

8 February 2005

PRESS RELEASE



ALMOST 100 BUSES DONATED BY 'HUGELY GENEROUS SECTOR' TO HELP MID TO LONG TERM POST-TSUNAMI RECONSTRUCTION

As Asia Bus Response enters Week 5, the UK bus and coach industry has so far pledged 97 vehicles to the practical tsunami relief initiative to help rebuild the worst-hit areas of Sri Lanka and Indonesia.

Announcing that Go-Ahead Group would be donating 10 buses, from the Oxford Bus Company and Wilts & Dorset Bus Company, **Group Chief Executive, Chris Moyes, said: "I'm delighted to see the momentum that's now building up behind the Asia Bus Response project."**

New contributors include Yorkshire Traction, Nottingham City Council, Cronin's Coaches of Cork, Shire Travel, GM Coaches, Bridgend, and David's Handy Rider of Oldham.

As well as providing vital transportation for people and supplies in the devastated areas, donated buses will be used to reskill drivers and engineers, and development agency, **Islamic Relief**, will then pay those people a living wage:

"The Asia Bus Response has been a hugely generous and brilliantly innovative initiative by the UK Bus and Coach sector. Islamic Relief is proud to be associated with this project and is very grateful to the organisations concerned for their generosity and support. Asia Bus Response is a fine example of the British public's solidarity with the victims of the tsunami catastrophe.

"Islamic Relief is now starting the reconstruction phase in the affected areas. The buses donated through Asia Bus Response will be central to our mid to long term plans, to get the victims back on their feet by helping them to rebuild their homes and their livelihoods. On behalf of the governments and peoples of Indonesia and Sri Lanka, Islamic Relief offers heartfelt thanks."

Waseem Yaqub, UK Manager, Islamic Relief

Donor companies will be responsible for getting their buses to a UK departure point, to be announced in the next few days. Buses, parts and equipment will be shipped and distributed by **Islamic Relief**. The charity is also co-ordinating and sourcing funding for shipping, taxes and registrations.

Minibuses to double-deckers are still required. To pledge robust, high-floor, low-tech mid-life buses that are fit for a few years' hard work, to pledge spares and equipment or to leave messages of support, email info@asiabusresponse.co.uk or call Mitch de Faria on Tel 01664 561711; for local authority co-ordination, email Andrew Varley at Lancashire County Council, andrew.varley@env.lancscc.gov.uk Tel 01772 263336. Visit www.asiabusresponse.co.uk for full details.

ENDS

Further information:

Asia Bus Response media information & bus donations:

Mitch de Faria, The Event Makers

Tel 01664 561711 Fax 01664 859276 Mbl 07957 200277

email info@asiabusresponse.co.uk

Asia Bus Response local authorities co-ordination:

Andrew Varley, Lancashire County Council

Tel 01772 533336 Mbl 07887 831127

email andrew.varley@env.lancscc.gov.uk

Islamic Relief Abdul Aziz Rajab-Ali

Tel 020 8498 2095 Mbl 07900 470994

email abdul.aziz@islamic-relief.org.uk

Editor's Notes:

Asia Bus Response is a voluntary, co-ordinating group of UK bus professionals that aims to help the UK bus industry respond appropriately and meaningfully to the tsunami disaster.

Asia Bus Response has undertaken to:

- ensure that buses dispatched fit the needs of the destination countries
- arrange for buses to convene at a UK location for assembly/shipping
- have all vehicles mechanically checked pre dispatch to ensure worthiness
- liaise with operators, local authorities & industry suppliers concerning parts, training and other opportunities
- encourage the filling of buses with supplies required by destination countries at the time of dispatch.

Islamic Relief has undertaken to:

- co-ordinate shipping, insurances, export & import tax, registrations & licences and arrange payments for same via the Governments of the destination countries and other organisations
- distribute buses as appropriate and do all possible to ensure that donated vehicles are fully utilised by those affected by the tsunami disaster, not left unused or co-opted by others or used in other areas
- use the buses as a means to reskill the local workforce, to rebuild confidence, pride & independence among the people and communities stricken by the disaster
- provide occasional updates on how the buses are being used and how they have helped local communities.

Asia Bus Response Supporters:

- Best Impressions
- Blazefield Holdings
- Brentons of Blackheath
- Cronin's Coaches, Cork
- David's Handy Rider, Oldham
- East Yorkshire Motor Services
- Emsworth & District Motor Services, Hants
- Essex County Council
- Evans Coaches, Pwllheli
- Go-Ahead Group

- GM Coaches, Bridgend
- Group Travel, Cornwall
- Harris Coaches, South Wales
- Ipswich Buses
- Lancashire County Council
- National Express
- Nottingham City Council
- Nottingham City Transport
- Oxfordshire County Council
- PRP Training, Pembrokeshire
- Shire Travel
- Southern Vectis
- Thamesdown Transport
- The Event Makers
- Trent Barton
- Translink
- TRC Coaches, Rhondda Valley
- Yorkshire Traction
- Viacom Outdoor
- Wedlake Saint

www.asiabusresponse.co.uk
www.islamic-relief.org.uk