

Zakat Insights: a Newsletter on Zakat and Justice

#1: February 2026

Welcome to Zakat Insights, sharing the latest news, stories and developments on the subject of Zakat.

Introduction

There is perhaps no better time to launch Zakat Insights: a newsletter on Zakat and justice - than on the heels of the World Economic Forum – where in January global leaders and billionaires came together in Davos for their yearly affirmation of the global economic order. This time was a little different however, with the ambitions of one global hegemon beginning to rattle even those who have long benefitted from being at their table.

“Middle power” leaders are now being celebrated for acknowledging what the global majority have long been saying – that the “rules based international order” is (a little more than partially) false. For admitting their participation in the game of global economic inequality and asymmetric relationships, whilst betraying their cognisance that there is indeed a menu. Davos culminated in the unveiling of the Trump’s “Board of Peace” – cementing the crudest form of appropriation within the architecture of the global economy.

So what then about Zakat within this. What does a fundamentally redistributive, rebalancing, compensating instrument for justice say about such an order - An order that some argue works against the grain of Islamic moral economic principles? Is it saying anything? Should it be?

Or, more generally, has Zakat’s wider systemic and justice-oriented scope been limited to responding to symptoms, via the provision of immediate relief primarily?

A new series of WHAF facilitated learning groups and newsletters intends to explore some of these questions, and others, whilst narrowing in on specific themes relevant to the international administration of Zakat. Bringing together a mix of operational and theoretical considerations and perspectives. Thanks for joining!

News in Brief, Stories and Developments

UK: In December ’25 Muslim Charities Forum (MCF) launched their scholar approved Zakat Policy Templates, which can be downloaded [here](#) for a fee.

Egypt/ Gaza: Al Azhar’s Zakat and Charity House [report](#) completion of displacement camp for Palestinians near Netzarim area in Gaza (22.01.26)

Saudi Arabia: have [introduced](#) new rules for Zakat, donations, and I'tikaf during Ramadan 2026 (23.01.26). The Kingdom have further launched a national privatization strategy, which will be [implemented](#) across 18 sectors, including Zakat, Tax and Customs.

UK: The Institute of Development Studies, ICTD, [publish](#) new working paper detailing how Zakat

payments in Pakistan, which are overwhelmingly direct (individual-individual), surpass the state's largest cash transfer programme and ODA. Further demonstrating that women are the primary recipients owing to perceptions of socioeconomic vulnerabilities. (13.01.26)

Bangladesh: Mohammad Abdul Majid [states](#) at Zakat press conference (29.01.26), that: "following the July Revolution of 2024, a collective aspiration has emerged among the people to build a discrimination-free, poverty-free, and just society, and Zakat can play a crucial role in realising that vision." The press conference was followed by the [14th Zakat Fair](#) on the 31st of January, on the theme of "Zakat for establishing justice."

OVERHEARD AT:

The 9th International Conference on Zakat (ICONZ) 📍 Indonesia | 📅 9–11 December 2025

ICONZ 9 aimed to inspire global collaboration and partnerships that amplify the impact of zakat.

Adil Badr, Zakat Lead at Islamic Relief Worldwide, joined the conference as a panellist and shared the reflections below.



Q. What are some of the best practices that were shared at the conference?

AB: The conference highlighted several strong best practices, including improved transparency and governance in Zakat management, better use of data and digital tools to track impact, and increased coordination between Zakat institutions to avoid duplication. There was also a strong emphasis on aligning Zakat distribution with long-term poverty alleviation strategies, rather than only short-term relief.

Q. What or who inspired you?

AB: I was particularly inspired by the organisations and practitioners who are actively working across borders to harmonise Zakat standards and improve collaboration. Hearing real-life examples of how effective coordination and innovation have increased impact for vulnerable communities was especially motivating.

There were a few factors of inspiration. The work that BAZNAS have started and are developing was encouraging. They have a practitioner function where Zakat is collected and managed for distribution, but also have a research institute for collaboration with academia and a training institute for Zakat workers at different levels from the Zakat collector to management roles. This professional collaborative approach is exactly what is required.

Q. Will you be incorporating anything you have learnt at the conference into your work at Islamic Relief?

AB: Yes, the conference reinforced the importance of collaboration, transparency, and evidence-based decision-making, which are all highly relevant to our work at Islamic Relief. I will be more mindful of how we can strengthen partnerships, share learning, and continue to improve how we communicate the impact of Zakat to stakeholders and donors.

In particular, the formalisation of Zakat training is something I'm taking a keen interest in. We have Zakat being collected and disbursed, it is one of the professions mentioned specifically in the Quran and we have a history of Zakat management but limited structure globally in regards to developing globally accepted standards.

Further, the education and practitioner combination element is something to be explored.

Q: Are you optimistic about the future of global Zakat collaboration?

AB: Yes, I am optimistic. The level of engagement, shared commitment, and openness demonstrated at the conference suggests that there is real momentum towards stronger global collaboration. While challenges remain, there is a clear willingness among organisations to work together to maximise the effectiveness and reach of Zakat worldwide.

*However, there is work to be done. There is collaboration between certain stakeholders and within certain regions but what we need is support for a global conversation piece. As an example, I think interaction between Malaysia and Indonesia is strong, and between certain Zakat stakeholders in Africa and the Far East. But we have Zakat management stakeholders and implementers in literally every nation – the architecture to support **that** conversation is not yet well established. However, I am optimistic.*

OVERHEARD AT:

Mastul Foundation Zakat Conference, 📍 Bangladesh, 17th Jan 2026

“Zakat still remains a marginalised idea in our society. It is still in the form of faith and it has not yet come into the form of practice. We say Zakat. But we don't understand what Zakat is. As a result, Zakat did not develop as a system.”

“We live in a consumer economy, or we have consumerist ideas, or a kind of capitalist idea. You see you only care about having a balance in the bank”

“The meaning of the Zakat economy of Islam is to bring people out of poverty.”

(Prof. Dr. Md. Mokhter Ahmad, Director of the Daffodil Centre for Islamic Studies at the Daffodil International University, see MASTUL Foundation [YouTube](#) for full speech).

“Through the proper collection and distribution of Zakat we can alleviate poverty, and we can get rid of this unfortunate trend of being a pawn in foreign countries”

(Dr. A F MKhalid Hossain, Honorable Advisor, Ministry of Religious Affairs, See MASTUL Foundation [YouTube](#) for full speech)



OVERHEARD AT:

The 9th World Islamic Economic and Finance Conference (WIEFC), 📍 Pakistan, 24–25 January 2025

1:38:25 *“So basically we are stuck with trying to Islamize capitalism and this is an impossible project. And what we need to do is to rebuild on genuine Islamic foundations...”*

It (banking) is channelling wealth towards the rich as banking always does. It is exploiting the poor. Some very essential resources like money are not being offered to the poor when they deserve it.

It's just like the doctor not providing medicine to the person who has disease then the board should be allowed to do measures which rectify this injustice. Basically we have a missing dimension. The dimension is missing from capitalism because this is simply not part of the vocabulary of economics.

In Islamic economics we have the vocabulary but we have no institution to implement that justice. So as a famous sociologist once said that you know we all desire justice and we all desire peace and many things but these things just remain desires unless you have an institutional implementation. So unless we establish some methodology some mechanism some institution which has power which has power to uh enforce this it will just remain a dream and a desire.”
(Professor Asad Zaman)

Watch the conference [here](#) —



Learning Group: Zakat for Women's Empowerment and Justice

WHAF kickstarted the Zakat and Justice learning series with a session on Zakat for women's empowerment and justice. Participants of the all female group spoke candidly about the experience of women in relation to the administration of Zakat, noting that women in leadership roles was relatively rare, and spaces were needed for honest conversations.

Participants viewed access to education and knowledge about Zakat (and Fiqh, beyond the basics) as an important starting point in building the Zakat literacy needed for women to step into leadership roles. But it was also pointed out that navigating male power dynamics is challenging, and often women who do have the knowledge are not platformed. One participant commented that ***“Muslim women are not waiting for men, we are getting on with things...We've seen that, well, if you're not going to cater for me in the Muslim space I'm going to go to the non Muslim space and find my own way there in another way and lead the discussion.”***

At the same time, participants pointed out that Muslim community is not a monolith and gender dynamics vary from place to place. However there was an overall shared sentiment that women are more likely to prioritise women's empowerment if they had greater say over fund allocation.

Women as the primary givers of Zakat and as the primary recipients of Zakat (not exclusively) was also discussed as was gendered differences with regards to how women pay and calculate Zakat and how Zakat received is spent. One participant commented that there is ***“little guidance on Zakat on things like career breaks, irregular income or care work.”*** Whilst women's heightened vulnerabilities meant that they were often the primary recipients of Zakat, participants noted that that there needed to be more emphasis on addressing the structural issues that caused vulnerabilities in the first place. Participants thus considered how female giving power, and emerging trends that point towards a growing interest in social justice, could be leveraged to increase women's say in design, in order to address systemic issues.

Participants felt that not enough research looked specifically at gendered dynamics of giving and receiving and that data on the same could be useful in furthering the discussion on women's increased involvement. Participants noted that comprehensive gender analysis should be integral to programme and policy design, with one participant emphasising that ***“as long as we are not conducting this analysis there is a gap in the design of our programmes.”***

Different viewpoints were offered on the empowering potential of technology. On the one hand mobile payment of Zakat directly to women was cited as working well in some contexts, whilst others felt that technology, understood as not neutral and can deepen inequality through a design bias that assumes the user is male: ***“Most Zakat platforms are designed around a male financially autonomous user.”***

NEXT UP

Zakat, Ramadan and Sustainable Giving. 27 February. Register here

Have anything to share or contribute on Zakat and Justice?

Get in touch!

