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PRESS RELEASE



PRACTICAL BUS INDUSTRY PLEDGES 65 BUSES IN ONE WEEK BUT MORE ARE WANTED TO HELP SHATTERED TSUNAMI COMMUNITIES

In one week, the Asia Bus Response initiative has received pledges of 65 buses from organisations across the UK. The appeal for vehicles to help rebuild communities and livelihoods in the worst hit areas of Sri Lanka and Indonesia is a practical response to the need for reconstruction following the devastation of the tsunami.

Among those supporting **Asia Bus Response** are National Express, Go-Ahead Group, Trent Barton, BlazeField Holdings, Southern Vectis and Oxfordshire County Council, and smaller concerns, including Group Travel of Cornwall and Harris Coaches of South Wales.

The recognition that transport is at the heart of economic and social activity, and that buses can help rebuild shattered lives and livelihoods, is clear from the appeal's already widespread support. But more buses are needed, from double-deckers to minibuses. Councils, community organisations and bus-owning enthusiasts are now urged to join with bus and coach operators, and come forward with vehicles.

“A little help is worth the world to those desperately in need. Asia Bus Response is not only a highly practical appeal, but serves to bring together a whole industry in support of a single humanitarian goal. I hope everyone will take this appeal seriously and support it with the enthusiasm it deserves.”

Gwyneth Dunwoody, MP, Chair, House of Commons Transport Committee

Buses, parts and equipment will be shipped and distributed by development agency, **Islamic Relief**. As well as providing vital transportation for people and supplies, donated buses will be used to supply skills training for drivers and engineers in the countries of destination. **Islamic Relief** will then pay those people a living wage.

Vehicles donated must be robust, high-floor and low-tech, in good condition and fit for a few years' hard work. Donor companies will be responsible for getting buses to a UK departure point. **Islamic Relief** is co-ordinating and sourcing funding for shipping, taxes, registrations and licensing. Visit www.asiabusresponse.co.uk for full details.

“Transport is the lifeblood of any community. No community needs life more than those that have suffered in the tsunami. We owe it to them to help them rebuild their lives.”

Sir Bill Morris, Secretary General, Transport & General Workers Union, 1991-2003

To pledge buses, 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 and ideas about how local authorities can help, email Andrew Varley at Lancashire

County Council, andrew.varley@env.lancscc.gov.uk Tel 01772 263336. For full details, visit www.asiabusresponse.co.uk.

ENDS

Further information:

Asia Bus Response media information & bus donations:

Mitch de Faria, The Event Makers

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Asia Bus Response local authorities co-ordination:

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Islamic Relief Sabia Kamali

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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
- Essex County Council
- Go-Ahead Group
- Group Travel of Cornwall

- Harris Coaches of South Wales
- Ipswich Buses
- Lancashire County Council
- National Express
- Nottingham City Transport
- Oxfordshire County Council
- Southern Vectis
- Thamesdown Transport
- The Event Makers
- Trent Barton
- Viacom Outdoor
- Wedlake Saint

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