

Globalizing Zakat Assistance for Humanitarian Crisis: Issues and Challenges

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Abstract

Zakat is a mandatory alms-giving that formed as a part of Muslims' obligation. It is made compulsory for those who have the means to carry it out. It promotes the production of human capital and improves economic growth, and is a form of wealth redistribution. Islam has placed, more specifically the Islamic finance, an emphasis on *Zakat* as an important socio-economic tool. Lately, *Zakat* receives a growth of attention for its potentials. With the existence of frequent humanitarian crisis such as the refugee crisis, there is a call for a better utilization of *Zakat* at the global landscape. Looking closely to the latest development, this research looks closely to the issues and challenges in globalizing *Zakat* for the humanitarian assistance and overcoming the refugee crisis. This research adopts the qualitative research methodology and doctrinal legal analysis. It is found that issues and challenges in globalizing *Zakat* for humanitarian assistance are inter-related. Such issues and challenges may be differed from one country to another country. A comprehensive structured governance, the regulatory framework, human capital, the effective collection and distribution of *Zakat*, a strong trust from Muslims to the *Zakat* institutions or a specific collector, and the efficient collaboration between countries are needed in globalizing *Zakat* for the humanitarian assistance.

Keywords: Zakat, Humanitarian assistance, Globalization, Islamic social finance.

1.0 Introduction

Zakat is one of the Islamic philanthropies and an integral part of Islamic history that exist during Prophet Muhammad saw time. Prophet Muhammad saw established *Zakat* as part of administrative structure for his government. All Muslims who meet the criteria of wealth must pay *Zakat* as it is fall under the five pillars of Islam. Allah mentioned about *Zakat* at least 82 times in the Quran along with praying (*Solat*). *Zakat* reinforce the responsibility of a Muslim for each other's physical and social well-being (M Weiss & L Esposito, 1986). The success of *Zakat* has been proven during the reign of Umar Abdul Aziz where no one is in need of *Zakat*. This shows that at that time there is no poor or needy people. The beauty part of it is when it is well managed and distributed, thus, the wisdom behind *Zakat* obligation became unquestionable. *Zakat* has shown a significance role throughout the history and it is one of the largest forms of wealth transfer to the needy. *Zakat* promotes an equitable redistribution of wealth. Subsequently, the effective and efficient management of *Zakat* can help to increase economic prosperity. The Quran identifies eight categories of eligible use of *Zakat*, including helping the poor and needy, refugees and displaced people and liberating those in bondage (A Rehman & Pickup, 2018). Wealth is growing in almost all Muslim countries. The same goes with poverty. What is the reason to this situation? As mentioned before, *Zakat* has a huge potential in helping and shaping the socio-economy. Therefore, all Muslim countries, especially, should give extra attention to explore the potential of *Zakat* to help those who involved in the humanitarian crisis.

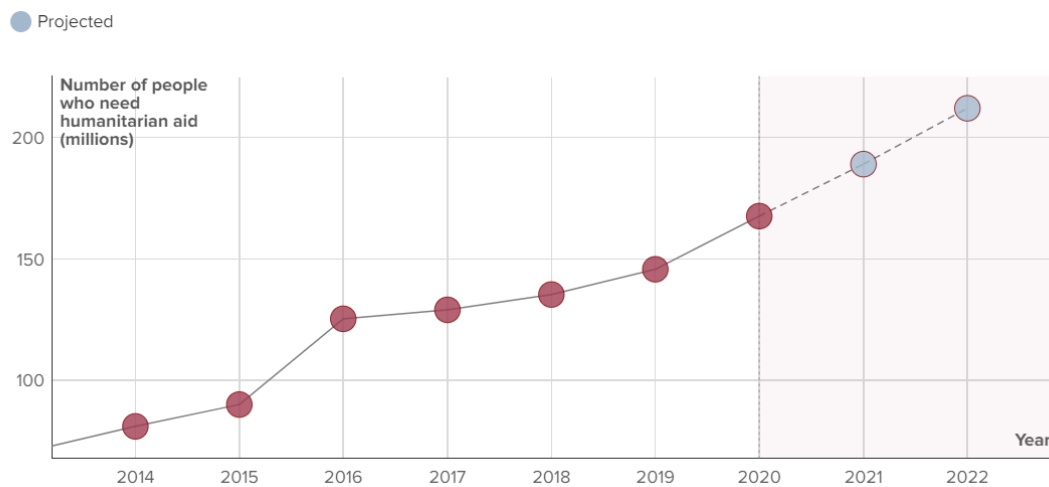
The damage of an event or series of event on human, economic or environmental has led to the humanitarian crisis. Armed conflicts, epidemics, famine, natural disasters and other major emergencies are among the factors of humanitarian crisis. No matter what sort of catastrophe, survivors are left in desperate need of life-saving assistance such as shelter, food, water and health care. Apart from that, women and children are among groups who are most affected. Children have no access to get a proper basic education. Women lose access to family planning services, prenatal care, postpartum care and other health services. Women of reproductive age comprise a quarter of the at-risk population - one in five is likely to be pregnant (UNFPA, n.d.). They also have poor access to clean water. Those who got affected from the humanitarian crisis and the country itself need supports from many aspects especially on the financial part. The idea of using *Zakat* in supporting the humanitarian crisis is such a noble initiative, not only it could help the country and the people but also encourage Muslims to always observe their obligation in paying *Zakat*.

2.0 Humanitarian Crisis Trends

According to International Rescue Committee (IRC), as of January 2020, there are top ten of humanitarian crisis that represents more than half of the people identified as being in need globally. The IRC has assessed the countries at greatest risk of a humanitarian crisis in 2020 (Committee, 2020). These countries are Central African Republic, Somalia, Burkina Faso, South Sudan, Afghanistan, Venezuela, Nigeria, Syria, Democratic Republic of Congo and Yemen. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Concern Worldwide, Dominic MacSorley said that Yemen is the world's worst humanitarian crisis, with extreme levels of need

created by conflict and severely limited access to humanitarian assistance (Giovetti, 2019). The conflict in Yemen started in March 2015, with more than 24 million people whom in need of humanitarian aids. Based on UNICEF latest information dated May 2020, out of 24 million people, 12 million of them are children. That was a huge number. Children continue to be killed and harmed in the conflict, while the damage and closure of schools and hospitals has disrupted access to education and health services, leaving children even more vulnerable and robbing them of their futures (Unicef, 2020). Before the crisis came into the picture, nearly half of all Yemenis lived in extreme poverty, two third youth were jobless and social services were on the brink of collapse.

While Yemen being the world's worst humanitarian crisis, Democratic Republic of Congo, which is the second largest country in Africa is said to facing one of the longest-standing and most complex humanitarian crises in the world for decades. With the population of 77.3 million, 15.74 million of are in need of humanitarian assistance. The civil war in Syria in 2011 has resulted in humanitarian crisis. Since then, hundred thousands of people has been killed. After a decade, Syrian crisis has become the largest refugees and displacement crisis. As of December 2018, 11.7 million people were in need of humanitarian aid, 5 million of whom are children. 13.2 million Syrians need health assistance, and 2.1 million Syrian children are currently out of school (Giovetti, 2019). The number of people who need emergency aid around the world will exceed 200 million by 2022, according to UN projections (Humanitarian, 2020).



Source: (Humanitarian, 2020)

The above chart is a wakeup calls for everyone all over the globe to play their part and one of it is through *Zakat* assistance.

3.0 The Issues and Potential of Zakat

4.0 Conclusion

5.0 References

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