

Hearts and Prayers

were with Refugees
this Ramadan.





Dear supporters,

On behalf of all of us at UNHCR, I would like to thank you for your generous and unwavering support to the refugee cause over the past challenging winter period.

It is heart-warming to be reminded that after eight years into the Syria crisis, we can count on individuals such as yourself advocating for those who have been caught up in the aftermath of conflicts around us.

The refugee situation we are experiencing in the Middle East has transformed the region on multiple levels, and in many instances, those receiving the displaced, have also had to struggle with its widespread impact. Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Iraq, and Egypt have collectively received millions of refugees, and while they have received substantial support, the pressing needs, 8 years on, continue to outpace the resources available.

UNHCR has touched the lives of 3.5 million vulnerable Syrian, Iraqi refugee and displaced families with vital winter aid across Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt. These are the real heroes, living through the dawning of an uncertain future with hopeful thinking, resilience and an unflinching will to survive. We cannot provide this protection and assistance, however, without the support of all concerned.

The role of the private sector, combined with the generosity of the hosting countries, and the support of the international community, is the token of hope that refugees desperately need to stand on their own feet. In the absence of immediate political solutions to the multiple crises facing the region, we must continue to collectively reach out in solidarity and to each play our complementary role.

We extend our deep appreciation to you for standing by the most vulnerable, and look forward to continuing this humanitarian mission together, until the families who depend on us are able to live safe and dignified lives, and long term solutions are found to their plight.

Best regards,

Amin Awad
Director
Middle East and North Africa Bureau
UNHCR

This Ramadan, we asked you to answer the simple prayers of refugee and displaced families who observed the holy month, unable to go home.

And you responded!

“ The best thing is that we received the cash assistance two days before Eid, which was great. I was so happy that I secured these small gifts for my daughters so they can be happy during Eid like any other kid.

Um Joudi, a Syrian refugee widow.

Thanks to your incredible kindness, we are able to offer an extra helping hand to the most vulnerable families throughout Ramadan – allowing them to have enough food and clean water to break their fasts with ease. You also gave families memories to cherish despite everything; thousands of parents were able to cook their children’s favourite food and buy them new clothes to celebrate Eid.

With all the support gathered, we were able to secure survival funds for as many as 4,882 families that would keep a roof over their heads and food on the table for an entire year.

From Syria to Rohingya, Iraq to Yemen, all the way to Mali, refugee and displaced families received that little extra care, even in such uncertain times.



ROHINGYA CRISIS

Your Impact on the Ground



The camps that spread across the Cox's Bazaar region of Bangladesh are today home to more than 723,000 Rohingya refugees. Though the situation in the camps has improved dramatically since the outbreak of the crisis in August 2017 – with new, safe shelters, infrastructure improvements and essential facilities – there is still great work to be done. And urgently, as their future and return to Myanmar remains uncertain, these thousands of families are forced to rely on humanitarian aid in order to survive.

It may sound simple... but small changes make a huge difference to those in need!

In addition to the provision of basic daily necessities this Ramadan, among which shelter repairs, and the supply of clean water and food were constant, with the help of your Zakat funds, we were able to secure cooking gas and stoves to thousands of families in the camps. Can you imagine Ramadan without being able to cook? But through a simple change, **you gave refugee families the chance to prepare hot meals for Iftar and Eid, a gift that will keep giving well into the future.**

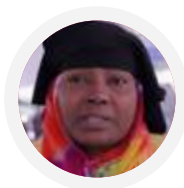


Previously, Rohingya refugees collected wood from the surrounding forests near to the camps in order to cook their meals. With so many people in need, the daily requirement of firewood was 730 tonnes a day, an area equivalent to at least four football fields. These overwhelming numbers reveal a practice that presented a problem on almost every level: negatively impacting the environment, community health, flood control, development, and most significantly putting the safety of women and children at risk.

“We had to collect firewood.” One mother of five told us about the daily trek of several kilometers. **“It took us the whole day. It is dangerous. I was scared every time, every day.”**

Through the Refugee Zakat fund, we were able to support the Rohingya refugees to honour their Ramadan traditions away from home. With the help of your Zakat funds we provided liquefied petroleum gas and cooking stoves to the most vulnerable refugee families this Ramadan, especially the families of widows, elderlies, and those supporting orphans.

“Even if we haven’t enough food, we cannot stop fasting. We will observe Ramadan with whatever we have at home.”



Layla,
Rohingya refugee and community
leader in the camps.



With your amazing support and the work of our staff on the ground, we were also able to organize a series of community iftars for Rohingya refugees and the local hosting community in Bangladesh to come together and celebrate their shared faith.

“We are from Myanmar and having Iftar with Bangladeshi families is amazing. It makes us really happy and proud.” One Rohingya refugee at the iftar told us.

YEMEN CRISIS

You made it a Happy Eid



You made it a happy Eid for hundreds of displaced Yemeni families. “I will wear my Eid clothes and go around the tents to get Eid treats”. A Yemeni child told us a few days before Ramadan.

You answered our call to help displaced Yemeni families, and we can't thank you enough. We are very happy to know that the prolonged crisis and suffering in Yemen has not been forgotten, and that people who care are still committed to making a difference.

With your donations, we were able to meet the needs of 4,566 of the most vulnerable displaced Yemenis for an entire year. This promise does not just last for a day or two, but the families you've supported today feel safe and secure: because they know that they can promise food and a safe temporary home for their children well into the future.

Cash assistance has been judged as one of the most effective and dignified ways to help refugee and displaced communities, and in Yemen this is all the more urgent. Families received critical cash support before the Eid celebration, making these important days both easier and even more special. Together with our partners on the ground, we distributed children's clothing and shoes to hundreds of children as Eid gifts, including Ghareeb and Hamdah pictures above, who live in the Kharif settlement in Amran governorate, West Yemen.

For the hope, the smiles, and the prayers answered, we thank you.

SYRIA CRISIS

Still waiting but never forgotten



Syrian refugee and displaced families approach almost a decade of living with crisis, loss, extreme hardship and heartache. As the years go by, without an end in sight, finding the means to survive is only getting harder, while public support is dwindling. I can't tell you enough what your support means to these families today, and especially in Ramadan.

Your reactions to those in need brought tears to my eyes. Hundreds of people reached out to see if they could help refugee families more concretely, to sponsor a child or family, or asked how they can do more to lighten their burden this Ramadan.



“ Without cash assistance, we’d be living on the streets.

Abu Mohammed,
80-year-old Syrian refugee in Jordan.

Thanks to you, we secured essential support for 4,181 of the most vulnerable Syrian refugees in Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt, as well as those displaced inside Syria. We were able to promise the basic things – so precious yet so often taken for granted – shelter, food, water, medicine – to those who wouldn’t be able to make it alone.



“ I will cook today’s Iftar for 25 members of my family with this new kitchen set I received.

Um Mahmoud.

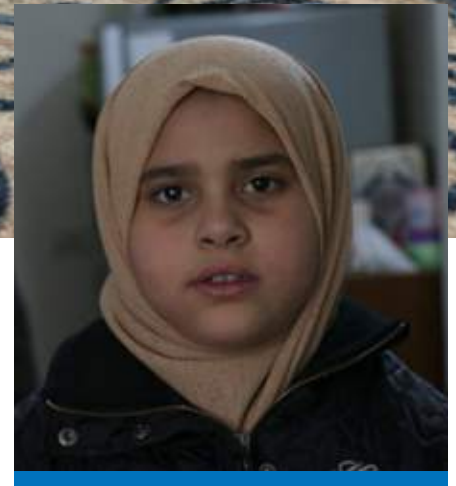
Um Mahmoud had tears of happiness in her eyes when she opened the package delivered by UNHCR during the holy month of Ramadan.



Um Joudi



Joudi

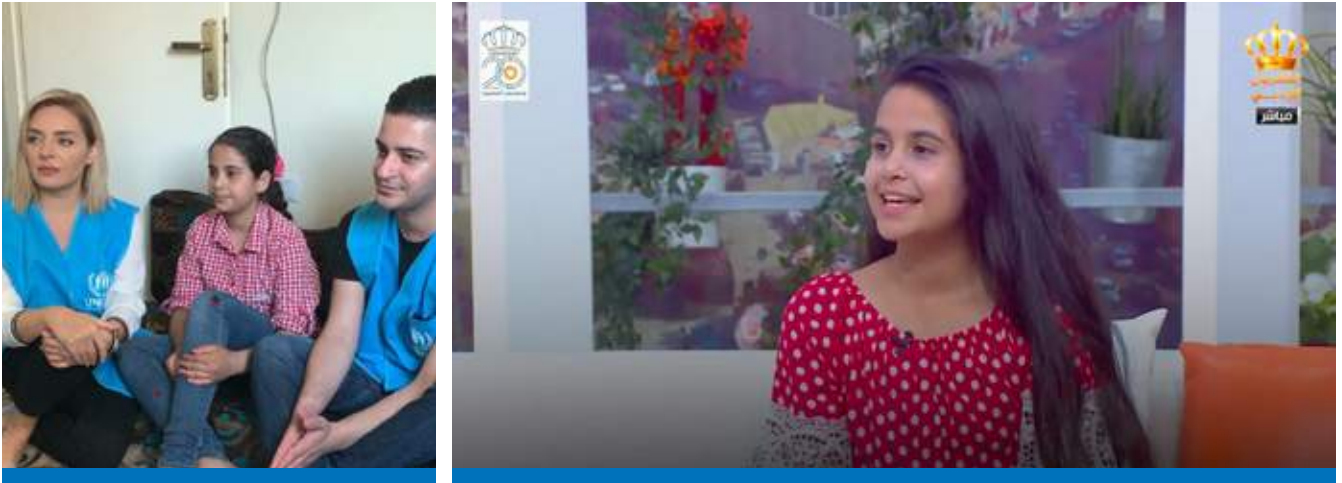


Lojayn

We also wanted to share with you the story of Um Joudi this Ramadan. A family now safe from danger, and through your support, looking towards the future with hope.

Through your generous donations, Um Joudi, a 27-year-old widow and single parent to two little girls, Joudi and Lojayn, can rest assured knowing that her children have a safe space to sleep in for a whole year.

The family fled Syria following the **death of the girls' father** and took refuge in Jordan where they live today, **relying on the monthly cash allowance** to make ends meet.



Thanks to your support, the girls attend school, have enough food and water to stay healthy, and importantly: they are positive and hopeful. They also enjoyed Ramadan this year.

“This Ramadan gave us hope to continue with our lives. We felt that there are still good people around that support us.” Um Joudi said.

The girls and their mother told us that this year, they were able to enjoy their favorite meals such as Warah Dawali (Grape leaves stuffed with meat and rice) and Kabseh (Rice with chicken)... And on Eid, Um Joudi bought both of her daughters a new outfit.

“But our best memory was when UNHCR and the celebrities visited us at home during Ramadan and we all felt like one family. We also went to an Iftar gathering with other refugees families... my daughters just had so much fun with other kids around. That day was amazing and full of hope! Most importantly it drew big smiles on my daughters’ faces”.

We also made the dream of a little girl come true. Joudi told us that she wants to be a TV presenter, and here at UNCHR we have no doubt that she can make it. After celebrities visited their family during Ramadan, they started to make this dream a reality! Above is a photograph of Joudi presenting live on Jordan TV.

From all of us here at UNHCR, thank you for always being there for refugees.

Before we go... With Love

Here are some of the beautiful **prayers** Rohingya refugees shared with us – for you - this Ramadan



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“We pray for the people of Bangladesh because they gave us a land to live in, we also pray for the organizations helping us; we pray that we go back home, we really hope for that, Assalam alykum.”

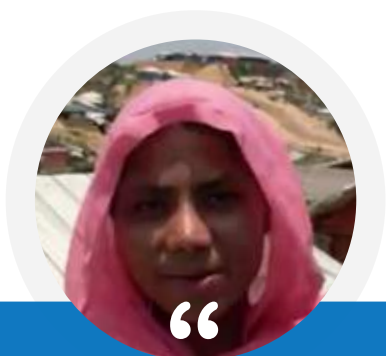
Mohammed,
A refugee volunteer in Kutupalong refugee settlement.



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“I pray to God so that He may help the Rohingya community, to go home in safety and in good health.”

Sariful Islam,
Humanitarian worker at Kutupalong Refugee settlement.



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“I pray to God that the heat reduces. Also, I pray more that we go back home to Myanmar, and live peacefully.”

Janara Begum's,
Rohingya refugee.



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“Every day we cry and pray to God, we seek safety and peace from him. And I express my gratefulness. I wish for more wealth to the people giving money and support to us. May God bless you with more and better food.”

Layla,
Chosen by Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh as a community leader.



Thank You.