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PRESS RELEASE



'MAGNIFICENT' UK BUS INDUSTRY'S TSUNAMI RESPONSE ON WAY TO ASIA: 100 BUSES TO BE HANDED OVER ON 8 JUNE

100 Asia Bus Response buses will depart for Sri Lanka and Indonesia on 14 June. The donated buses will assemble near Southampton on Tuesday 7 June in preparation for handover to charity Islamic Relief at a media event on the morning of Wednesday 8 June.

In recognition of the immense contribution made by the UK bus and coach industry in response to the tsunami disaster, as well as senior representatives from Islamic Relief and bus donating organisations, the major media handover will be attended by delegates from the governments of Sri Lanka and Indonesia and the Mayors of Southampton and Winchester.

The handover and photo opportunity will take place at Marwell Zoological Park, between Southampton and Winchester, at 10am on 8 June. Full details are available at www.asiabusresponse.co.uk.

Message from Mitch de Faria, **Asia Bus Response** co-ordinator:

"The scale of the tsunami disaster was beyond our comprehension. Everyone felt they wanted to do more than simply give money. Then it appeared that buses had been swept away and others destroyed, drowning many on board. Asia Bus Response became a practical way to help those worst affected.

"Thanks to the belief of bus industry leaders and excellent trade media coverage, the UK-wide industry responded magnificently; from major groups to local authorities, small operators to charities. The donations of buses and parts have come in from every area of the UK and Eire – and further offers of vehicles from the US.

"With Islamic Relief on board to ship and distribute the vehicles, the voluntary appeal for mid-life buses was anticipated to last a few weeks. We were not to know the difficulties that would have to be overcome to achieve our objective. But 6 months later that objective is now in sight.

"Our original target of 20 buses to help rebuild essential infrastructure in Sri Lanka and Indonesia has grown to almost 130 vehicles. The 100 best suited to the climate and terrain will be distributed to provide essential transportation, help to re-establish communities and provide much-needed employment.

"Smaller vehicles will enable communities to trade and re-establish economic viability. Others may assist in the rebuilding of tourism and some may replace service buses lost in the devastation.

"The appeal has caused the UK bus and coach industry to pull together for a single purpose. In doing so it has shown humanity, generosity and perhaps most significantly, its willingness to set aside its own goals to help those in far greater need."

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Further information:

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