



Partnership

WITH THE NEEDY

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BOSNIA ■ BOSNIA ■ BOSNIA ■ BOSNIA

Building peace and justice in Bosnia

Islamic Relief has enabled 260 Bosnian families to return to their former villages in the Zvornik/Srebrenica region in north-east Bosnia

The Srebrenica and Zvornik municipalities witnessed the worst murder of Bosnian civilians by Serb Paramilitaries during the vicious Bosnian war, which ended in 1995. The most infamous incident was the deliberate killing of over 7000 Bosnian men who had sought shelter in the UN compound near Srebrenica town. Thousands are still missing from the war, buried in anonymous graves in the woods and fields of the hills around. The area, which borders Serbia, formerly had a 70% Bosnian population which was completely driven out, whole villages being burned or destroyed and mosques blown up.

Still today the whole region is littered with these destroyed buildings, and Bosnian villages have been overtaken by forest growth as the land reverts to wilderness. Serbs driven from the Federation areas now live in the few Bosnian houses still standing, mainly in urban areas. Hundreds of thousands of Bosnian refugees from the area

still live in refugee camps and temporary accommodation in the Federation area, mainly around Tuzla. Most of them are waiting for security to return so they can return to their land and property. They also need help to rebuild and repair their houses and restock their small farms. All their wealth was either lost, stolen or spent in reaching exile.

In a clear sign that the reconciliation process between the Serb and Bosnian communities is beginning to make some headway, over 2400 Bosnian households have begun to repair their homes and resettle villages in the Srebrenica and Zvornik Region. The previous opposition by Serb authorities to Bosnian return has been broken down by extensive powers given to the Office of the Higher Representative (OHR), including the removal of anti-Dayton administrations and uncooperative Police chiefs, a fact which has contributed to the sudden reversal of Serb attitude towards Bosnian return to eastern Republika Serbska.

When the increased security



Mirsad Okic and his family have returned to their home in the Dulici village of Zvornik municipality. Their house is undergoing extensive repairs with help from Islamic Relief staff Sikander Ali and Mostafa Osman



Houses repaired by Islamic Relief, in the Hajdaravici village of Zvornik municipality

became apparent in the summer of 1999, some of the Bosnian displaced persons, most of whom were in Tuzla Canton, braved their way to return spontaneously to the Zvornik region, although initially to areas not far away from the Inter Entity Boundary Line.

Over time the return movement went deeper into RS territory.

Currently there is return movement all over Zvornik, including four doctors who recently applied for their homes in Zvornik town centre. Srebrenica has had good return to the periphery villages such

as Potocari and at the end of March 2000, the first return occurred to Srebrenica centre.

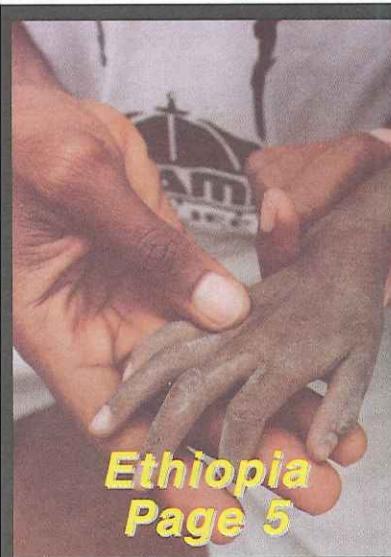
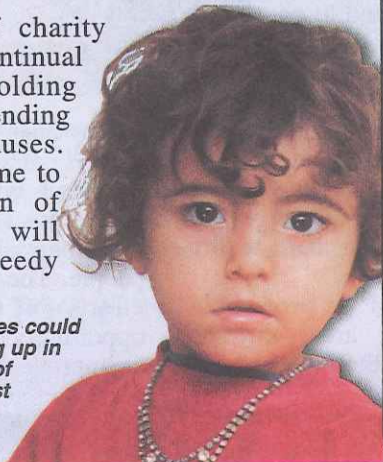
Islamic Relief Bosnia-Herzegovina (IRBH) has been active in the area supporting refugees returning to their homes. An office was established in Zvornik in June to co-ordinate our Minority Returns and Re-integration Project, which this year will enable at least 260 families to repair their homes and will provide 75 families with loans to restock their farms and buy seeds and tools.

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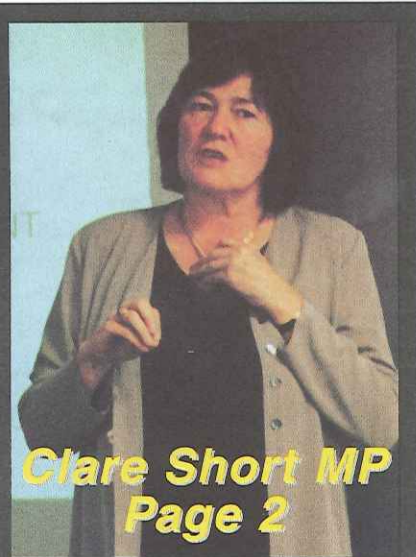
Waqf - The door to future endowment

Waqf is the only type of charity having the attribute of continual reward. It means withholding charitable assets from outlay and spending their revenues on charitable causes. Islamic Relief has launched a scheme to help open a door to this garden of benevolence and altruism which will benefit the poor and the needy worldwide. For details see page 3.

Your contribution to one of our Waqf schemes could make a difference to a child like this growing up in one of the refugee camps in the Gaza Strip of Palestine. These camps suffer from, amongst other shortcomings, chronic overcrowding, poor education and high unemployment



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