



Contemporary Discussions on Philanthropy Symposium

Gender, Displacement, and Islamic Philanthropy

Advancing Humanitarian Innovation

University of Birmingham
Edgbaston Park Hotel
53 Edgbaston Park Road
Birmingham B15 2RS, UK

Pevsner Room

8-9 September 2025



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About the Symposium

The Symposium aims to push interdisciplinary boundaries and contribute to developing an inclusive humanitarian policy and practice. By connecting humanitarian, migration, and religious systems, it provides a platform to exchange and discuss innovative conceptual and financing solutions to support displaced women through integrating different aid paradigms.

The Symposium is organized by 'Making Aid Work for Displaced Women' project of the University of Birmingham, in collaboration with the Muslim Philanthropy Initiative at Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy.

Objectives

The Symposium seeks to:

- Mobilize new voices and conceptual resources to build bridges between mainstream humanitarian and Islamic philanthropic approaches to women in displacement and humanitarian crises
- Expand the evidence base on how Islamic philanthropy responds to humanitarian crises and addresses the specific needs and rights of displaced women
- Improve understanding of the relationship between Islamic philanthropy and displaced women's protection by drawing on Islamic humanitarian law and ethics.
- Inform gender-sensitive Islamic philanthropy models and a faith-sensitive framework for displaced women's protection.

Output

The Symposium will produce a:

- Report structured around gender-sensitive Islamic philanthropy models, linking these with the ethics of care, protection and inclusion within the humanitarian system.

Moreover, authors will have the opportunity to publish their papers in a special issue of the Journal of Muslim Philanthropy & Civil Society and Muslim Humanitarianism Review Journal, published by Indiana University Press or in an edited book series, titled Muslim Philanthropy and Civil Society.

ABOUT MAKING AID WORK INITIATIVE

"Making Aid Work for Displaced Women: Integrating Islamic Philanthropy and the International Humanitarian System" is a UKRI-funded initiative which explores how Islamic philanthropy can be leveraged to improve humanitarian outcomes for displaced and migrant women by developing evidence-based innovative conceptual and financing solutions. Hosted by University of Birmingham's School of Government, School of Social Policy and the Institute for Research into International Migration and Superdiversity (IRiS), the project partners with the Center for Conflict and Humanitarian Studies in Doha, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent, Islamic Development Bank and World Humanitarian Action Forum.

ABOUT THE MUSLIM PHILANTHROPY INITIATIVE

The Muslim Philanthropy Initiative (MPI) is one of the five units at the Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy (LFSOP). The Lilly Family School of Philanthropy is the only school in the world devoted to the study of philanthropy. It is a leading academic institution dedicated to increasing the understanding of philanthropy and improving its practice worldwide through research, teaching, training and civic engagement. The school offers academic degrees, professional training certifications, and cutting-edge rigorous research on philanthropy.

DAY 1 AGENDA

Time	Activity	Notes
8:30	Registration	
9:00	Welcome Remarks - University of Birmingham, Making Aid Work Team - MPI Team Logistics & Announcements - Symposium information & research journals	Host: Abdul Samad, MPI Associate Director, Indiana University David Hudson, Head of International Development Department Sandra Pertek, UKRI Future Leaders Fellow, Project Lead, University of Birmingham/CHS Shariq Ahmed Siddiqui, Director of Muslim Philanthropy Initiative (MPI), Indiana University
9:30	Keynote: Khaled Khalifa, Senior Adviser for Islamic Philanthropy and Regional Representative to GCC, UNHCR	Leveraging Islamic Philanthropy to Address Demographic and Geographic Disparities in Humanitarian Settings
10:00	Expert Panel 1: The future of Islamic social finance for inclusion in displacement contexts This expert panel explores the transformative potential of Islamic social finance—such as <i>zakat</i>, <i>waqf</i>, and <i>sadaqah</i>—in addressing the unique challenges faced by women affected by conflict and displacement. As humanitarian needs grow and traditional aid models are stretched, Islamic social finance offers culturally rooted, community-driven mechanisms for sustainable support.	Moderator: Fadi Itani, CEO, MCF Panellists: Aisha Al-Ayafi, Director of Humanitarian Affairs Department, OIC GS Mohammed Kroessin, Head of Islamic Microfinance, Islamic Relief Worldwide Husna Ahmad, CEO, Global One Said Yusuf Sheik, Head of IPF, UN Migration (IOM)
10:50	Coffee break	

11:05	Special address: Carole Rakodi, Emeritus Professor, International Development Department, University of Birmingham	Understanding the religious, social and political context of philanthropy and humanitarian action: towards an analytical framework
11:30	Chair: Abdul Samad, Indiana University Research Panel 1: Integrating gender sensitivity into humanitarianism and philanthropy 1. <i>Contesting Faith and Justice: Muslim Philanthropy and Gender Justice Activists' Engagement with Zakat for Vulnerable Women</i> – Amelia Fouzia, UIN, Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, Indonesia 2. <i>The Pitfalls and Rewards of Advancing Islamic Humanitarian and Development Innovation, A case study of Islamic Relief: Religious Discourses, Re-Orientalism, and Decolonising Gender Mainstreaming</i> – Pamela Jabbar, Independent researcher, UK 3. <i>Quiet Giving, Loud Diplomacy: Islamic Philanthropy, Humanitarian Diplomacy, and the Protection of Afghan Women Refugees in Pakistan</i> – Haris Bin Aziz, National University of Modern Languages, Pakistan 4. <i>Invisible Stakeholders: Migrant Muslim Women and the Challenges of Inclusion in Islamic Philanthropy Amid Waqf Reform in India</i> – Yaseen Muhammed K. A., Darul Huda Islamic University, India (pre-recorded)	
12:45	Lunch	
13:45	Keynote: Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, UCL, Professor of Migration and Refugee Studies	

14:15	Expert Panel 2: Humanitarian diplomacy and philanthropy for displaced women This expert panel explores the intersection of humanitarian diplomacy and philanthropic action in addressing the specific challenges faced by women affected by conflict and displacement. Drawing on diverse regional and institutional perspectives, the session will examine how humanitarian actors and philanthropic institutions—particularly those rooted in faith traditions—can more effectively advocate for and support displaced women.	Moderator: Ahmed Al-Dawoody, Legal Counsel, ICRC Panellists: Fatema S. Alnoaimi, Qatar Charity, Senior External Affairs Specialist Selman Kesign, Director of Professional Training and Research, ZFI Maha Akeel, Independent Specialist Jessica Skinner, Independent Specialist
15:00	Coffee break	
15:15	Chair: Kaja Borchgrevink, PRIO Research Panel 2: Humanitarianism, peace-building and women-led philanthropy 1. <i>Culinary Bonds: How Everyday Food Practices Foster Belonging Among Syrian Refugee & Turkish Host Women in Gaziantep</i> – Ayda Apa Pomeshikov, University of Washington, USA 2. <i>Enhancing the Role of Women Mediators in Conflict Resolution in Muslim Societies</i> – Maha Akeel, Dar Al Hekma University, Saudi Arabia 3. <i>Advancing community-led protection initiatives using its faith-sensitive Community Hope Action Team (CHAT) model. Drawing on implementation across humanitarian contexts</i> – Bushra Rehman, Islamic Relief Worldwide, UK 4. <i>Faith, Generosity, and Impact: Muslim Women and the Future of U.S. Philanthropy</i> – Abdul Samad, Muslim Philanthropy Initiative, Indiana University, USA	
16:30	Wrap up Day 1 and adjourn	Sandra Pertek Shariq Siddiqui
17:30	Dinner	

DAY 2 AGENDA

Time	Activity	Notes
09:00	Welcome Remarks	Rene Lindstaedt, Head of School of Government, University of Birmingham Sandra Pertek Shariq Siddiqui
09:15	Keynote: Aisha Al-Ayafi, Director of Humanitarian Affairs Department, OIC General Secretariat	
09:35	Chair: Ali-Reza Bhojani, University of Birmingham Research Panel 3: Islamic Ethics and Philanthropic Instruments for Women 1. <i>Bridging Faith and Equality in Women's Empowerment from a Legal Perspective</i> , Beata Polok, Dar Al-Hekma University, Saudi Arabia 2. <i>'A duty, not an option': Secular and Faith (Dis)Engagement in Protection of Displaced Women in Muslim-majority Contexts</i> – Salma Khalil, University of Manchester, Sandra Pertek, University of Birmingham 3. <i>Mercy in Motion: Islamic Philanthropic Instruments for Women in Displacement, Conflict and Refuge</i> – Muhammed Nabil, University of Birmingham 4. <i>A Historical Review on Early Islamic Philanthropy for Displaced Women</i> - Syed Muaz Shah, Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Development, Pakistan 5. <i>Islamic Ethics and Gendered Migration: An Analysis of Ethiopian Women in Saudi Detention Centre during COVID-19</i> - Halifet Ayemohammed Yusuf, Wollo University, Ethiopia (pre-recorded)	
11:00	Coffee break	
11:15	Workshop 'Toward a protection framework of displaced women from a faith perspective' This workshop aims to present and discuss a potential women's protection framework and its implementation.	Ahmed Al-Dawoody Amjad Saleem Sandra Pertek
12:45	Lunch	

14:00	Chair: Husna Ahmad, Global One Research Panel 4: Community-based experiences and responses to displacement 1. <i>Gentrification, Displacement, and Impacts of Resettlement on Marginalised Communities Women- Study of Mumbai's Resettlement Colony</i> - Priyanka Mokale, University of Birmingham 2. <i>Access of refugee and asylum-seeking women to community-based mental health services in Edinburgh and Glasgow</i> - Ainuska Sheripkanova, QMU Edinburgh, UK 3. <i>Climate-Induced Displacement, Gender-Based Vulnerability, and Legal Precarity Among Displaced Afghan Women in Pakistan</i> - Nafisa Nasar, University of Birmingham (pre-recorded) 4. <i>Why is the participation rate of young Muslim women low in the formal workforce? A research study conducted in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh</i> - Durraïn Desnavi, Azim Premji University, India (pre-recorded)	
15:00	Coffee break	
15:20	Expert Panel 3: Moving forward: The future of humanitarianism and the role of Muslim donors and humanitarian actors in building resilience This expert panel explores the future of humanitarianism through the lens of Muslim donors and actors, focusing on their role in enhancing the resilience of women affected by conflict and displacement. In light of growing needs and funding gaps, the session will consider how Islamic humanitarian principles and philanthropic practices can offer distinctive, community-based solutions. It will also examine emerging models of partnership, governance, and the potential of Islamic approaches to more effectively support women in crisis contexts.	Moderator: Selman Kesign, Director, ZFI Panellists: Hany El-Banna, President, World Humanitarian Action Forum Kaja Borchgrevink, PRIO, Oslo Anwar Khan, Former President Islamic Relief USA Lamees Hafeez, Muslim Aid
16:30	Wrap up Day 2/Next steps	Sandra Pertek Shariq Siddiqui
17:00	Departure/Sightseeing	Free time

About keynote speakers and organisers

Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh is Professor of Migration and Refugee Studies, Founding Director of the UCL-wide [Refuge in a Moving World](#) interdisciplinary research network (@RefugeMvingWrld) and Principal Investigator of the recently completed ERC-funded [Southern Responses to Displacement](#) research project, the AHRC-funded [Refugee Hosts](#) project, and a British Council-funded project on [Religion and Social Justice for Refugees](#).

Elena's research focuses on the significance of gender and religion in experiences of and responses to conflict-induced displacement, with a particular regional focus on the Middle East. She has conducted extensive research in refugee camps and urban areas including in Algeria, Cuba, Egypt, France, Lebanon, South Africa, Syria, Sweden, and the UK. Drawing on a critical theoretical perspective, her work contributes to key debates surrounding refugees' and local host community members' experiences of conflict-induced displacement, the nature of refugee-host-donor relations, and both North-South and South-South humanitarian responses to forced migration. Elena has published widely on questions relating to gender, religion and displacement, as well as on Southern approaches to forced migration. Inter alia, Elena is the author of three books ([The Ideal Refugees: Gender, Islam and the Sahrawi Politics of Survival](#) (Syracuse University Press, 2014), [South-South Educational Migration, Humanitarianism and Development: Views from the Caribbean, North Africa and the Middle East](#) (Routledge, 2015), [The Southern Eye: Co-Seeing Displacements](#) (Broken Sleep Books, 2024) and has edited/co-edited four books to date ([The Oxford Handbook of Refugee and Forced Migration Studies](#) (OUP, 2014), [Intersections of Religion and Migration: Issues at the Global Crossroads](#) (Palgrave, 2016), [The Handbook of South-South Relations](#) (Routledge, 2018), and [Refuge in a Moving World](#) (UCL Press, 2020). A fifth coedited book, the [Oxford Handbook of Religion and Contemporary Migration](#) is in development, and will be published by OUP in 2026. She has also edited and co-edited a number of Special Issues including "[Faith Based Humanitarianism in Contexts of Forced Migration](#)" (*Journal of Refugee Studies*, 2011), 'Refugee and Diaspora Memories' (*Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 2013), 'Hospitality and Hostility towards Migrants: Global Perspectives' (*Migration and Society*, 2018), 'Recentering the South in Studies of Migration' (*Migration and Society*, 2020) and 'Southern-Led Responses to Displacement' (*Journal of Humanitarian Affairs*, 2025).

Khaled Khalifa is a professional humanitarian worker with more than 25 years of experience in relief and development. He led humanitarian operations in various settings of natural disasters and complex emergencies. Khaled Khalifa worked in several senior managerial positions with major international organizations in many countries and has a Ph.D. degree in Management Leadership and Organizational Strategy. He also holds an MA degree in English Literature & Humanities, an MSc in Sustainable Development, and a Project Management Diploma. He is a well-known international trainer in disaster management and an expert speaker on humanitarian affairs and the Middle East. In addition to his role as a representative to the Gulf Cooperation Council, Khaled leads UNHCR's Islamic philanthropy activities globally and has been instrumental in the success of the Refugee Zakat Fund, which supported over 2 million beneficiaries in 13 countries last year. This success was made possible thanks to Khaled Khalifa's role in building key partnerships with diverse Islamic philanthropy stakeholders.

Dr Aisha Alayafi is a trailblazing Saudi leader with an unparalleled track record in international development, public health strategy, academic innovation, and humanitarian diplomacy. Recognised as the first Saudi woman to take on technical roles at both the World Bank and Islamic Development Bank, with far-reaching contributions that have re-shaped global and regional agendas. Whether pioneering flagship health initiatives, strengthening gender-inclusive education systems, or branding academic institutions on a global scale, consistently catalyses transformation. A change-maker in every sense – driven by vision, refined by experience, and committed to elevating lives through policy, partnership, and people-focussed progress.



Sandra Pertek is UKRI Future Leaders Fellow at the School of Government and School of Social Policy, and Associate Professor at the International Development Department (IDD) and the Institute for Research into International Migration and Superdiversity (IRiS) at the University of Birmingham. She is also a Senior Research Fellow at the Center for Conflict and Humanitarian Studies (CHS). She was previously Lecturer at the Institute for Global Health and Development, Queen Margaret University, and Teaching Fellow (POLSIS) and [ESRC Postdoctoral Fellow](#) at the University of Birmingham. Sandra specialises in the intersection of gender, violence, religion, forced migration and humanitarianism. Her research integrates the intersectional and ecological approaches to improve outcomes for displaced populations. She has led a number of studies across the Middle East, Africa and Europe, including the "[Ukrainian Refugees at Risk](#)" and "[Protecting Forcibly Displaced Women and Girls in the Muslim World](#)" projects. She currently leads an interdisciplinary and policy-oriented, £1.3m UKRI-funded research initiative, "[Making Aid Work for Displaced Women](#)", which focuses on integrating Islamic philanthropy into the international humanitarian system and developing innovative solutions to global forced displacement. She is an interdisciplinary researcher and social development specialist with over a decade of experience in humanitarian, development, and migration settings. Bridging research, policy, and practice, she has consulted for international and governmental organisations, including the European Commission, GIZ, the Home Office, and Islamic Development Bank. She has also collaborated with various organisations, such as the UNHCR, OIC and IFRC. Before joining the University of Birmingham, Sandra was a Senior Policy Adviser on Gender at a leading humanitarian agency. She has published articles on gender, religion and forced migration in leading journals and co-authored the monograph, 'On the Significance of Religion in Violence Against Women and Girls' (Routledge). Her new monograph, 'Violence against Women, Religion and Forced Displacement: Experiences and Humanitarian Responses', is underway.

Shariq Siddiqui is an Assistant Professor of Philanthropic Studies and Director of the Muslim Philanthropy Initiative at the Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy. Shariq has a Ph.D. and M.A. in Philanthropic Studies from the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy and a JD from the McKinney School of Law at Indiana University and holds a B.A. in History from the University of Indianapolis. Shariq authors research on Muslim philanthropy and the Muslim nonprofit sector. Most recently, he conducted a national survey of full-time Islamic schools in the United States. This project resulted in the book (that he co-authored) on Islamic Education in the United States and the Evolution of Muslim Nonprofit Institutions, published in November 2017. He is the author of four additional books including: Understanding Muslim Philanthropy; Philanthropy in the Muslim World; Poverty and the Monotheistic Traditions; and Nonprofit Collaborations in Diverse Communities. Shariq serves as the editor-in-chief of the Journal of Muslim Philanthropy and Civil Society and Muslim Humanitarianism Review and served as the founding co-editor of Journal on Education in Muslim Societies and Series Editor of the Muslim Philanthropy and Civil Society Book Series, all of which published by Indiana University Press. Previously, Shariq served as the Executive Director of Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action (ARNOVA). ARNOVA is a leading international association that connects scholars, teachers, and practice leaders in research on nonprofit organizations, voluntary action, philanthropy, and civil society.

Abstracts

Day 1

Panel 1: Integrating gender sensitivity into humanitarianism and philanthropy

Contesting Faith and Justice: Muslim Philanthropy and Gender Justice Activists' Engagement with Zakat for Vulnerable Women - Amelia Fauzia UIN, Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, Indonesia

This paper examines how Muslim philanthropic practitioners and gender justice activists engage with the issue of zakat for vulnerable women. Despite its vast potential for redistribution and humanitarian response, the use of zakat remains constrained by dominant interpretations of religious law and institutional norms. Building on author's prior research on Muslim philanthropy and its engagement with the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as on the growing intersection between Islamic social finance and the humanitarian sector, this study explores gender justice activists within the framework of Islamic and development studies.

Drawing on qualitative data—including interviews and document analysis from Indonesia, Pakistan, and UN-affiliated bodies—the paper addresses two central questions: (1) What theological, legal and social arguments do Muslim gender justice activists and zakat practitioners advance in support of or opposition to allocating zakat for women affected by violence and displacement? and (2) How do discourses of inclusivity, justice, and *maqāṣid al-sharī'a* (higher objectives of Islamic law) shape their respective positions?

The findings reveal that both religious and feminist ethical frameworks are strategically mobilized to expand or contest the boundaries of zakat. The study argues that geographic and political contexts significantly influence these interpretations. While actors in Muslim-majority countries tend to adhere to classical *fiqh*-based constraints, counterparts in more secular or pluralistic environments invoke *maqāṣid*-driven and rights-based reasoning. This paper contributes to critical debates on the convergences between Islamic philanthropy, gender justice, and humanitarian innovation, highlighting both tensions and transformative possibilities in aligning faith-based giving with inclusive, justice-oriented practices.

The Pitfalls and Rewards of Advancing Islamic Humanitarian and Development Innovation, A case study of Islamic Relief: Religious Discourses, Re-Orientalism, and Decolonising Gender Mainstreaming - Pamela Jabbar, Independent researcher, UK

This paper makes two calls: the first is for decolonising gender mainstreaming, gender strategies, policymaking, and practices within development, as well as humanitarian approaches to gender and faith-sensitive Islamic philanthropy models for displaced women. The second is for faith actors (within development and humanitarian agencies) to adopt greater reflexivity when invoking Islamic/religious discourses for gender justice. Based on a case study of Islamic Relief (IR), a UK faith-based Muslim development organisation, this paper draws on PhD research, which included interview data with policy actors and an analysis of IR's Gender Justice Policy. The author argues that while in the post-9/11 context, IRs use a religious discourse to gender justice policymaking might on the one hand foreground the rewards of a) advancing religious discourses in development and humanitarianism on gender justice, and b) promote the potential benefits of decolonising development (and gender mainstreaming) within theory and practice. On the other hand, the pitfalls presented in this case highlight the need for some caution and greater reflexivity in the use of religious discourses to gender (justice).

In the case of IR's approach, at one level, the invoking of religious discourses may have served to resist dominant secular gender mainstreaming strategies on 'gender equality', thereby providing a test case for the value of a decolonial approach. However, at another level, IR's approaches to an Islamic-inspired gender mainstreaming strategy were based on a rejection of feminism (both secular and Islamic/Muslim), but an alignment with dominant development discourses. This resulted in a form of compliance and resistance with dominant development strategies, leading the faith actors inadvertently to employ orientalist mechanisms and strategies in the policymaking process. The author captures this phenomenon as "reorientalism" (Lau 2009). Reorientalism, in this case, is presented in two ways: 1) reorientalism was the process through which Muslim faith actors simultaneously were othered and othered the other; 2) faith actors in development are the "New Orientalists" (Said 1978) in development, whereby they resisted and reproduced Orientalist narratives.

Given IR's longstanding engagement with humanitarian crisis, the implications of this case offer insights for humanitarian actors seeking to shape a faith-sensitive framework for women in the context of crisis, refugee and displaced women. The findings and recommendations for interdisciplinary dialogues, incorporating decolonial feminist praxis and reflexivity-in-praxis, could inform the design of more gender-sensitive Islamic philanthropy models through dialogical and critical reflections. Importantly, this knowledge exchange could influence mainstream humanitarian practices, advance the critical urgency for decolonising development and gender strategies, by including decolonial feminist approaches, which promote reflexivity. The findings highlight the need for advocacy for the non-rejection of feminist approaches by Muslim faith-based agencies and actors, and the building of solidarities across the field, with Islamic, secular Muslim, and secular feminisms. In a time of backlash to gender justice and reductions in aid spending, solidarity is urgent. Finally, calling for practitioners (faith and secular) to exercise greater reflexivity-in-praxis is to ensure that religious and secular discourses do not reinscribe epistemic violence (Spivak 1988), (re)orientalism, as seen in this case, or harm displaced women.

***Quiet Giving, Loud Diplomacy: Islamic Philanthropy, Humanitarian Diplomacy, and the Protection of Afghan Women Refugees in Pakistan* - Haris Bin Aziz, National University of Modern Languages, Pakistan**

This paper investigates the intersection of Islamic philanthropy, humanitarian diplomacy, and the gendered protection of displaced Afghan women in Pakistan. It offers a critical analysis of how religiously inspired charitable giving operates within and alongside geopolitical and diplomatic structures, particularly in the context of ongoing displacement following the Taliban's return to power in Afghanistan in 2021. The central argument distinguishes between two overlapping yet distinct modalities of Islamic giving: "quiet giving," defined as informal, community-based and often women-led acts of Islamic charity; and "loud diplomacy," represented by state-backed or donor-driven philanthropic gestures used to project international humanitarian credentials or advance political influence.

Using a qualitative, interpretive methodology, the study draws on discourse analysis of public statements by Pakistani and Gulf state officials, Islamic philanthropic institutions, and humanitarian organizations; content analysis of media portrayals and NGO reports; and semi-structured interviews with Pakistani civil society actors engaged in refugee assistance. It is further informed by Islamic jurisprudential texts on zakat, sadaqah, and huquq al-nas, as well as international humanitarian and refugee law frameworks. The research highlights the interplay between Islamic ethical principles and evolving humanitarian norms in Muslim-majority host societies.

The findings indicate that while local Islamic charitable practices in Pakistan—often led by faith-based NGOs, mosque networks, and women's informal giving circles—play a pivotal role in addressing the immediate needs of Afghan women, their contributions are under-recognized and systematically

marginalized in the global humanitarian discourse. These actors tend to frame their work in terms of communal obligation and dignity rather than visibility or institutional metrics. In contrast, loud humanitarian diplomacy—such as Gulf-funded infrastructure or conditional aid—often instrumentalizes Afghan refugees to serve foreign policy interests, without meaningful integration of gendered or faith-sensitive protections.

The paper also identifies a growing disconnect between Islamic ethical traditions and contemporary humanitarian diplomacy, arguing that the instrumentalization of faith for diplomatic purposes often flattens its emancipatory potential. Health-related humanitarian campaigns—such as anti-polio drives and COVID-19 responses—further underscore the tensions between visibility and inclusion. Afghan women refugees have been central yet marginalized figures in these public health efforts: as vaccine recipients, as community health mobilizers, and as voices excluded from policy deliberation. Despite their engagement, they were often targeted with suspicion and received uneven access to aid due to administrative and legal exclusions, revealing the limited gender-responsiveness of both international humanitarianism and Islamic philanthropic interventions in crisis moments. It contends that a gender-responsive, faith-sensitive humanitarian framework—rooted in both Islamic legal ethics and international norms—is urgently needed to protect the dignity and rights of displaced Afghan women, especially amidst rising Islamophobia, donor fatigue, and securitization of refugee identities.

***Invisible Stakeholders: Migrant Muslim Women and the Challenges of Inclusion in Islamic Philanthropy Amid Waqf Reform in India* - Yaseen Muhammed K. A., Darul Huda Islamic University, India (hybrid request)**

This paper examines the intersection of gender, displacement, and Islamic philanthropy in the context of India's evolving waqf (Islamic endowment) laws, focusing specifically on the lived experiences of migrant Muslim women. As India considers and implements Waqf Amendment Bills aimed at improving administrative oversight and preventing the misuse of waqf properties, this study argues that these legal reforms have largely failed to incorporate the needs, voices, and agency of displaced Muslim women—an increasingly vulnerable demographic in urban India. The central argument is that Islamic philanthropic institutions such as waqf, traditionally intended to provide social welfare to marginalized communities, are structurally ill-equipped to serve displaced women due to entrenched patriarchal norms, legal and bureaucratic barriers, and urban exclusion. Migrant Muslim women face unique challenges: they are often undocumented, live in informal housing, and are alienated from religious governance structures that could otherwise provide them with education, healthcare, or housing via waqf institutions.

The paper is based on a qualitative analysis of policy documents, recent Waqf Amendment Bills, and field data drawn from community organizations in cities like Delhi and Hyderabad. It also incorporates interviews with legal scholars, social workers, and women directly affected by displacement and religious philanthropic exclusions. The findings reveal three critical gaps: (1) the systemic absence of gendered perspectives in the governance and reform of waqf properties; (2) the disconnect between the legal language of waqf reform and the socio-spatial realities of urban migrant women; and (3) the lack of participatory mechanisms that include displaced Muslim women in policy consultation or waqf board representation. Furthermore, the commercialization and encroachment of waqf lands—often under state-led urban development projects—have resulted in the direct displacement of populations that waqf institutions are meant to serve. Migrant Muslim women, in particular, are left with no legal or social safety net, as waqf institutions are either inaccessible or unresponsive to their needs. The bureaucratic emphasis on legal ownership, formal identity proof, and fixed residence excludes these women from benefiting from waqf-supported services.

This paper argues for a re-imagination of Islamic philanthropy that goes beyond charity and token welfare to encompass inclusive governance, gender equity, and the active participation of displaced communities in decision-making. Policy recommendations include instituting gender quotas on waqf boards, mandating gender impact assessments in waqf legislation, and creating urban waqf schemes specifically targeting displaced women and migrants.

Panel 2: Humanitarianism, peace-building and women-led philanthropy

***Culinary Bonds: How Everyday Food Practices Foster Belonging Among Syrian Refugee & Turkish Host Women in Gaziantep* - Ayda Apa Pomeshikov, University of Washington, USA**

Since 2011, nearly 3.5 million Syrian refugees have resettled in Turkey. For many, return remains unsafe, and life in Turkey has become a long-term reality. Despite limited pathways to citizenship, Syrians have established diasporic communities and formed partial bonds with local populations. In this context of protracted displacement, faith-based humanitarian and charity organizations in Southeastern Turkey have become influential by providing both emergency relief and long-term social support.

Culinary Bonds examines how everyday food practices among Syrian refugee and Turkish host women in Southeastern Turkey generate belonging and solidarity. While many of these women engage with humanitarian organizations, their collaborations extend beyond formal aid. Through daily acts of cooking, sharing meals, and caring for one another, they transform kitchens into spaces of reciprocity that unsettle the conventional donor-recipient divide. This presentation asks: how do collective, mundane activities such as preparing and consuming food cultivate connections across boundaries of citizenship, ethnicity, and language?

The analysis highlights the civic agency of refugee and volunteer women whose work, often confined to domestic spaces and invisible to formal measures of integration, reimagines a shared cultural past and envisions a common future. The author argues that diasporic belonging is enacted through practices of hospitality and care, with cooking serving as a key medium for building community solidarity. The research draws on ethnographic fieldwork conducted in Gaziantep, Turkey, between May 2019 and January 2021, combining participant observation at humanitarian events, semi-structured interviews with organizational managers, and life-history interviews with refugee women and local volunteers.

***Enhancing the Role of Women Mediators in Conflict Resolution in Muslim Societies* - Maha Akeel, Dar Al Hekma University, Saudi Arabia**

Women suffer in various ways during conflicts, including physically, mentally, sexually, socially, and economically; but they also play an active role in conflict prevention and peacebuilding, develop strategies and initiatives to survive, and take care of their families and communities. However, most often during peace negotiations, women are either ignored completely or included at a later stage in the process as an afterthought, which limits their input and influence on outcomes. The media as well tends to ignore these various roles played by women. Depicting women as mainly victims of conflict and not as agents of change undermines their role in conflict-resolution and limits their involvement to addressing only their grievances and not their contributions.

This paper will look at how third-party mediators and international organizations can play a role in including women in peace processes. It focuses on Muslim societies, where 60% of worldwide conflicts occur in countries members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), thus it becomes even more necessary to include women, not only because they are disproportionately affected by violence, but also because they face entrenched patriarchal and cultural barriers to having their voices heard. Applying

feminist theory to gender roles and patriarchy, the paper explains why women are excluded and argues for the importance of having women as mediators and negotiators during peacemaking processes to ensure that their rights, needs, and expectations are reflected in the final documents.

The paper uses a qualitative desk study examining and analyzing research studies and reports from international organizations on the experiences of women during conflicts in Muslim societies, from 1990 to 2022, and the roles they played as advocates for peace, peacekeepers, relief workers, and mediators whether in formal or informal structures and community work. The findings indicate that women-run organizations, including women faith-based mediators, are found to enjoy higher trust levels in their communities and can therefore play an important role in formulating and implementing strategies to address various issues and rebuild society. The paper recommends that actions and policies for empowering women and promoting gender equality during and post-conflict must be locally driven, taking into consideration ethnic, religious, and economic divisions. It calls on international organizations, especially the OIC, and policy makers to incorporate the priorities and interests expressed by women civil society actors, women peacebuilders and women mediators who are active at the local level, and to lead by example through having women in mediation. Supporting and enhancing the capacity of women-led organizations and mediator networks is also important as is including women in peace negotiations early on in the process.

Advancing community-led protection initiatives using its faith-sensitive Community Hope Action Team (CHAT) model: Case studies of implementation across humanitarian contexts—including Mali, Malawi, Ethiopia, and South Sudan – Bushra Rehman, Islamic Relief Worldwide, UK

Islamic Relief Worldwide (IRW) is presenting a paper focused on advancing community-led protection initiatives using its faith-sensitive Community Hope Action Team (CHAT) model. The presentation is drawing on implementation across humanitarian contexts—including Mali, Malawi, Ethiopia, and South Sudan—where IRW has developed a participatory model that centres on faith, local leadership, and community engagement in addressing gender-based violence (GBV), child protection, and harmful social norms. The CHAT model is an adaptation of the Channels of Hope (CoH) methodology, originally developed with World Vision, and tailored by Islamic Relief to reflect Islamic teachings and values. The approach fosters safe spaces for dialogue and action, empowering faith leaders, women, and youth to respond to protection risks in a way that aligns with their cultural and spiritual contexts. Each CHAT typically includes 6–12 members, selected based on their accessibility and trust within the community. These include religious leaders, women’s representatives, teachers, and health workers.

The purpose is to examine and document insights from Islamic Relief’s experiences in implementing faith-sensitive approaches to protection and inclusion. It focuses on examples from Islamic Relief country offices that have adopted the CoH methodology, exploring the various approaches utilised, their integration into programmes and their long-term impacts. Drawing on examples from four countries, this paper seeks to establish a foundational understanding of how CHATs have been implemented and adapted to diverse cultural and social settings. These case studies illustrate the flexibility of the CHAT model and emphasise the critical role of community-driven protection initiatives.

A key strength of the CHAT approach lies in its deliberate facilitation of women’s participation and leadership. For example, in Malawi, CHATs regularly comprise a majority of women—including mothers, youth representatives, and members of women’s associations—who lead discussions on GBV, emotional well-being, and child protection using relatable formats such as storytelling and community theatre. In Mali, CHATs engaged imams to deliver sermons emphasizing Islamic values of compassion, protection, and care—particularly in addressing male disengagement during pregnancy and postpartum periods, an issue previously neglected in community discourse.

The involvement of respected faith leaders allows CHATs to challenge harmful practices from within the community's own moral and religious framework, thereby reducing resistance and building trust. Their participation lends credibility and encourages broader community buy-in, especially in conservative or conflict-affected areas where traditional outreach may be ineffective. To deepen understanding of CHAT implementation and inform future program design, Islamic Relief proposes a focused research methodology involving key informant interviews and secondary research. Through this approach, Islamic Relief seeks to illuminate the potential role CHATs play in advancing community-based, faith-sensitive protection.

***Faith, Generosity, and Impact: Muslim Women and the Future of U.S. Philanthropy* - Abdul Samad, Muslim Philanthropy Initiative, Indiana University, USA**

Philanthropy plays an important role in the daily life of U.S. Muslims. The Muslim American Zakat Report 2022 found that Muslims gave an estimated 4.3 billion dollars in zakat. Despite these impressive numbers, a large gap in understanding U.S. Muslim demographics and dynamics exists. U.S. Muslims, especially Muslim women, are not adequately researched nor their giving patterns understood. This report departs from existing literature on U.S. Muslim women that centers topics such as stigma, negative stereotypes, and discrimination, and, instead, sheds light on Muslim women's philanthropic behaviours and generosity by analysing survey data on demographic characteristics, religious beliefs and practices, donation and zakat giving, and volunteerism.

Day 2

Panel 3: Islamic Ethics and Philanthropic Instruments for Women

***Bridging Faith and Equality in Women's Empowerment from a Legal Perspective*, Beata Polok, Dar Al-Hekma University, Saudi Arabia**

This research paper aims at critically exploring the longstanding discourse on the compatibility between universal human rights standards and Islamic values, with a particular focus on women's rights and women's economic empowerment. It aims to highlight the significant similarities between Islamic law and universal human rights law or standards, arguing that well-implemented Islamic principles can serve as a powerful shield for women's empowerment.

At the very centre of this discussion lies the recognition that both Islamic law and international human rights frameworks emphasize the dignity and worth of the individual and recognize a number of basic women rights. For example, core tenets of Islamic teachings advocate for justice, equality, and compassion—principles that resonate with the fundamental goals of human rights. By examining these specific provisions in both legal systems, it is possible to identify the overlapping areas that promote women's rights, such as the right to education, the right to work, the right to participate in political life as well as number of family rights which aim at protecting women.

One of the key aspects of this research paper is the role of Islamic philanthropy, or zakat and sadaqah, which can be leveraged as a tool to fulfill obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Islamic charitable practices have a great potential to address systemic inequalities and provide financial support to women in need, enhancing their social and economic status. This paper will highlight various successful initiatives that have utilized Islamic philanthropy to empower women, demonstrating the practical implications of aligning Islamic values with human rights standards.

***A duty, not an option': Secular and Faith (Dis)Engagement in Protection of Displaced Women in Muslim-majority Contexts* - Salma Khalil, University of Manchester**

This paper explores how secular and faith-based dynamics in humanitarian action shape the protection of displaced women in Muslim-majority contexts. Despite increasing recognition of the need for collaboration between secular and faith actors in humanitarian aid, limited attention has been paid to the gendered dimensions of this relationship—particularly in settings where religious norms and practices are central to daily life, including experiences of displacement. As forced migration continues to rise globally, and with a significant proportion of the displaced population coming from Muslim-majority countries, there is an urgent need to address how religious values, institutions, and frameworks intersect with protection efforts.

The central research question asks: *How do secular and faith dynamics in humanitarian action influence the protection of displaced women in the Muslim world?* Drawing on seventeen in-depth, semi-structured interviews with humanitarian practitioners, researchers, and policy specialists working across Muslim-majority countries and diasporic contexts, we use a qualitative methodology grounded in social constructivism and intersectional feminist theory. The author further engages the concepts of transnational solidarity and cultural relativism to analyse how gender, religion, and displacement intersect in shaping both vulnerabilities and responses.

The findings reveal that the predominance of secular humanitarian frameworks often leads to a marginalisation of faith-based perspectives and actors, despite their critical role in refugee protection in many Muslim communities. Participants described widespread faith insensitivity, compassion bias, and the reluctance of international agencies to engage with religious values or actors—issues compounded by post-9/11 securitisation and Islamophobic narratives. Conversely, respondents highlighted how faith-inspired resources, including Islamic teachings on protection (e.g., *aman* and *hijra*), religious leaders, mosques, and Islamic social finance mechanisms, could serve as powerful tools for improving the protection of displaced women, if engaged respectfully and systematically.

The author argues that mainstream humanitarian approaches frequently overlook socio-religious resources that are central to the lived realities of displaced Muslim women. This omission contributes to inadequate protection and reinforces structural exclusions. However, the study also reveals the potential for collaboration: bridging secular and faith-based approaches requires mutual capacity-building, context-sensitive language, and a commitment to shared values. Inter-governmental bodies such as the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) are positioned to play a stronger role in coordinating faith-based protection frameworks, while Muslim humanitarian organisations have the potential to shape alternative narratives and practices that centre women's agency and religious identity. By critically engaging with faith and secular dynamics, this paper contributes to efforts to decolonise humanitarian practice and advance gender-sensitive, culturally grounded approaches to protection. The author calls for the development of a faith-informed refugee protection framework, grounded in both international human rights norms and Islamic ethical traditions, to more effectively support displaced Muslim women across contexts of conflict, transit, and refuge.

***Mercy in Motion: Islamic Philanthropic Instruments for Women in Displacement, Conflict and Refuge* - Muhammed Nabil - University of Birmingham**

Secular aid often overlooks Islamic moral economies, missing opportunities to leverage their emphasis on dignity and equity. A framework blending Islamic ethics with the Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS) could address gaps where secular aid falters, fostering pragmatic responses (Benthall, 2016). Rooted in

Islamic principles of justice (*adl*), compassion (*rahmah*), and communal welfare, Islamic philanthropical instruments – zakah (obligatory almsgiving), sadaqah (voluntary charity), and waqf (endowment) – are known to offer immediate relief and long-term community empowerment. Despite their effectiveness and inclusivity, their potential in creating interventions for displaced and refugee women remain somewhat underexplored in both scholarship and practice.

This study examines how existing literature views these instruments as addressing the plight of women in displacement, conflict, and during their time of seeking refuge, when they are likely to face systemic exclusion from humanitarian and welfare frameworks.

Qur'ānic injunctions note eight categories of zakāh (Q9:60) - many of which fall in common with women experiencing displacement – they could be amongst the poor, the needy, captives or slaves, in debt and wayfarers. Moreover, there's a heightened Islamic emphasis on charity contexts (Q2:83, 177, Q59:7, Q89:17, Q90:15), dealing with orphans (Q93:9, Q4:36 and managing their properties (Q4:10, Q6:152, Q17:34) particularly orphans girls (Q4:3,127). These inspirations were neither extraneous to Prophetic traditions and sayings, not unacknowledged in Islamic traditions. Historically, zakah supported the displaced and vulnerable during early Islamic migrations. Waqf, a cornerstone of sustainable support, historically funded female sanctuaries and education and holds potential for modern refugee empowerment through vocational training and safe spaces. Sadaqah's flexibility enables rapid aid and allows bridging gaps in secular systems while its spiritual dimension fosters dignity. Women are also known to have played a significant role in supporting women in need, often through informal and community-based resilience interventions that may lack recognition in policy.

However, governance issues, cultural stigmas, and waqf's underutilisation in contemporary crises hinder scalability. A salient example is the way colonial disruptions weakened waqf's social welfare role, complicating modern applications. Challenges remain in overcoming bureaucratic inertia and ensuring equitable access in chaotic settings. Today, UNHCR zakah fund initiatives deliver essentials to refugee women across 21 countries.

Logistical challenges and exclusion in conflict zones often restrict women's access to philanthropic provisions. In this context, this research looks back in history and into contemporary practices aiming to find strategies to re-engage zakah, sadaqah, and waqf as dynamic tools by centring displaced women's agency in their design and governance. Historical models, such as women's waqf endowments in Mamluk Egypt and innovative applications, like gender-sensitive zakah distribution (UNHCR) can offer insights and pathways forward.

A Historical Review on Early Islamic Philanthropy for Displaced Women - Syed Muaz Shah, Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Development, Pakistan

A disproportionate level of conflict unfortunately occurs in Muslims majority regions around the world, be it in external wars, civil wars or dealing with non-state actors within countries. Multiple studies have shown how nearly 60% of all violence during conflict occurs in Muslim states and thus have produced the greatest number of victims from such conflicts. Women and children both directly and indirectly are the most numerous of the effectees. Islamic law is clear in that women and children are not only to be not killed as they are non-combatants amongst other categories, but that relief and support should be given to them and has been a cornerstone of Islamic ethics. This is supported by the Quranic and Hadith traditions that have been explored but not much has been written about the narrative experience from the *Seerah* or biographical accounts of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) during this early time period from the works of *Ibn Hisham*, *Ibn Ishaq*, *Al-Waqidi*, *Ibn Saad* amongst others. Particularly in relation to

the early Muslim experiences of seeking refuge in Abyssinia, the symbolic migration of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) to Medina known as the *Hijrah*, and the Conquest of Mecca and other encounters.

One of the earliest experiences of the Muslim community was their own status as refugees in a foreign state near modern-day Ethiopia in the 5th Century AD. The King *Najashi* provide protection against Meccan opposition who were attempting to forcibly repatriate the refugee Muslims. Texts including the debate of Jaffer ibn Abi Talib highlight the importance of protection against religious persecution are amongst other key references from which some of the initial principles of protection are developed. The migration or *Hijrah* from Mecca to Medina is not only a penultimate point in the early stages of Islam but a key reference that provides guidelines for displaced refugees. Quranic references like Surah *Hashr*, Verse 9 explored by scholars like Ahmed Abou-El-Wafa refer to frameworks - (i) Dignity, (ii) Preferential treatment, (iii) No Discrimination, (iv) Maximum protection and support mechanisms and (v) Territorial Asylum.

The Quranic emphasis on refugee protections extends to members outside the faith, for example in Surah *Tawbah*, Verse 6 where protection and transportation to safe haven is a right of non-Muslims non-combatants. This shows that Islam places key protections on innocents who ask for protection during conflict and where protection frameworks include not just basic essentials but for example education for children and meaningful existence until war situation subsides and conflict is ended. Multiple references can be gathered specifically in the context of women in the protection practices of the Prophet which not only include widow and orphans but also special protection for pregnant women, women with children and other sensitive categories. Early 7th century Islamic references lend support to the development of conceptual ideas in Islamic law and ethics. The study of the *Seerah* and early historical examples provide ample sources that create an important narrative often missed in Islamic protection framework discussions, this study hopes to rectify that.

Panel 4: Community-based experiences and responses to displacement

Gentrification, Displacement, and Impacts of Resettlement on Marginalised Communities Women - Study of Mumbai's Resettlement Colony - Priyanka Mokale, University of Birmingham, UK

The study is based on the resettlement impact on Mumbai's marginalised communities, with a special focus on Muslim communities and Dalits (Lower caste). Various infrastructure projects are made annually for the city's development and beautification. However, while performing these projects, marginalized communities' houses are demolished. A displacement process occurred, and these displaced communities mainly resettled 30-40 km from their original place, which affected their daily lives, livelihood, etc. Various studies have been conducted on the impact of slum rehabilitation and resettlement on communities; however, these have not applied the gender and marginalised communities' lenses.

Development-related displacement has resulted in the displacement of the urban poor. According to a statement by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the adequate right to housing, since November 2004, an estimated 400,000 slum dwellers have been displaced from their homes in the city of Mumbai. Ethnicity, power relations, and class do not exhaust societal divisions that determine vulnerability. Gender plays a significant role, mainly as women are doubly or triply disadvantaged by being members of groups subject to discrimination and exclusion. One can observe some of the most extreme forms of human insecurity caused by patriarchy, poverty, lack of skills to earn an income, all aggravated by membership in a marginalized social group. Single women and women-headed families without an adult male are also pressured to give up claims on land and property illegally possessed or registered by locally influential people or relatives.

This study is based on the secondary literature and ethnographic fieldwork conducted by the author in January 2025-February 2025. To understand the everyday struggles and challenges after the displacement and resettlement of marginalised women, the author has conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews and participant observation.

During the participant observation and interviews, it was observed that women of the Natwar Parekh, after the involuntary displacement, face many challenges in terms of accessing livelihood opportunities, financial burdens, loneliness, and lack of neighborhood and socio-cultural support, with domestic violence cases on the rise after moving to the resettlement colonies. In addition to that, due to poor built environment, congested tight, packed building structures, and inadequate maintenance, many women and old age people suffer from different health-related problems like asthma, tuberculosis, stress, cancer, etc. Also, due to caste and religious identity divisions, some fights occur in the communities.

Access of refugee and asylum-seeking women to community-based mental health services in Edinburgh and Glasgow - Ainuska Sheripkanova, QMU Edinburgh, UK

The presentation is based on an ongoing doctoral research study which aims to understand experiences of displaced women's access to community-based mental health services in Edinburgh and Glasgow, Scotland. The main research question is to explore how their experiences of community-based mental health services impacted their integration outcomes. Working for various charity organisations in Edinburgh, the author witnessed that displaced women's trajectories to integration are more challenging than other migrant population such as foreign students, migrant workers or even refugee and asylum-seeking men. Many of these women do unpaid work such as cooking, cleaning and have caring responsibilities which prevent them from studying English and working outside home due to perceived traditional gender roles. Sometimes their desire for independence through education and employment might be seen as a threat by their intimate partners. Asylum-seeking women are at higher risk to be exploited for sex or labour as they have no right to work in the UK. As a result of these challenges, lack of social support system and limited English language skills, many refugee and asylum-seeking women's paths to integration become very painful, slow and or sometimes never happen. Forced migration often exacerbates existing gender inequalities and exposes individuals to new health risks, including gender-based violence and limited access to healthcare. An intersectional theoretical framework is used to understand the complex interplay of these factors. The author hopes to share the research study findings with the relevant local council departments in Scotland and charity organisations which can contribute to developing effective, targeted interventions in the future.

Islamic Ethics and Gendered Migration: An Analysis of Ethiopian Women in Saudi Detention Centre during COVID-19 - Halifet Ayemohammed Yusuf, Wollo University, Ethiopia

Several studies have examined the treatment and conditions of Ethiopian migrants detained in Saudi Arabia due to their irregular status. However, limited attention has been given to how these practices can be evaluated not only from an international law and human rights perspective but most importantly, from an Islamic ethical approach. This is particularly relevant given that Saudi Arabia, alongside other Gulf and Arab countries, grounds their legal frameworks in Islamic law. This paper focuses on the protection of Ethiopian women migrants in Saudi Arabian detention centres, critically assessing the conditions of detention through an Islamic ethical perspective, considering gendered vulnerability and the moral obligations deriving from Islamic law and ethical principles.

Although it is grounded in a specific context, this case study offers a broader insight into the ethical limits of state action in migration governance and particularly the underexplored intersection of gender, displacement, and Islamic accountability. Therefore, this study engages with moral questions surrounding detention by incorporating insights from Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) and exploring how national health and security justifications enable rights-restrictive migration practices, particularly

affecting women. To do so, this study employs a qualitative research design and doctrinal legal analysis, drawing from primary sources such as officials statements and reports from GCC government portals, documentation conducted by international and regional human rights organizations on the conditions of Ethiopian migrants in Saudi detention centres, and classical as well as contemporary Islamic legal texts and studies with focus on migration.

Most importantly, special consideration is given to the principle of public interest (al- Masālih Al-Mursalah) and the weighing of harms (Mafāsīd) and benefits (Maṣāliḥ) of detention measures, with a focus on the obligation of government actors and relevant institutions toward detained women. Further, it also utilizes the Islamic ethical framework of Maqāṣīd al-Sharia (higher objectives of Sharia) to assess state detention policies from a gender-sensitive lens. Preliminary findings demonstrate that the detention of Ethiopian women, including pregnant women and children, violates core human rights standards governing detention centres, specifically those addressing the treatment of women in detention and foundational Islamic values such as protection of life, lineage, and mind.

In stark contrast to the Islamic historical precedent of hijra, migrants have been subjected to maltreatment through their placement in overcrowded detention facilities characterized by insufficient sanitation and hygiene, alongside a complete disregard for physical distancing measures, let alone the provision of isolation during a pandemic that has widespread implications. The treatment of detained migrants represents a critical concern that necessitates reevaluation to uphold the sovereignty of the GCC nations, requiring a comprehensive analysis of the factual circumstances and the application of both Islamically and internationally recognized standards for detention.

Climate-Induced Displacement, Gender-Based Vulnerability, and Legal Precarity Among Displaced Afghan Women in Pakistan – Nafisa Nasar, University of Birmingham

Asia and the Pacific are among the most climate-vulnerable regions globally, where environmental degradation and conflict intersect to intensify systemic inequalities. In fragile contexts like Pakistan, climate change acts as a threat multiplier, deepening existing socio-political vulnerabilities and placing disproportionate burdens on marginalized groups. Displaced Afghans in Pakistan, especially women, face layered vulnerabilities stemming from intersecting legal, gender, and ethnic identities. Despite hosting over more than four million Afghan refugees for more than four decades, Pakistan's legal regime of refugees into registered (Proof of Registration card holders), unregistered (Afghan Citizen Card holders), asylum seekers, and undocumented individuals exacerbates the precarity of their legal and social status.

This study explores the lived experiences of displaced Afghan women in the aftermath of the devastating 2022 floods in Quetta, Balochistan. It examines how climate change intensifies vulnerabilities among women across legal categories, leading to secondary and tertiary displacement, heightened gender-based violence, malnutrition, health deterioration, and early child marriages, often as coping mechanisms to repay flood-related debts. This research also explores the precarious refuge of these Afghans in unsafe concrete structures like shopping malls and local stores, and of undocumented individuals who remained in their damaged mud homes, heightened their vulnerability during the disaster, especially for women and girls.

Employing a qualitative case study (pilot and actual) approach, the research draws on open-ended, semi-structured interviews, field notes, and ethnographic observations from both urban and rural refugee settings. A strategic convenience sampling strategy allowed the inclusion of Afghan women from diverse legal and ethnic standings, while the second phase involved consultations with stakeholders such as the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA), UN refugee agencies, and humanitarian organizations. Through this multi-perspective lens, the study captures how legal and ethnic identities,

institutional neglect and structural exclusion exacerbate the crisis for Afghan women already on the margins.

This research offers critical insights into the nexus of environmental displacement and gender-based violence, emphasizing how legal ambiguity and exclusion from formal aid systems heighten risk. Yet, it also highlights community resilience. In the absence of sufficient state or international support, the study advocates for the inclusion of religious institutions such as mosques as part of the climate disaster response infrastructure. These institutions can function not only as shelters but also as hubs for mobilizing local charitable resources (e.g., zakat and sadaqah) in emergencies. The research recommends a more inclusive, localized approach to climate aid by leveraging religious spaces like mosques as safe havens during crises.

The findings contribute to broader debates on climate justice, displacement, and gender, urging policymakers and development actors to adopt inclusive aid frameworks that recognize displaced populations especially women as central stakeholders. As South Asia continues to face recurrent climate disasters and growing refugee populations, this research calls for more equitable and community-anchored approaches to relief, rehabilitation, and resilience-building to make sure that the legally vulnerable women are not left behind in the pursuit of climate adaptation and humanitarian response.

Why is the participation rate of young Muslim women low in the formal workforce?

A research study conducted in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh – Durraïn Desvani, Azim Premji University, India

Time and again data has shown that the Women Labour Force Participation has been extremely low in India (PLFS). This drastic differences in the participation rate, despite the rising economic growth raises concerning questions. In addition, the Muslim participation in the workforce have been low in comparison to their population as well as other religions. Adding the above two situations, the Muslim women participation in the formal workforce would only become worse as the numbers fall even more. The author has narrowed it down to formal employment as two-tiered workforce exists, and while the permanent workers are on a decline, the number of contract workers increase leading to growing informalisation of the formal sector.

Given that Bhopal has a history of Begums ruling from 1819 to 1926, who worked for women's education and took certain administrative decisions – this low participation of young Muslim women from Bhopal becomes important for scrutiny. The author has used snowball and purposive sampling methods to find interviewees and has conducted 25 in-depth interviews of Muslim women from Bhopal. These women fall in the age group of 18-35 and have been born and brought up in Bhopal. While some continue to work in Bhopal, others have moved outside in lieu of their higher education, job and marriage.

The findings that have emerged include looking at Muslim women through their intersectional position of gender and religion, in order to analyse their experiences at workforce. Muslim women's aspiration, how these choices have been shaped in the background of class, gender and religion is the second pertinent theme. The author has also attempted to understand the meaning Muslim women derive from paid work, beyond fulfilling the economic needs. Next, the internal and external challenges faced by Muslim women have been brought forth – within home and at the workplace respectively. These include domestic norms at home, responsibilities and restrictions post- marriage and hiring bias, toxic bosses and harassment at the workplace. Finally, the author has shown how the Muslim women wearing Hijab often face this discrimination more as they are '*visibly Muslims*' and are often perceived as being 'oppressed', 'backward' and 'not having a choice'. To gain an understanding of the practice of *Purdah* and what it means, the author has drawn from Kirmani's work on deconstructing and reconstructing 'Muslim women' through women's narratives and have extended the argument in the workplace. Finally, a minor

theme which emerged is how these Muslim women negotiate by avoiding or fighting, given this complexity of norms, as well as discrimination at workplaces.

These themes have to be consciously seen in the light of the current political situation in India where Muslims are increasingly marginalized and Muslim women are a minority amongst minorities. The author pushes for the need to listen and capture the multifaceted experiences of Muslim women to understand their experiences, instead of assuming their position in the society.

Bios of panellists and participants

Husna Ahmad OBE is the CEO of Global One 2015 which is a faith based International NGO focussed on women. She is an Honorary Professor in Practice at the Computer Science Department of UCL, London University. She is also an Associate Professor at the Department of Arts and Law at the University of Birmingham. She is the Co-chair of IXN for Good at UCL. Prof Ahmad has been appointed the Chair of the Steering Committee of UNEP's Faith for Earth Initiative. She is also a member of the Interfaith Women's Council of UNEP. She is a key Adviser of the Global Muslim Business Forum GMBF. She is a member of the Multi faith Advisory Council to the UN Inter-agency Task Force on Religion and Development. Prof. Ahmad sits on the Steering Committee of The World Bank's Moral Imperative Initiative. She is currently a Board member of Faith for the Climate, Palmers Green Mosque (the MCEC). She is also a member of the Women's Faith Forum UK; and Executive committee member of Barnet Multi Faith Forum. Husna is an international speaker, author and thought leader, focusing particularly on faith, gender, environment and peacebuilding. She is the Secretary General of the World Muslim Leadership Forum and the Coordinator for the Alliance of NGOs and CSOs for South-South Cooperation [ANSSC] which works in collaboration with the UN office of South South Cooperation. She was appointed an Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) in the New Year's Honours list in 2010 for her services to disadvantaged people for work promoting social justice with disadvantaged communities.

Maha Akeel has over 20 years of diverse experience in media, intergovernmental organizations, and academia focusing on social development through women, youth and family empowerment and strategic communications. She was a journalist before joining the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), as the first professional woman to work there and the first female to hold a leadership position as Director of Communications and Chief Editor of the OIC Journal, and later as Director of Social Affairs and Senior Advisor. After completing her term at OIC, Ms. Akeel joined Dar Al Hekma University as a lecturer in the Diplomacy and International Relations Department. She is also an independent strategy and policy consultant on gender equality, social development, and public diplomacy. She holds a bachelor's degree in communications and a minor's degree in Business Administration from California State University of Fullerton in California. She has also completed 3 master's degrees: MBA from Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, an M.A. in Communications & Cultural Studies from the University of Calgary, Canada, and an M.A. in Gender in Global Politics from SOAS, University of London. Her thesis was on the factors affecting Muslim women's participation in peace processes. Ms. Akeel is a public speaker, author, and columnist. She has published a book on Saudi women in the media, two Policy Briefs for the G20 on multilateralism, and many opinion articles in national and international newspapers and magazines as well as articles in academic journals on issues related to social development, women empowerment, and international relations. She recently succeeded in being a member of the exclusive leadership programme of the UN Senior Women Talent Pipeline as the first Saudi woman to join the programme.

Ahmed Al-Dawoody is the legal adviser for Islamic law and jurisprudence at the ICRC in Geneva, Switzerland. He also teaches at the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights. Prior to joining the ICRC, he was an Assistant Professor in Islamic Studies and Islamic law and jurisprudence at Al-Azhar University in Cairo. He was the Assistant Director of Graduate Studies for the Institute for Islamic World Studies and the coordinator of the MA program in Contemporary Islamic Studies at Zayed University in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. He taught in Egypt, the USA, the UK, the UAE and Switzerland. He earned his PhD from the University of Birmingham, UK; his MA from Leiden University, the Netherlands; and BA from Al-Azhar University, Egypt. He has published more than two dozen articles and book chapters on Islamic Law and is the author of *The Islamic Law of War: Justifications and Regulations* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

Fatema S. Alnoaimi is a Senior External Affairs Specialist at Qatar Charity, where she leads on strategic partnerships and memberships. Her work focuses on building meaningful collaborations with international organizations, UN agencies, NGOs, and diplomatic missions. She is also the focal point for Qatar Charity's engagement in the Grand Bargain and oversees the development of institutional agreements and MoUs. Though she formally joined the humanitarian field in 2024, Fatema's interest in this work goes back to childhood, driven by a deep desire to be part of something that brings hope and dignity to others. She transitioned from a background in media and communications to advocacy and humanitarian affairs, where her skills in relationship-building and strategic outreach could be directed toward impact. Fatema played a central role in launching the Humanitarian Impact Forum in partnership with UNOCHA in 2025 and continues to shape its first full edition. She holds a BA in Communications and Public Relations from UCB, and an MSc in International Management from the University of the West of England. For her, inclusion, especially of women, is not a policy, but an instinct deeply rooted in culture and faith.

Hany El-Banna was born in Egypt and earned his MBBCh in Medicine from Al Azhar University, Cairo, where he also completed a Diploma in Islamic Studies in 1976. He later moved to the UK and was awarded the Hamilton Bailey Prize in Medicine at City Hospital, Birmingham, in 1981. He went on to complete a Doctorate in foetal pathology (MD) from the University of Birmingham Medical School in 1991. Dr El-Banna is best known as the founder of Islamic Relief, the largest Western-based Muslim international relief and development NGO. He is also the founder or co-founder of several other key humanitarian initiatives, including: The World Humanitarian Action Forum (WHAF): A global platform fostering collaboration among humanitarian and development actors to improve service to crisis-affected communities; The Muslim Charities Forum (MCF): An umbrella body for Muslim-led charities in the UK, promoting coordination and capacity building; and Zakat House: A charitable initiative grounded in the Islamic principle of zakat, supporting smaller UK-based charities, offering guidance, and funding social projects for those in need locally and globally.

Ali-Reza Bhojani is Assistant Professor of Islamic Ethics at the University of Birmingham with research interests spanning Islamic ethics, jurisprudence, and theology. Trained in both traditional Islamic seminary settings and Western academic institutions, Dr Bhojani brings a uniquely grounded yet critical lens to the study of Islamic intellectual traditions. His work engages deeply with Islamic legal theory in Shi'i thought and the wider Islamic traditions, particularly focusing on the moral and epistemological frameworks that shape Muslim ethical reasoning. Dr Bhojani is the author of *Moral Rationalism and Shari'a* and has published widely on issues ranging from plurality and authority to ethical speech and artificial intelligence. In the context of Islamic philanthropy, Dr Bhojani is interested in how classical principles and contemporary challenges interact in shaping both the practices and the ideas around Muslim charitable giving in plural contexts.

Haris bin Aziz is an academic, author and journalist based in Pakistan, working at the intersection of politics, religion, and rights. He completed his PhD in Politics and International Relations, with a focus on freedom of expression and political Islam in post-9/11 Europe. His book, "Freedom of Expression Debates in Europe and the Muslim World after 9/11" (Lexington Books, 2023), explores the contested boundaries of secularism and speech across global contexts. He has held visiting academic positions at institutions including the University of Oxford, LSE, the University of Cambridge, King's College London, Columbia University, and the University of London among other universities across Europe. Alongside his academic work, he produces research-based journalism for Pakistan's leading news network, focusing on human rights, environmental justice, and minority issues.

Kaja Borchgrevink is a Senior Researcher at the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO), specializing in the intersections of religion, development, and humanitarian aid. Her research explores Muslim philanthropy, the role of faith-based actors in global development, and the politics of aid more broadly - often with a focus on gender and transnational dynamics. Kaja currently leads the project Religious Gender Justice Activism (GenderJustice) and Developmental Peace? Perceptions of China's Engagement in Pakistan and Afghanistan (AsiaPeace). She led the recently completed research project The Power of Ideas: Muslim Humanitarians and the SDGs (HUMA), investigating how Muslim humanitarian actors engage with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with case studies from Indonesia, Pakistan and Nigeria. Kaja has published widely on Muslim philanthropy, humanitarian financing, and the evolving role of Muslim NGOs in international aid. Her recent work includes analyses of transnational zakat management, the UNHCR Refugee Zakat Fund, and Muslim humanitarian responses to COVID-19. Kaja holds extensive field experience and brings a critical, interdisciplinary lens to her work on religion, aid and social justice.

Durrain Desnavi recently completed her Master's in Development from Azim Premji University, Bangalore. Her areas of interest include gender, religion, and the socio-political realities of Muslim women in India. Her previous work—ranging from the experiences of women during the 1947 Partition to the impact of climate-induced heat stress on marginalized communities—has been published in academic journals, policy reports, and online platforms. As a part of her postgraduate research study, she conducted a research study on young Muslim women in Bhopal to understand the *low participation of Muslim women in the formal workforce*. These experiences were understood through the voices of 25 Muslim women from Bhopal. The results of the research study show that this cause of Muslim women, and their participation in the workforce becomes important, not only because it is challenging for a Muslim woman to pursue her interests outside home, but also because there exists layers of discrimination at the workplace, including hiring bias, prejudices and exclusionary practices in professional space. Hailing from the city of Bhopal herself, she advocates for the need to listen and capture the multifaceted experiences of Muslim women to understand their experiences, instead of assuming their position in the society.

Amelia Fauzia is professor in Islamic history and culture at Faculty of Arts and Humanities, State Islamic University (UIN) Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, with expertise on Islamic philanthropy. She is head of Institute for Research and Community Outreach (LPPM) and Director of Social Trust Fund (STF) at Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University (UIN) Jakarta. She received her master's degree from Leiden University (1998) and PhD from Melbourne University (2009). She has conducted research on Islamic philanthropy since 2003, led the project 'philanthropy for social justice in Muslim societies' (ends in 2006). She was a member of Indonesia national waqf board in 2013-2018. Her research interest and publication are on Islamic history, Islamic philanthropy, and women economic empowerment, looking at dynamics of socio-religious movements. Among her publication are *Faith and the State, A History of Islamic Philanthropy in Indonesia* (Brill, 2013), 'Waqf making and commercial cemeteries: religious circulation and commodification of the economy of giving' (*The Muslim World*, 2018), Transnational Zakat Management: Transformations in the Humanitarian Sector – with Borchgrevink (*Muslim Philanthropy and*

Civil Society, 2025), and *Women Entrepreneurs and Business Empowerment in Muslim Countries* – with Sakai (Palgrave McMillan, 2022).

Lamees Hafeez is the Director of Strategy and Communications at Muslim Aid. She has worked in international development since 2008, starting in campaigns, advocacy and development education, and has a Masters in Humanitarianism and Conflict response. She is committed to capacity building, partnerships and working local. From 2013, she worked extensively on the Syria response based mostly in Türkiye and Iraq, with travel across the region. During this time, she established field offices, worked on cross border programming, institutional donor funding and partnerships, and advocated on behalf of Syrian NGOs. She was a founding member of the Partnerships Initiative and the Syrian NGO Alliance. More recently, she has worked at HQ level in the UK on programmes in Yemen, Palestine, and Bangladesh, as well as the Türkiye/Syria earthquake response. Lamees Hafeez has extensive experience in the humanitarian and charity sector. She has held various roles at organisations such as Muslim Aid UK, Human Appeal, and the Muslim Council of Britain, Union of Medical and Relief Organisations (UOSSM), Human Care Syria, Watan, Concern Worldwide, Big Heart Foundation, Syria Relief, and the Muslim Jewish Conference. Her responsibilities have included program coordination, leadership, advocacy, partnership coordination, and operational management. She's also been involved in strategic planning, fundraising, budgeting, and staff management.

David Hudson is Professor of Politics and Development at the University of Birmingham and Director of the Development Leadership Program (DLP). He is also Head of the International Development Department. He has written widely on the politics of development, in particular on the role of coalitions, leadership and power in reform processes and how development actors can think and work politically as part of the Developmental Leadership Program; the drivers of global migration, finance and trade and how these processes shape national development; and how people in rich countries engage with global development issues, as part of the Gates Foundation's Development Engagement Lab and the Aid Attitudes Tracker before that. Current and recent research projects involve fieldwork or data collection in Fiji, France, The Gambia, Germany, Indonesia, Jamaica, Myanmar, Rwanda, Senegal, Solomon Islands, UK, and the US and uses a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods, including survey data, network analysis, as well as experiments, text analysis, interviews and focus groups.

Mahboob Hussain is a UK-based strategist with over 15 years of experience in the non-profit sector, specialising in strategic communications, coalition building, and diaspora engagement. His work has supported a range of faith-led, philanthropic, and advocacy organisations nationally and internationally, with a focus on mobilising resources and networks to address inequality and humanitarian need. He is currently supporting Every Pregnancy with UK partner engagement for its convening series, connecting charities, donors, and influencers to advance maternal and newborn health outcomes in crisis-affected and displaced communities.

Fadi Itani is the Chief Executive Officer of the Muslim Charities Forum, he was the former Deputy Director General of Qatar Charity UK and before that was the Global Director for Communications and External Relations at Islamic Relief. He also served as the CEO of Zakat House, a hub for small charities and was seconded to the Humanitarian Forum as the Public Affairs Director. He has a wealth of experience in the community and charity sector, spanning over 30 years of service. He was the former Executive Director of Muslim Welfare House (MWH) Trust, a national community organisation. He was awarded the "Good Citizenship Award" and the "Mayor of Islington's Civic Award " for servicing the community and the Mayor of London Award for his services to the people of London.

Pamela Jabbar is a scholar-advocate who specialises in gender and social justice. Her doctoral work at the University of Birmingham was funded by a scholarship from its International Development

Department (IDD). Her PhD research examined how feminist, Islamic, and development discourses intersect in contemporary constructions of gender justice, with a focus on UK Muslim Faith-Based Organisations in the post-9/11 era. Drawing on over twenty years of community-engaged research across academic, voluntary, and public sectors, she interrogates how power/knowledge, gender, religion, and ethnicity intersect within postcolonial settings. Her community-based and scholarly work employs transformative, participatory action methods - decolonial, diasporic, and feminist praxis - with an interdisciplinary framework. Pamela welcomes collaborations with researchers and practitioners in social and gender justice.

Salma Moustafa Khalil is an interdisciplinary researcher, editor, translator, and archivist. Her work is at the intersection of ethnography, sociology, and political philosophy. Her work explores themes of (forced) migration, political/social mobilisation, and the politics of knowledge production. She is currently pursuing a PhD in Social and Cultural Anthropology at the University of Manchester. Her research explores artistic and intellectual production as forms of activism among Arab diasporic communities in Berlin and London. Salma also serves as Editorial Assistant at the LSE Middle East Centre where she edits and translates research papers addressing urban development, forced displacement, political corruption and gender empowerment. Independently, her translations have appeared in publications including the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS). Finally, Salma is Radical Archivist at Healing Justice London (HJL) working on developing new methodologies of archiving the work of social movements.

Anwar Khan is currently the CEO of AK Spark Consulting and consults with nonprofits in the US and internationally. He is a Co-Founder of Islamic Relief USA, with over 30 years of experience working in the field of humanitarian and development assistance at IRUSA. During his tenure at IR USA, he held various roles, ultimately becoming CEO and President. He is currently serving on the board of World Food Program USA, Alliance to End Hunger, and the American Muslim Community Foundation. Anwar also served on the Muslim Advisory Council at Lilly School of Philanthropy, Indiana University. He holds a B.S. in Medical Biochemistry from the University of Birmingham, U.K., and an M.A. in Philanthropic Studies from Indiana University, Indianapolis.

Mohammed R. Kroessin is a socio-economic development practitioner with over 20 years' experience of working with Islamic development and financial institutions on strategies for sustainable development, climate finance and social impact. Mohammed holds a Masters in international political economy (Kent, UK) and a Masters in development management (Westminster Business School, UK). He has completed his PhD at the University of Birmingham (UK) in Islamic development finance. He was a Research Associate at the University of Birmingham, a Visiting Research Fellow at Aston Business School and is currently a lecturer (guest faculty) in Islamic Microfinance at the Frankfurt School of Finance and Management, Germany. He has formerly worked for Chambers of Commerce and the Centre for Enterprise in the UK, was Asst. CEO of Muslim Aid and is now heading Islamic Relief's Global Islamic Microfinance Unit where he leads a portfolio of 10 country financial inclusion programmes. Mohammed has worked with Islamic development finance institutions in Africa, Asia and the Middle East, sits on the board of two microfinance institutions in the Balkans, and is the founder of GEMicro, an Islamic social finance advisory firm.

René Lindstädt is Head of the School of Government at the University of Birmingham and Professor of Government and Data Science. He also serves as one of the editors of the British Journal of Political Science. His main research and teaching areas are American politics and political institutions, political economy, and political methodology, with particular interests in political accountability and representation, data science, social learning and diffusion and strategic communication and cooperation. His research has been published in, among others, the *American Journal of Political Science*, *Political Analysis*, the *Journal of Politics*, the *British Journal of Political Science*, and *Comparative Political Studies*.

Professor Lindstädt's ongoing research includes, among others, projects on ideological congruence and representation, the electoral politics of war, and electoral competitiveness.

Priyanka Mokale is currently pursuing her Ph.D. at the University of Birmingham, Department of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences. She is working on Mumbai City's Rehabilitation and Resettlement housing policy and its impacts on the Marginalised communities of India, with special focus on Scheduled caste and Muslim communities. Before joining for her Ph.D., Priyanka had been involved in various social activities, and she worked as a Manager at the Aga Khan Agency for Habitat India, a leading NGO that works on climate change, housing, sanitation, agriculture, and livelihoods in rural and urban India. She also worked at Shelter Associates, a Pune-based NGO that focuses on sanitation and toilet infrastructure, as well as housing in metropolitan cities in India, primarily Navi Mumbai, Pune, and Kolhapur. She has completed her master's in urban policy and governance from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. In her master's dissertation, she focused on solid waste management in religious places of India. She then completed her M.Phil. in Development Studies at the same institute. In her M.Phil. dissertation, she examined the implementation of the 25% reservation policy under Section 12(1)(c) of the Right to Education Act to understand the enrolment percentage of disadvantaged communities in India.

Yaseen Muhammed KA is a distinguished Islamic studies scholar and sociologist with over ten years of academic experience, including a comprehensive degree in Islamic Studies from Darul Huda Islamic University (DHIU). Currently pursuing research at Pondicherry University's Department of Sociology, he specializes in interdisciplinary approaches that bridge Islamic scholarship with contemporary social analysis. Under the UNESCO Chair on "Translation and Migration," he conducted significant research on fiction literature, particularly focusing on Ayyamul Maaiz, and delivered a virtual workshop on "Kerala-Gulf Migration and Literary Perspectives in Aadu Jeevitham." His scholarly contributions include publications in prestigious journals such as Research Ethics: Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies and the King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies, alongside articles in Limelight English Magazine and Kerala History Magazine. He has presented at numerous national and international conferences, from Ibn Khaldun University in Istanbul to IIT Mandi, addressing topics spanning systematic discrimination, eco-tourism, educational development, and Islamic philosophy. His expertise extends beyond academia into debate championships, where he achieved national recognition including finalist positions at the Back Waters National Debate Championship (IIM Kozhikode) and presentations at Qatar's 2nd International Conference on Debate & Dialogue. Fluent in English, Urdu, Malayalam, and Arabic, he combines rigorous academic research with creative pursuits including writing and visual arts, positioning himself as a dynamic scholar bridging traditional Islamic studies with contemporary social discourse.

Muhammad Nabil is a Research Fellow with the 'Making Aid Work for Displaced Women' project. He's a PhD candidate in Near and Middle East at SOAS University of London, where he researches contemporary institutional praxis of British Muslim charities in a multicultural and cosmopolitan society (i.e., the UK). His research explores charitable impetus in faith canons, charitable endeavours of past traditions and generations, and contemporary charitable work of British charities that overlap several research areas of the Making Aid Work project. Following formative training in language and communications, most recently as an Erasmus Mundus scholar, he worked for over a decade with research, media and development organisations, public policy think-tank, academia and a language centre based in the global South and the UK. He's been a visiting fellow at Imperial College London. His research interests include humanitarian interventions, charitable and voluntary work; representation of ethnic cultures, and language education.

Nafisa Nasar graduated with a BS in International Relations (IR) in 2020 and recently completed her MS in IR from BUIITEMS. She is also a Commonwealth Scholar and is pursuing an MSc in International Development Studies (Conflict, Security & Development) at the University of Birmingham as a distance

learner. Since 2020, she has been working as a Programme & Research Assistant at the International Center for Refugee and Migration Studies (ICRMS) and has collaborated as an external Senior Research Assistant with the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Her graduation with distinction from Oxford's Refugee Studies Centre's course on Refugee and Forced Migration Studies, along with her participation in the Kaldor Centre for International Refugee Law's Displaced Scholars Mentoring Program, highlights her academic and professional passion for forced displacement and migration studies. She has been building the leadership, capacity, and advocacy skills of rural women in Balochistan with the Balochistan Rural Support Program (BRSP). Nafisa has conducted a research study on the "Climate-Induced Vulnerabilities of Afghans (Registered, Unregistered, Asylum Seekers, and Undocumented) in Balochistan, Pakistan." She has presented her research findings at various international conferences and one national symposium. She is now working on two research papers that assess the climate-induced vulnerabilities faced by Afghan refugees with various legal statuses (i.e., registered, unregistered, asylum seekers, and undocumented) living in urban informal refugee settlements in District Quetta.

Natalia Paszkiewicz is a Research Fellow working on 'Making Aid Work for Displaced Women' project. She has joined the team following twenty years of work with migrants and refugees in different capacities, including as a researcher and as a practitioner in NGO and humanitarian sectors. Natalia is committed to applied anthropology and interdisciplinary research aimed at transforming structures which govern forced migration, with a focus on women seeking protection. In her previous role as Project Manager, she worked on the UKRI-funded research and innovation project 'Bridging religious studies, gender & development and public health to address domestic violence: A novel approach for Ethiopia, Eritrea and the UK' at SOAS University of London. The project was dedicated to the development and strengthening of religio-culturally sensitive domestic violence alleviation systems. Natalia completed her PhD in Social Policy at the University of Brighton, and her thesis explored the intersection between UK asylum policy and statutory social services responses to asylum seekers and refugees in the theoretical framework of ethics of care. For her postdoctoral research on the project entitled 'Healthy Housing for the Displaced' at the University of Bath, she conducted fieldwork in displacement settings in Jordan, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Bangladesh, Turkey, Nepal and Peru.

Beata Polok specializes in Public International Law and the compatibility of Sharia law with international standards. She earned her PhD from the University of Silesia in Poland, where she focused on studying marriage law in Pakistan. She has worked at various universities in Pakistan and served as a gender expert in international organizations since 2018. In 2023, she was granted a research fellowship at the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies. Currently, Dr. Polok is an Assistant Professor at Dar Al-Hekma University in Jeddah, where she teaches a range of subjects related to Public International Law. Her published works cover topics such as women's rights and the evolving landscape of Islamic law, particularly in the context of ongoing reforms in Saudi Arabia.

Ayda Apa Pomesnikov is a Ph.D. candidate in the Interdisciplinary Ph.D. Program in Near and Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Washington. She holds an M.A. in Transcultural Studies from Heidelberg University, Germany, and a B.A. in Sociology from Boğaziçi University, Turkey. Her research interests include forced migration, refugee and diaspora studies, comparative humanitarianism, and gender in Muslim-majority contexts. Her dissertation, "The Prophet Was a Refugee Too: Syrian Refugee Women's Search for Belonging in Turkey," draws on two years of ethnographic fieldwork conducted as a United States Institute of Peace Fellow (2019–2021).

Carole Rakodi is a social scientist with varied research interests, including urban poverty, land and housing in developing country cities and the roles played by religion in society. She worked for the Zambian government for seven years and for the UK Department for International Development in Kenya, before taking up posts in the Department of City and Regional Planning in Cardiff University and the International Development Department in the University of Birmingham. From 2005-2011 she was

Director of the Religions and Development Research Programme based in the International Development Department, School of Government and Society. Her own research was in Zambia and Zimbabwe and she has worked with research colleagues in Kenya, South Africa, Nigeria, Ghana, Tanzania, India and Pakistan.

Bushra Rehman is the Child Protection and Inclusion Advisor at Islamic Relief Worldwide. She holds a Master's in International Development (Conflict, Security and Development) from the University of Birmingham and is the recipient of the Development Studies Association Award for her dissertation which explored the intersection of gender and disability in displacement settings. Bushra has extensive experience managing SIDA-funded projects within Islamic Relief, delivering capacity-building training on safeguarding, protection, and inclusion and has a strong commitment to inclusive and protective humanitarian programming.

Amjad Saleem is a seasoned peacebuilding, humanitarian, and development leader, driving impactful change across diverse global contexts. With extensive experience at the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), International Alert, The Commonwealth Foundation, and Muslim Aid, he has spearheaded initiatives focused on youth engagement, interfaith action, inclusion and anti-racism, conflict resolution, and policy development. Amjad is a thought leader, through his publications, including "Lessons from Aceh" and the recently released "Routledge Handbook on Contemporary Sri Lanka," which contribute to critical discourse on contemporary challenges. He actively serves on the boards of the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform and Muslim Aid UK, guiding strategic direction and impact. Amjad's academic credentials include a PhD from Exeter University, an MBA from Manipal Global Nxt Malaysia, and an M.Eng from Imperial College London. He is an alumnus of the US State Department's International Visitors Leadership Program and the Geneva Centre for Security Policy, and holds fellowships at Universiti Malaya, the Centre for Conflict and Humanitarian Studies (Doha), and Sunway University Centre for Planetary Health, further solidifying his expertise and influence.

Abdul Samad is the Associate Director of the Muslim Philanthropy Initiative at the Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy. He is a research scholar and the author of *Nonprofit Collaborations in Diverse Communities: Challenges and Opportunities in Muslim-led Organizations*. Abdul designs and delivers professional development programs for nonprofit leaders around the world. His research focuses on philanthropy, nonprofit leadership, and civic engagement among marginalized communities. He has also consulted with foundations, nonprofits, and government agencies to help translate research into practical, community-driven solutions.

Kashif Shabir is the Founder of Ethical Consulting Group, where he advises charities, family offices, and philanthropic institutions on strategic giving, governance, and impact. With over 20 years of experience across the social impact, digital transformation, and charity sectors, Kashif has become a trusted advisor to some of the most generous family offices in the UK and beyond. He is currently serving as Strategic Advisor to UNHCR on Islamic Philanthropy, helping shape partnerships with global Muslim funders to support refugee needs. Previously, he held executive leadership roles including CEO of Muslim Aid UK and Interim CEO of Mercy Mission World, where he led the growth of Europe's largest Islamic Donor Advised Fund (DAF). Kashif began his career in San Francisco's tech sector, later transitioning to senior roles at global charities including Oxfam and the British Red Cross, where he led digital and strategic change initiatives. He has served on advisory boards including BOND, the Directory of Social Change, and currently, Muslim Aid USA. A qualified executive coach, Kashif is also a strong advocate for inclusive leadership and sector-wide innovation.

Syed Muaz Shah is a legal academic and lawyer with experience in development, human rights and Islamic jurisprudence. He served as Director of the Center for Human Rights at Ziauddin University

Faculty of Law, Politics and Governance for 5 years where he spearheaded advocacy, research and policy initiatives around women's rights and refugee rights. He works closely with regional ICRC office in South Asia around research in understanding Islamic law in the context of International Humanitarian Law and has written multiple papers including "Sexual Violence during Armed Conflict and OSV: An Islamic Historical Perspective". He has worked as an Islamic legal expert with UNWOMEN, UNICEF and UNFPA on the issues of child marriage and serves with the National Commission on the Rights of a Child (NCRC) in Pakistan in a similar capacity. He has been associated with the International Center for Refugee and Migration Studies (ICRMS) at BUIITEMS University, a project of UNHCR in Quetta, Balochistan, where has conducted multiple policy dialogues, refugee community engagements and research focused on Afghan refugees since 2022. He is currently a Research Associate with the Making Aid Work project and is pursuing his LLM in International Law at the Geneva Graduate Institute.

Said Sheik-Abdi is a notable humanitarian and changemaker. He currently serves as the Global Head of Islamic Philanthropy Fund Unit at the United Nations' Migration Agency also known as International Organization for Migration (IOM) headquartered in Geneva. Previously, he was Senior Private Sector Partnership Lead where he led partnerships. He also held the Senior Regional Strategic Advisor position for East and Horn of Africa at IOM. Said is recognized for his expertise in humanitarian aid, partnerships, and diaspora engagement, advising governments and communities in the US, UK, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, UK, Turkey, and Somalia. Prior to joining IOM, he worked for international organizations, the Minneapolis Public Housing Authority, and international media. In the past, he has been invited multiple times to the White House and State Department to provide guidance on diaspora, remittance and humanitarian aid, and was among the few African descendants to advise President Obama on his first trip to Africa. Said played a key role in several humanitarian campaigns, including the I AM A STAR campaign, which won the Peter Drucker Award for nonprofit innovation in 2012 and Creative Coordinator Award along with Turkish Airlines in 2018. Throughout his career, he has led humanitarian missions in Somalia, Uganda, Congo, and Bangladesh, raised millions of dollars for social causes through both public and private sector, and oversaw innovative projects, including those funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. His contributions have been recognized by San Diego State University and the Global Donors Forum.

Ainuska Sheripkanova is a social work and social policy specialist with over 10 years of experience, professional as well as voluntary, in both frontline service provision and management of social policy initiatives and programs in Central Asia, the United States, the Caucasus region, Russian Federation and Scotland, UK. She graduated with a Social Work Master's degree from Columbia University in New York. She has worked with international organizations such as UNHCR, UN Women, OSCE, and international NGOs on a variety of projects and has translated project aims into tangible results on the ground. Her key areas of expertise include researching social policy issues, face-to-face social work interventions, case management, client interviewing, project management and implementation, devising policy options on social inclusion issues, GBV prevention and response and cross-cultural work. In addition to native Kyrgyz and native-standard Russian, she speaks fluent English and Arabic. Ainuska decided to pursue her PhD study at QMU Edinburgh in 2023 in order to underpin her years of practical experience with what she considers to be a useful and relevant intellectual framework, and to reflect on her work experience internationally with displaced populations, especially women and children.

Halifet Ayemohammed Yusuf is an Ethiopian lawyer born and raised in Saudi Arabia. She teaches law at Wollo University in Ethiopia. She is a research associate on the project *Geopolitics at the Margins – Exploring Emergent Political Orders Across the Red Sea* at the Institute for Peace and Security Studies (IPSS), Addis Ababa University, in collaboration with the University of Gothenburg. Her research focuses on the political dynamics of labour migration between the Horn of Africa and the Gulf states. Alongside her academic work, she serves as a Human Rights Officer and the Focal Person for Dessie City at the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC). She is a board member of the Ethiopian Women Human Rights Defenders Network (EWHRDN). Halifet holds an MA in Applied Islamic Ethics from Hamad Bin Khalifa University, where her thesis examined the detention and deportation of Ethiopian migrants from



the GCC through the lenses of Islamic ethics and international human rights. She also holds an LLM in Human Rights Law from Addis Ababa University, with a thesis on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam and the right to development in the Nile Basin.

Logistical information

Below you will find all the key information you need in order to plan your travel and stay at the symposium.

Similar to Google maps, the university also has a helpful [Campus maps](#) tool to help you navigate through the campus.

Event Details

Venue: Pevsner Room, Edgbaston Park Hotel, 53 Edgbaston Park Road, Birmingham B15 2RS

Dinner (8 September, 5.30pm): Akbar's Restaurant, 184 Hagley Road, Birmingham B16 9NY

Getting There

By Train: The nearest train station is **University station**, which is a 13 minute walk from the venue.

You may also connect to the University station via our main train stations; Birmingham New Street, located in Central Birmingham or Birmingham International, located at the airport.

- **Birmingham New Street** [7 minutes]
- **Birmingham International** [29 minutes]

Taxi: Taxis are readily available from all local stations and airports. Recommended taxi providers:

- **TOA Taxis** (Central Birmingham) 0121 427 8888
- Uber, Bolt.

By Car: If you're driving, there is on-site and nearby parking available. Closest parking options:

- **Edgbaston Park Hotel** (Edgbaston Park Hotel, 53 Edgbaston Park Road, Birmingham B15 2RS) – free on-site parking (limited spaces) validate at reception
- **North-East Multi-storey** (First Parking LLP, University of Birmingham - North East, Pritchatts Road, Birmingham, B15 2SA) - Pay and display, 8-6pm (free outside of these hours)

Airport

The closest and most popular airport is **Birmingham International**, approximately 29 minutes by train (connecting via New street) or 33 minutes by car.

Local Accommodation

For those needing an overnight stay, here are some recommended nearby hotels:

- **Edgbaston Park Hotel** (Edgbaston Park Hotel, 53 Edgbaston Park Road, Birmingham B15 2RS) - [booking/more info](#)
- **Lucas House Conference Centre** (48 Edgbaston Park Rd, Birmingham B15 2RA) - 3 minute walk – [booking/more info](#)

- **Peter Scott House** (Edgbaston Park Rd, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 2RA) – 4 minute walk – [booking/more info](#)

We recommend booking early to secure the best rates.

Weather

September marks the start of autumn in the UK. You can expect a real mix of weather — some sunshine, but definitely matched with rainfall! We'd advise you to bring a coat and umbrella for any unexpected downpours during your time here.

Average temperatures: 14°C to 19°C (57°F to 66°F)

Chance of rain: Approximately 35%

Key contacts

If you have any issues, please reach out to makingaidwork@contacts.bham.ac.uk

Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech

The University of Birmingham is an academic community of staff and students, a place for open, critical thinking, and the creation, sharing and dissemination of knowledge. We are a university that teaches, researches, and applies knowledge in a comprehensive range of subjects. In this environment, academic freedom, and freedom of speech, are fundamental: -the ability of all our members freely to challenge prevailing orthodoxies, query the positions and views of others, and to put forward ideas that may sometimes be radical or dissenting in their formulation. We are committed to securing freedom of speech within the law for all our members, staff, students and visiting speakers. We are also committed to ensuring academic freedom for all academic staff and any visiting academics invited by the University, its staff or students.

Conduct of the Meeting

The chair and Principal Organiser of an event have a duty to ensure as far as possible that both the audience and the speaker act in accordance with the law during the course of the event. They have a particular responsibility to uphold the University's obligation to protect lawful freedom of speech.

Attendees must normally have the freedom to choose where they may sit (except where specific seating is designated for speakers, or space is designated for other legitimate reasons, for example to meet disability access requirements, or where the activity is within the exemptions specified in the Equality Act 2010, such as a meeting held for the purposes of religious observance undertaken by the adherents of a particular faith). Organisers or Visiting Speakers must not place pressure on any woman to sit separately from men or vice versa as involuntary segregation will constitute unlawful discrimination. Genuinely voluntary segregation is permissible, but the organiser and the Authorising Officer would need evidence to satisfy themselves that any gender segregation was wholly and demonstrably voluntary, both at the booking stage and during the event.

If a speaker infringes the law (such as, for example, sexually harasses an attendee, or uses racial abuse, or does not have due regard to the need to prevent people being drawn into terrorism, or

threatens physical violence) the chair or Principal Organiser shall be at liberty to curtail or end the event, and refer the matter to the police.

Infringements of the procedures set out in this Code may render those responsible subject to disciplinary proceedings. If any such actions involve breaches of the law, the University will refer the matter to the police and assist them to implement the processes of law.

Guidelines for chairing

Chairing and moderating are intrinsic to a successful panel and conference. We ask all moderators to be respectful and mindful of diversity among the presenters and audience. Please keep the time of each presentation strictly to 12 minutes. To ensure there is enough time for discussion, we recommend that all questions are in the end of all presentations rather than after each individual paper. If you notice any breach of the current CoC during your session, please report to the conference helpers or contact... who will support and record the incident. Make sure you support the affected individual.

Presentation guidelines

Please arrive 10 minutes ahead of time for your panel. Keep your presentation to 12 minutes to respect the other presenters in your panel and the audience, and to allow sufficient time for discussion. If you are using slides, make sure to upload the presentation before the start of your session. We recommend that you avoid long quotes. If you do have long quotes or text, please make sure that it is read out loud for inclusivity. Please try to be mindful for neurodiverse or differently abled people in your audience.

Please note that we will be taking photos and recording the event. If you do not wish to feature in those, please let us know in advance and we will take care of your privacy.