truck
1

Aid deliveries between October 7, 2023 - November 12, 2024

During the 2024 Ramadan journey,



we reached

4 million 290 thousand people

in 62 countries, including Türkiye.



250,200

1 million 248 thousand people benefited from 250,200 food packages.



20,912

We handed over zakat, fitrah and fidyah donations to 20,912 families in need.



2 million

We distributed hot meals for 2 million people in Gaza.



945,677

We distributed iftar and suhoor meals for 945,677 people.



50,310

We gifted Eid clothes to 50,310 orphans and children in need.



Ramadan in Latin America

e Mehmet Çelik, 2024

For IHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation, Ramadan and Sacrifice periods are seen as an opportunity to bring places closer,

to remember, and to remind. During this Ramadan, I was assigned the South America mission. Most people in our country have limited knowledge about the region, mainly based on what is shown in TV series and news.

The total population of the Latin America region, which includes 20 countries, is 650 million. Muslims make up approximately 6 million of this number. Therefore, the religious practices, timeframes, and activities that are ingrained in our culture and familiar to us hold very different meanings for Muslims here. In the daily lives of these communities, the visibility of Islam, the month of Ramadan, and the holidays in television, social activities, and public life is quite limited. As a result, Muslims consider these time periods as opportunities to come together, strengthen their bonds, renew themselves, and preserve their culture.

I am very excited about my Ramadan journey to Cuba, Peru, Ecuador, and Colombia. Together with my friend Mariglen, the Coordinator of the Europe and America Unit, we will share in the joy of Ramadan with Muslims who live as a minority in these four countries. We will visit the tables of those in need, offer our greetings from our homeland.

After 10 years, I'm excited to return to Cuba. I'm curious to see how the country has changed. During this time, we lost Yahya Pedro, a leading figure among Cuban Muslims, founder of the Cuban Islamic Association and a key person in building mosques and connecting Muslims Cuba, South America, and around the world. As I hadn't seen him in years, this trip felt a bit sad for me.

One the first day of Ramadan, we arrived in Havana, the capital. Aquli, the director of our partner organization, Liga Islamica, welcomed us. We didn't have much time. So, as soon as we left the airport, we went to the historic Abdullah Mosque. There, we discussed the products we need for food packages and how to procure them as quickly as possible. Talking about finding and sourcing products might seem unusual, but as many know, Cuba faces a heavy U.S. embargo. Beyond the gradual decline of the country's economic system, the economic crisis that shook much of the world after the pandemic is felt even more deeply here. Even before these challenges, the embargo had already limited the variety

of products in the country, making it difficult to secure items in the desired quantities. That's why we prepare the food packages for those in need with extra care.

Mosques and prayer halls in regions where Muslims live as a minority often serve as centers for meetings, weddings, and social and cultural activities. After quickly bringing the supplies we had gathered to the mosque, we worked together to organize and prepare them. We delivered the food packages to those in need before the first iftar. This small but meaningful act of solidarity, carried out from thousands of kilometers away, strengthens the bonds of brotherhood among Muslims and contributes to their unity.

"Due to the embargo, the pandemic and unemployment, the situation of those in need has worsened in recent years. Some are suffering from diseases caused by malnutrition. Thanks to the food packages you've distributed, hundreds of people will not only have a more comfortable Ramadan but also feel that they are not alone," said our guide, Aquil. With the goal of sharing and providing relief to those in need, we completed our first mission on this journey.

The days passed quickly. And it was time to say goodbye to Cuba. Leaving a quieter and more subdued Cuba compared to my visit 10 years ago, and without being able to see Yahya Pedro, deeply saddened me. With teary eyes and long embraces, we bid farewell to our hosts and guides, who are brothers and sisters who may be geographically distant but whose hearts beat in unison with ours.

We were heading to Peru to continue our Ramadan activities. The month of Ramadan, after five years, was an opportunity to reunite with our brothers and sisters here. The short breaks between preparing and distributing food packages became moments to catch up with our brothers and sisters, to be remembered, and to remind each other. In Peru, the beautiful people who greeted us with their smiles and a few words in Turkish took away our fatigue.

The building where we distributed the food packages is actually a mosque. Its spacious garden comes alive every evening with iftar gatherings. There are also a few small classrooms where various lessons are taught. A representative from our partner organization mentioned that the building no longer meets their needs and that they want to build a new mosque. They also plan to renovate the current building and transform it into a facility that can provide education from kindergarten to high school. One of the biggest challenges for Muslims living here as a minority is the lack of schools offering Islamic education for their children. We encourage them to share their plans and projects with us.

Following the productive work in Lima, the capital of Peru, our next stop was Ecuador. Here, we met a dear friend, someone I can even call my spiritual father, Yahya Suquillo. Like the late Yahya Pedro in Cuba, he is one of the pioneering Muslims who left a mark on his country. During the nearly three years I lived in Colombia, he was a valuable friend with whom I consulted and received support on many matters. He embraced Islam in the 1980s. Later, he played a key role in opening the first mosque in the country. He is like an elderly brother or father to almost every Muslim in Ecuador, tirelessly working to solve their problems. He is a dedicated individual whose name appears on the list of the world's 500 most influential Muslims. Both of his daughters studied in Türkiye and are passionate admirers of Türkiye. When we visited his home, the models of Istanbul

mosques, keepsakes, and souvenirs related to Türkiye placed in every corner of the living room immediately catch the eye.

Despite being unwell, he is kind enough to come to the airport to welcome us. As our time was limited, we immediately went for food shopping for the packages to be distributed here. We went to the selected stores based on Uncle Yahya's meticulous research, finalized the checks and purchased the groceries. Since iftar time was approaching, we went to the Selam Mosque. Here, we reunited with old friends and met new ones, making our iftar gathering meaningful and full of blessings in every way. After iftar, as we delivered the food packages to those in need, we could feel how much it means to them that we traveled from afar to offer support.

Here, we met a few young people I had previously met in Colombia, as well as others who have come from Costa Rica and Argentina to study. While traveling across different South American countries during Ramadan, the chance to talk with youth from places we couldn't visit becomes a special blessing of our journey. And once again, it was time to say goodbye. Farewells have always been difficult for me. With teary eyes and warm embraces, we parted ways, accompanied by prayers to meet again soon.

We were at the final stop of our Ramadan journey in Latin America. We were in Medellín, Colombia, which could also be considered my hometown. Having spent nearly three years here carrying out the Foundation's projects and developing new ones, this country holds a special place in my heart. As I landed at the airport after a year and a half of absence, and as the city lights began to appear from above, I felt like I've never left while passing through the familiar streets and neighborhoods. This city, where I lived with my family, has given me beautiful memories and friendships, in contrast to the negative image often portrayed in TV shows and news in my country.

We quickly headed to our accommodation as we would be leaving early in the morning for

food and iftar preparations. In the morning, we met with our hosts here, Aziz and Farid, and with their help, we easily completed our food package preparations. Aziz is a brother from Konya who has been living here for many years. He always supports us while carrying out IHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation's aid projects.

As we delivered the food packages to those in need, one of the pioneers of Colombian Muslims, Ahmed Hoca, visited us. Despite his old age and health issues, he joined us in our work. "Your support and not forgetting us, your brothers thousands of kilometers away, are very precious to us," he said.

Our Ramadan journey came to an end here. Although their life, culture, and customs in Cuba, Peru, Ecuador, and Colombia are very different from ours, we came together with thousands of our brothers and sisters, sharing the same excitement and emotions in the spirit of Ramadan. Far from our country, we delivered the charitable donations of generous people to those in need. We once again witnessed how small things can have much greater impacts than we initially thought. The true meaning of these sincere journeys to various parts of the world will be revealed to us in due time, by Allah's will. We believe that the reward for good deeds will be much greater than we expect.

With gratitude for being among those who can express thanks for being the means of these efforts, we praise Allah for bringing distant places close and hearts together. May Allah be pleased with the benefactors.



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A Visit That Left a Mark on My Life

When we slaughtered our Kurban and set out for distribution, it was the hottest hours of the day in Tanzania. When I first saw Aunt Ayşe, who greeted us with a smile at the door, I didn't know that she would leave a deep mark on me. She had lost her husband and children and was living alone in a one-room hut made of mud. Sometimes, she spends days without eating anything. "The only days I get to eat meat are the days when guests like you come, she said. After kissing her hand and congratulating her on the holiday, we parted ways with smiles on our faces. I still pray for her when I think of her.

Emre Sarıca
Tanzania, 2024

What Did We Do During the Orphan Solidarity Days?

During the 12th Orphan Solidarity Days, held in 2023, we carried out **129 projects** in **23 countries**, including Türkiye. We reached out to the lives of orphans, extending from Africa to the Balkans, from Asia to the Middle East.



Turnkey happiness

We were in Pakistan to carry out the projects planned for the Orphan Solidarity Days and to touch the lives of orphans and their families. With the support of generous donors, we went to Peshawar to open a grocery store prepared for an orphan family. The daughter in law of the mother of the orphan who would run the store greeted us with a baby in her arms. When we asked who the four-year-old child standing beside her was, she said he was her son. Later, we learned that the child was an orphan who had lost his parents. Despite living in difficult conditions, they had taken another orphan under their care and made him part of their family, which deeply touched us. After the opening, it was worth everything to see the excitement and joy on their faces as they received the grocery store, a dream they had longed for. This grocery store became a hope for the future of an orphan family.

Arife Çiftçi

Pakistan, 2023



The Unseen Dimensions of Sudan's Civil War

By Dr. Serhat Orakçı

According to Foreign Affairs magazine, in the coming months, up to 2.5 million people in Sudan could face starvation. For the past 18 months, the country has been gripped by intense conflict, giving rise to a humanitarian catastrophe of staggering proportions. If urgent action is not taken and the fighting continues, displaced Sudanese will be left confronting a disaster even more severe than the one they currently endure.

The alarm bells have been ringing for months. Sudan is now witnessing the largest displacement crisis in the world. Although the war between the national army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) has been ongoing for over a year and a half,

humanitarian corridors remain closed, and aid cannot reach the affected areas.

The statistics paint a dire picture. Around 12 million Sudanese have been forced to flee their homes—either displaced internally or having crossed borders into neighboring countries. More than 25 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance. Compounding the crisis is the complete collapse of the country's health and education systems. Hospitals are no longer functional.

What threatens to worsen the humanitarian disaster in the months ahead is the blow sustained by Sudan's agricultural sector. The Nile Valley, especially the regions of Al Jazirah and Sennar—once the country's

breadbasket—has become a target of heavy assaults. As a result, many farmers have been displaced from their lands. According to statements from Agricultural Unions, there has been a staggering 72% decline in the cultivation and harvesting of farmlands. This drop not only fuels astronomical price increases but also renders access to food nearly impossible. In other words, famine looms over Sudan.

Famines in Africa, often resulting from food shortages, have previously led to mass casualties. In Somalia, the last major famine claimed the lives of at least 250,000 people, including many children, while hundreds of thousands were forced to seek refuge in camps. Sudan now stands on the brink of a similar catastrophe. Yet, organizations such as the UN, which have the capacity to prevent such disasters, remain largely ineffective. Forced displacement has become a tragic norm in Sudan. Communities under attack flee to safer areas, only to be uprooted again when those places come under threat. Recent offensives have triggered mass migrations to relatively secure cities like Al-Qadarif, Damazin, and Kassala.

The country's infrastructure lies in ruins. Airports have been bombed, and access to electricity and clean water is a luxury. For many young Sudanese, taking up arms seems to be the only option. Both the RSF and the army compete for dominance by recruiting youth into their ranks, fueling further polarization within society.

One of the most heartbreaking aspects of this conflict is the fragmentation of families. Those able to escape to neighboring countries such as Egypt, Ethiopia, South Sudan, and Chad consider themselves fortunate. But inside Sudan, countless people are taking refuge in schools, while others, unable to find space, rely on the goodwill of extended family or acquaintances. Although traditional systems of mutual aid help keep communities afloat, the burden grows heavier each day.

Sudan is grappling with humanitarian disaster, state collapse, and mass displacement. In a country where formal governance has failed, social bonds remain the only glue holding society together—but for how long? As hope dwindles, humanitarian organizations like IHH, which continue to provide relief amid immense hardship, play an essential role. Still, the scale and depth of the crisis demand a coordinated global response. Diplomatic mediation and emergency aid are urgently needed.

In the meantime, the involvement of external actors—such as the United Arab Emirates and the Wagner Group—continues to escalate the conflict. Sudan now finds itself at a historic crossroads, engulfed in a crisis unlike anything it has previously experienced. Two armed factions, neither able to decisively defeat the other, are ruthlessly vying for power. In the chaos, Sudan's rich gold resources are being plundered by foreign interests.

In short, as the elephants fight, it is the innocent people of Sudan who are being trampled.

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