



**THE ROLE OF ISLAMIC SOCIAL FINANCING
IN ACHIEVING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS DIALOGUE
SEMINAR DISCUSSIONS**

Topic	UNHCR's Refugee Zakat Fund
Seminar Lead/Support	UNHCR - Shadi Ghrawi
Language	English (with translation)
Summary	The Seminar will present UNHCR's best practices in Islamic Philanthropy (IP) for the benefit of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), in particular its successful experience with the launch in 2019 of the Refugee Zakat Fund, a trusted, compliant and effective distributor harnessing the power of Zakat to transform the lives of refugees and IDPs, including in hard-to-reach areas. Supporting over 1 million beneficiaries the first year of its launch, the Fund supported over 2 million refugees and IDPs in 2020. With 85% of the \$110+ million raised coming from institutional donors, the Fund showcases the core proposition of building sustainable partnerships with IP stakeholders to maximize the humanitarian impact of IP. Partnerships are key to the humanitarian response to displacement crisis, in a time when 1% of humanity has been displaced, a scale that goes beyond the capacity of any individual organization or country to deal with. These partnerships are the result of demonstrated trust in UNHCR's approach to governance and infrastructure, from collection to distribution, in addition to UNHCR's expanding Zakat distribution network, currently spanning more than 10 priority countries of operation for UNHCR including Yemen, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Mauritania, Jordan, Lebanon, and Iraq.
Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UN agencies - International/ local NGOs - Family and corporate foundations - Islamic economy businesses - Zakat organizations - Islamic financial institutions
Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discover UNHCR's platform for channeling IP funds to the world's most vulnerable refugees and IDPs, the Refugee Zakat Fund 2. Understand best practices for multi-lateral organizations in launching successful IP programmes and initiatives 3. Examine the role and impact of Islamic Social Finance including Zakat in meeting the urgent needs of the most vulnerable displaced populations

1. Background Information

With more than 60% of displaced populations, including refugees and IDPs, coming from member states of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), UNHCR identified a strategic and long-term alignment between Islamic philanthropy, in particular Zakat, and the humanitarian needs of forcibly displaced people. In 2019, UNHCR launched the [Refugee Zakat Fund](#), a trusted, compliant, and effective distribution mechanism that aims to harness the power of Zakat to transform the lives of the most vulnerable refugee and internally displaced families. Through the Fund, these vulnerable



families, including women and children, are primarily supported with cash assistance to cover necessary expenses such as rent, food, healthcare, and debt repayment. Cash assistance has been particularly impactful amid the global COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns. In some specific cases, Zakat may also be distributed in the form of in-kind assistance, such as core relief items, and hygiene, shelter, or education kits.

With its capacity to assist 2.2 million refugees and IDPs in 2020, the sustainable engagement of foundations, Islamic financial institutions, and philanthropists is crucial for maximizing the humanitarian impact of IP in general, and Zakat in particular. Beyond contributing to growing awareness on displacement among Islamic finance and philanthropy actors around the world, the Fund, through facilitating a platform for strategic collaboration, presents an opportunity to realize the SDGs through Islamic social finance, especially after the addition of the indicator framework on refugees, and the relevance of Zakat to poverty alleviation and livelihoods. Through cooperation with UNHCR, corporations, government agencies and foundations can capitalize on UNHCR's efficiency through the 100% Zakat distribution policy, large distribution network and strong governance, to strategically channel IP funds to address immediate and longer-term humanitarian needs of refugees, IDPs, and host communities, including in programmes related education, healthcare, shelter, livelihoods, access to clean water, and cash assistance.

2. Agenda/Format

A 1.5-hour moderated discussion, followed by a 20-30 minute Q&A session.

		Speaker
3min	Welcome	<i>Moderator - Raefah Makki, Head of Campaign and Advocacy, UNHCR</i>
10min	Presentation of UNHCR's Refugee Zakat Fund - History - Best practices - Impact	<i>Khaled Khalifa, Senior Advisor and Representative to the Gulf Cooperation Council Countries, UNHCR</i>
15min	Supporting refugees and IDPs through Islamic social finance/ Zakat	<i>Shaykh Omar Subedar, Chief Operations Officer, Halal Monitoring Authority (Canada)</i>
15min	The role of scholars and Islamic institutions in promoting the use of Zakat funds for the humanitarian response to the displacement crisis	<i>H.E. Prof. Dr. Koutoub Moustapha Sano, Secretary-General, International Islamic Fiqh Academy</i>
35min	Discussion	<i>Lead by the Moderator</i>
2min	Closing	<i>Moderator</i>

3. Additional Information

[UNHCR's Refugee Zakat Fund Website](#)



DIALOGUE ON
**ISLAMIC SOCIAL
FINANCING**
AND THE SDGS



UNHCR's Islamic Philanthropy Reports
UNHCR's Refugee Zakat Fund Fatwas