

27 May 2005

PRESS RELEASE



6-MONTH APPEAL COMES TO AN END: 100 BUSES TO BE PASSED TO ISLAMIC RELIEF FOR USE BY CHILDREN IN TSUNAMI-HIT AREAS

The handover of 100 buses by the UK bus and coach industry on 8 June marks the end of a 6-month appeal by the industry to provide practical help to the areas of Asia worst affected by the Boxing Day tsunami disaster.

The mid-life buses from Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales, England, and from Eire, ranging from minibuses to double-deckers, are to be handed over to charity, Islamic Relief, for immediate shipment at **10am on Wednesday 8 June at Marwell Zoological Park, near Winchester.**

The UK's only industry-wide response to the tsunami, the **Asia Bus Response** appeal has been well received by the governments of Sri Lanka and Indonesia, with the announcement that the UK buses will mainly provide transportation for schoolchildren, replacing vehicles that were swept away or destroyed in the tsunami.

In Sri Lanka, bus services are organised in clusters, each cluster including a handful of buses for use by schools, bringing children from remote areas. Eight such clusters were located in the severely affected areas, and it is to these clusters that **Asia Bus Response's** vehicles will be assigned, exclusively for the use of children.

As well as shipping the vehicles and providing training for drivers, Islamic Relief is assisting the receiving governments to identify individual schools that are to receive **Asia Bus Response** minibuses. Over coming months the charity will monitor use of the buses to feed back to donating companies in the UK.

Mr Jeyaraj Fernandopulle, Minister of Trade at the Sri Lanka High Commission, said, "The arrival of these buses from **Asia Bus Response** will be seen by ordinary Sri Lankan people as the most visible and concrete benefit from the international community. The kindness of the UK's bus industry will leave a positive imprint on the hearts and minds of all the Sri Lankan people for a long time to come."

Asia Bus Response coordinator, Mitch de Faria, said, "Hundreds of thousands were killed in the tsunami and many more lost all they had. The UK bus and coach industry has pulled together, setting aside its own goals to help those in far greater need."

For full event and appeal details, visit www.asiabusresponse.co.uk or call Mitch de Faria on Mbl 07957 200277.

Vehicles and spare parts may be pledged to **Asia Bus Response** until 1 June.

ENDS

Further information:

Asia Bus Response media and events information:

Mitch de Faria, The Event Makers

Tel 01664 561711 Fax 01664 859276 Mbl 07957 200277

email info@asiabusresponse.co.uk

Asia Bus Response bus assembly information:

Phil Stockley, MD, Solent Blue Line

Tel 02380 614491 Mbl 07866 257693

email pstockley@solentblueline.com

Islamic Relief quotes

Abdul Aziz Rajab-Ali

Tel 020 8498 2095 Mbl 07900 470994

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

Islamic Relief PR

Sabia Kamali

Tel 020 8498 2093 Mbl 07944 502932

email sabia.kamali@islamic-relief.org.uk

www.asiabusresponse.co.uk

www.islamic-relief.org.uk