



**THE ARAB ASSOCIATION**

**R E P O R T**

**ON HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE FOR VICTIMS OF THE FLOODS IN HADHRAMOUT**

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## Introduction

- 1.1 This Report focuses on the period November 2008 to March 2009 and provides an overview of how the humanitarian aid for victims of floods in Hadhramout was deployed. As a community organisation working for public benefit, the Arab Association (*Al-Wehdah Al-Arabiah Bi Singhafura*) is accountable to its members and the public.
- 1.2 When floods swept through the provinces of Hadhramout and Al-Mahara in October 2008, it caused much hardships and loss of lives. The devastation of the floods on 24 October 2008 was a long way from Singapore, yet the desire to help the victims was very close to home. In the wake of this tragedy, the Arab Association mobilised its members and volunteers immediately to discuss ways and means to aid the victims of the floods. The issues discussed during the meetings included formulation of strategy and the type of humanitarian needs of the floods victims. A total of five (5) people in two teams went on a disaster relief assistance mission. In all, \$85,000.00 worth of items were collected by Al-Wehdah

## 2. Disaster Relief Assistance

- 2.1 The first group of volunteers and relief workers left Singapore on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2008. Heading this group of volunteers from Al-Wehdah and a Mercy Relief medical team was Singapore's Non-Resident Ambassador to Yemen, Mr. Helmi Talib. The second group comprising Mr. Khalid Basharahil, Mr. Mohdar Alsagoff and a Mercy Relief medical team arrived in Yemen a week later. The Al-Wehdah teams liaised and coordinated its work in Hadhramout, Yemen with the local authorities and ensured that relief items were distributed directly to the peoples affected by the floods.



*Picture (above) shows Singapore's Ambassador (NR) to Yemen is greeted on arrival at Seiyun Airport by Syed Ahmed Al-Gunaid, the Deputy Governor of Hadhramout Province.*

- 2.2 The first group of volunteers and relief workers arrived at Sana'a on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2008. Heading this group of volunteers and medical personnel was Ambassador Helmi Talib. The second group headed by Mr Khalid Basharahil arrived in Seiyun a week later. One of the main objectives of Al-Wehdah's (the Arab Association's) mission is to liaise with the authorities in Hadhramout, and to ensure that relief items are distributed directly to the people whose homes collapsed in the aftermath of the floods or were made inhabitable. The items distributed included clothing, food, water and household kits; other forms of assistance included outfitting 60 homes with water heaters and providing kitchen utensils, and underwriting the cost of providing temporary shelters for families whose homes were totally destroyed by the floods.
- 2.3 Most of the infrastructure in the flood-stricken areas in Hadhramout was damaged and access to the affected areas was difficult in the beginning – roads, communication facilities, power, and water distribution networks were destroyed. The Singapore team travelled to the towns and villages and met district officials and tribal leaders as well as members of local relief committees. Meetings were also held with Mr. Tahir bin Hussien Alattas, Mr. Alwi bin Salim Alkaff and Mr. Mohamad bin Abdullah Aljunied of the Arra'fa Society of Hadhramout, regarding the needs of the displaced people. A few more meetings were held with the heads of other relief organisations, namely Dr Nasser Omer Attamimi and Mr. Adil Barhamoos. The main source of information for the use of humanitarian aid was Dr Hussien Al-Haddad, the Director-General in the Ministry of Health and Population. Dr Hussien said that the health system was functioning although shortage of staff meant that the hospitals and health centres were functioning at reduced capacity.
- 2.4 When Mr Khalid Basharahil and Mr Mohdar Alsagoff arrived in Seiyun, Hadhramout meetings have been arranged for them to meet Mr Tahir bin Hussien Alattas, Mr Alwi bin Salim Alkaff and Mr Mohamad bin Abdullah Al-Gunaid of the Arra'fa Society of Hadhramout, to discuss the needs of the displaced people. In addition, they also had meetings with Dr Nasser Omer Attamimi and Mr Adil Bahurmoos, representatives of local relief organisations.
- 3 The following day (Wednesday 12 November) started with a visit to the Seiyun General Hospital. The Singapore delegation was met on arrival by Dr Hussien Al-Gunied, deputy minister for environmental affairs, and Dr Husien Al-Haddad, director-general in the Ministry of Health and Population (Hadhramout Province).



*A house in Wadi Saah devastated by flood waters*



- 4 On Thursday November 13, the team travelled to Wadi Saah (a village about 80 km from Seiyun) where the Mercy Relief medical team set up a mobile clinic. Our next stop was Thibi, a village which was badly affected by the flash floods. The team also travelled to Juhil and Al-Gos (villages located in the district of Tarim) the next day, Friday November 14. Al-Gos had a population of 600; and most of the houses in the village were either totally wrecked or emptied of its occupants. There we met members of the local relief committees – Dr Nasser Omer Attamimi, Head of the Faculty of Education, Hadhramout University, and Dr Jamal Omer Attamimi, a Medical Officer.
- 5 On Saturday 15 November, the team travelled to Qatn which is about 60 km from Seiyun. This was followed by a visit to Hosin Al-Ahmed (village), and on to Bahrah and Al-Guful. Lunch was at the house of Sheikh Salleh Binthabit, the head of the Bintabit tribe.
- 6 We received assurances from Dr Hussien Al-Haddad that the authorities in Hadhramout had sufficient medical supplies donated by foreign countries and international organizations. *Berita Harian* (29 November 2008) reported that a three-man delegation from Mercy Relief and MUIS will be leaving for Yemen to *ensure the quick and speedy distribution of its aid*.
- 7 The assistance provided to date is limited to relief needs, namely clothing, water and sanitation, medical and first aid). Singapore was not in a position to provide personnel and other assistance of a long-term nature to help Hadhramout rebuild itself because of its limited human and capital resources.



*Dr Hussien Al-Gunaid (left), Deputy Minister for the Environment, and Dr Hussien Al-Haddad, Director-General of the Ministry of Health and Population taking a closer look at a water filtration system donated by Singaporeans.*

- 8 The Yemen Times (of November 2, 2008) published (*below*) a list of donors providing aid to the Government of Yemen.

Donor	Type of aid	Amount (Quantity)
Yemeni Government	Supplies	80 trucks: 1.5 thousand tons, worth USD One million
UAE	Supplies	19 planes + mobile clinics
Oman	Supplies	2 planes
Egypt	Supplies	2 planes
Libya	Supplies	3 planes
Yemeni businessmen in UAE	Supplies	One plane
Algeria	Supplies	One plane
Saudi Arabia	Supplies	One plane
Netherlands		Mobile clinics
WHO	Supplies	2 tons of medical supplies including diarrhea kits and 7 tons of insecticides for indoor spraying to prevent malaria and other diseases
UNHCR	Supplies	3,500 mattresses, blankets, mosquito nets, laundry detergent, bath soaps, 700 tents, 500 plastic sheets, 32 plastic rolls and 500 kitchen sets, with 2,800 more tents, 6,000 mosquito nets, 3,000 plastic sheets, 3,000 kitchen sets, 10 plastic and construction tool kits due to arrive
UNICEF	Supplies	Over 1,000 cubic metres of water, 3,000 blankets, and 900 boxes of water purification tablets
UNDP	Supplies	2 generators and 300 insecticides spray pumps
WFP	Tents	For two refugee camps each hosting 10,000 internally displaced persons
WFP	Food	539 tons of various food supplies
Turkey H. Relief Foundation	Supplies	NA
Kuwait Red Crescent Society	Supplies	160 tons of relief aid, 1050 tents, 9120 blankets
Sudan	Supplies	38 tons of food, medical supplies, blankets, tents
Japan	Supplies	First package of seven aid packages, worth USD 200,000, 50 family-sized tents, 400 mattresses, 20 water filters and 60 kg of plastic boards
Oman	Supplies	200 tons of aid, technical team, electric generators, 120 tons of food
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	Money	USD 100 million
Qatar	Money	USD 275,000
Japan	Money	USD 200,000
Italy (through the IFRC)	Money	USD 195,000
USA	Money	USD 50,000
Republic of Korea	Money	USD 50,000
Germany	Money	USD 130,000
Islamic Relief	Money	USD 100,000
Islamic Conference Org.	Money	USD 250,000
Kuwait (Arab Dev. Fund)	Money	USD 3 million
IFRC	Money	USD 189,836
Prince Talal b Abdulaziz (KSA)	Money	USD 151,740

Hael Saeed Ana'am	Money	USD One million
Islamic Tadamun Bank	Money	USD 750,000
Sabafone	Money	USD 150,000
MTN	Money	USD 100,000
Yemeni Tobacco Company	Money	USD 150,000
Yemenia	Money	USD 100,000
Ghamdhan Corp	Money	USD 100,000
Dome Co.	Money	USD 60,000
Yemeni community in KSA	Money	USD 3,240,000
Union of Yemeni Former MPs	Money	USD One million

- 9 And an editorial in **Yemen Times** (of 3 November 2008) by its Editor-in-Chief, Nadia Al-Sakaff stated that *"despite the good feelings and the support coming from all over the world, some of the ill-meaning acts still crop up and disturb the general sense of cooperation and support. An example of this is news that an Arab country's airplane filled with supplies had been directed to land in Sana'a airport instead of Mukalla, and when the crew insisted on unloading the materials in Mukalla the airport authorities demanded payment of US Dollars 6,500 which they were forced to pay before being allowed to take off towards Hadhramout.*
- 10 *The news is very annoying. You get people coming to offer you help and yet you extort money out of them in such a demeaning way. Some other news described a well-known charity on the national level taking all the tents and food supplies dedicated to the people in the camps by WFP and keeping them to be redistributed by the charity as seen appropriate.*
- 11 *Corruption is not only from the Yemeni side. There has been some hushed criticism that many of the countries that promised money are not so serious about it and their aid is only paper on ink (sic). If the money is delivered at all, it will take its time and perhaps land up in other places.*
- 12 *Yemenis are very grateful for all the support and help. Yemen deserves it, and appreciates it, regardless of a few corrupt people who do not represent Yemen or Yemenis ".*
- 13 Mr Khalid Basharahil, President of Al-Wehdah and Mr Alwi Aidid, Vice President II of Al-Wehdah visited a number of towns and villages affected by the floods. In Gatn they were received by Mr Adel Bahurmoos (a member of the local relief organization) who briefed them on the latest situation with regard to the aid that had been distributed earlier to the inhabitants of the village. They were shown photographs and reports of houses and schools which were damaged by the flood waters. A certificate of appreciation (from Mr Adel Bahurmoos of the Gatn NGO) was handed to Mr Khalid Basharahil. They also paid a courtesy call on the Deputy Governor of Hadhramout Province, Syed Ahmed Al-Gunaid. At a dinner hosted by Syed Ahmed Al-Gunaid, the Deputy Governor conveyed the thanks of the people of Yemen for the assistance given by the people of Singapore.

- 14** They were shown photographs and provided details by Mr Adel Bahurmoos of the damage which was still unrepaired or beyond repair. A certificate of appreciation was handed over by Mr Adel Bahurmoos to Mr Khalid Basharahil.
- 15** The Arab community of Singapore demonstrated its support for Al-Wehdah's efforts in helping the Hadhramout floods victims. The management committee of *Al-Wehdah* would like to record its sincere thanks and appreciation to all donors whose generous contributions have enabled *Al-Wehdah* to take part in humanitarian work. The management committee of *Al-Wehdah* would like to continue with this work but practical considerations such as cost and whether our participation in natural disaster relief operations are really effective will have to be addressed first.