

# Zakat Insights: a Newsletter on Zakat and Justice

#2: March 2026

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

## Ramadan, Scandals and Calls for Accountability

The Muslim charities sector is in the spotlight this month – the most important in the fundraising calendar.

Scandals rocking the sector are making the headlines, with the Khaled Beydoun controversy being an obvious example. Further, US Muslim charities have come under sharp criticism for Zakat practices amounting to “Hundreds of millions in fake, wasted and hoarded donations.” In Ahmed Shaikh’s Zakat Report, 17 Zakat-collecting non-profits are reviewed and the phenomena of what Shaikh terms “hisab-hacking” is exposed as a misleading practice that manipulates programme expense ratios. The conclusion appears to point readers in the direction of the UN, considered favourably given their 100% donation policies. Yet, perhaps interesting to note, the Executive Director of the first in Shaikh’s list of critically reviewed organisations provides the foreword for UNHCR’s Islamic Philanthropy Report 2026, perhaps indicating that the distinction between Muslim charities and the UN is more blurred.

On challenges faced, the Guardian reports that charities are still subjected to bank derisking strategies that restrict their ability to transfer funds to locations deemed high risk. Despite factors of greatest need. Charities avoid obtaining licenses that would permit activities in sanctioned states, due to the financial risks, and mosques are similarly risk adverse. The British governments’ “Statement and guidance for charities on the evolving situation in Iran” illustrates well this regulatory quagmire charities are facing, an inverse state of affairs given they are issued by Governments participating in illegal wars.

Calls for accountability and transparency on the use of Zakat funds and reporting overheads accurately belong alongside discussions on the challenges Muslim charities navigate, and open reflections on the 100% Zakat donation policy – a policy that WHAF has heard described as fundamentally misleading for donors (given the explicit Zakat category permitting Zakat provisions to administrators) and a practice exercised by a UN elsewhere resourced to cover non-negotiable overheads, all while undercutting Muslim charities in the process.

In the absence of accountability improvements and the skillful navigation of these discussions, international zakat administrators may well start to experience a reduction in support, all while strengthening arguments that call for Zakat to be given locally (both local giving at home and abroad) where it is possible to do so.

## News in Brief, Stories and Developments

**Iraq:** The first International Scientific Conference on “Zakat Management” was held in Baghdad on 7 February 2026, sponsored by Al-Khair Foundation, the Council of Iraqi Scholars, and Al-Rakeeza Foundation. The conference discussed contemporary Sharia approaches to zakat, strengthening its role in development, and launched the Iraqi Zakat Platform.

**Jordan:** Under the patronage of HRH Prince El Hassan bin Talal, the Faculty of Sharia at the University of Jordan hosted a seminar on 26 January 2026 titled “*Zakat and Developmental Waqf: A Strategic Vision for Empowering a Sustainable Society.*” The event brought together the Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, the Grand Mufti of Jordan, and scholars and practitioners from several countries. The President of WHAF delivered a lecture on humanitarian challenges and the role of Zakat in strengthening relief work. Watch the seminar [here](#).

**US/Canada:** The Fiqh Council of North America (FCNA) and the Assembly of Muslim Jurists of America [issue](#) a Fatwa permitting the giving of Zakat to political campaigns, with conditions, explaining: “*Wealth is a means, not an end; the end is the existence of an integrated, compassionate, cohesive Islamic community that enjoys dignity, elevation, honor, and freedom*” . Read a critique of the fatwa [here](#).

**Nigeria:** Business group [formalise](#) The Companion Zakat and Sadaqah Foundation. Speaking at the opening ceremony Chairman Alhaji Thabit Wale Sonaïke made the case for a strategic approach to impact: “*This foundation exists to move obligatory charity from ad-hoc giving to structured social justice, where wealth is purified, dignity is restored and lives are sustainably transformed. Governance is not ceremonial; it is strategic.*”

**UK:** Muslim Census, National Zakat Foundation and Islamic Relief [publish](#) new report “The Crisis of Belonging: Inside the Lives of British Muslims” that found only half of [respondents](#) felt they belonged in the UK. Concerning Zakat, the report found that of the 80.7% of respondents that paid Zakat in the past year, almost half sent it exclusively outside of the UK. The call for more Zakat to be spent within the UK, was the second most common theme raised by respondents.

**UAE:** The General Authority of Islamic Affairs, Endowments and Zakat [launch](#) new National Zakat Platform, described as “*the beginning of a broader digital transformation journey for zakat management in the UAE.*”



**Pakistan/Global:** The government of Pakistan sets the Nisab at Rs503,529 for Ramadan 2026, a significant rise from 2025, due the rising prices of gold and other metals. This will reduce the number of Muslims overall eligible to pay Zakat —

**Global:** UNHCR launch 8th Islamic Philanthropy Global Report (2025), and report that almost 60% of all Zakat and Sadaqah received in 2025 came from MENA-based donors. UNHCR's Refugee Zakat Fund is backed by 18 Fatwas and scholar endorsements.

## OVERHEARD AT:

*The Ethical Wealth and Social Impact Symposium 📍 Indonesia, 11.02.2026*

*“Zakat was highlighted as having significant potential to reduce disparities and strengthen social welfare...With strong governance and sustained public trust, zakat is seen not only as a religious obligation but also as a practical solution to global economic inequality.” (As reported by IDN Financials).*

## OVERHEARD AT:

*The International Zakat Conference organised by AMP 📍 India, 14-15.02.2026*

Prof. Mohammad Rashid urged stakeholders to move *“from poverty alleviation to poverty elimination,”* emphasising the need for organised, data-backed systems capable of breaking persistent cycles of deprivation. (As reported by Radiance News)

## Learning Group: Zakat, Ramadan and Sustainable Giving, 27.02.2026

The second discussion in WHAF's co-learning series looked at Zakat fundraising practices during Ramadan. Topics included whether or not Zakat's empowerment objectives could be upheld when Ramadan Zakat fundraising typically places greater focus on emergency relief.

Participants shared that Zakat should not be exclusively given and collected during Ramadan, and that the question concerning what fundraising prioritised was applicable beyond Ramadan and Zakat, with one participant sharing *“Because we all know in the sector that we cannot solve any of these problems if we don't deal with the root causes.”* Therefore, it was seen as a conversation that needed to happen across the sector and one that communities were increasingly looking for: *“Essentially our charities will be left behind if we don't make that shift.”*

Also discussed was the need for transparency in relation to communicating with givers. The 100% zakat donation policy was regarded by participants as a fundraising tool, as damaging and misleading, and as tipping power

towards secular actors. Communicating positioning on the 100% policy and how funds are used, was considered a necessary charity practice. Collective approaches on the same were considered important.

A call for an independent institution to oversee, audit and regulate the Muslim charity sector was also proposed, upon which Zakat eligibility would be contingent. Relying on the charity commission to do this, was considered inadequate for matters unique to Muslim organisations.

## NEXT UP

**Beyond financing: Zakat for faith and community building. 3rd April 2026**

[Register here join our coming co-learning session](#)

## Nominate a Zakat Campaign

In next month's newsletter, WHAF would like to spotlight Zakat fundraising campaigns approaching things differently, that readers consider are deserving of appreciation.

Email us: Whose Zakat fundraising communication stands out from the crowd?

**Have anything to share or contribute on Zakat and  
Justice? Get in touch!**

