



# Islamic Relief Worldwide

Media Engagement Policy 2016

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# Introduction

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Effective communications with the media is a key component of Islamic Relief Worldwide's (IRW) Communications and External Relations Division, supporting the organisation's wider mission:

Exemplifying our Islamic values, we will mobilise resources, build partnerships and develop local capacity as we work to:

- Enable communities to mitigate the effect of disasters, prepare for their occurrence and respond by providing relief, protection and recovery.
- Promote integrated development and environmental custodianship with a focus on sustainable livelihoods.
- Support the marginalised and vulnerable to voice their needs and address root causes of poverty.

Additionally engagement with the media should be approached in a clear, authoritative and confident manner.

This document breaks down the policies to which the organisation will adhere in relation to engagement with the media.

# Definitions

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<b>Board of Trustees (BOT)</b>	The Islamic Relief Worldwide Board of Trustees.
<b>Broadcast Media</b>	A media outlet that presents news and/or opinion via television or radio
<b>Director of Global Communications and External Relations</b>	Lead person within the Communications Division
<b>International Media Coordinator</b>	First point of contact for media enquiries for Islamic Relief Worldwide
<b>Islamic Relief Worldwide (IRW)</b>	The Birmingham-based international secretariat and field and country programme offices.
<b>IR Family</b>	The entire IR network comprising the IR Partners and IRW which includes the Birmingham office and field and country programme offices.
<b>Online Media</b>	A media outlet that presents news and/or opinion via the internet
<b>Print Media</b>	A media outlet that presents news and/or opinion via printed method e.g. newspapers or magazines

## **1.1 Scope and Application**

This media policy applies to all employees of Islamic Relief Worldwide, field offices, trustees and volunteers. This policy will cover all external international media. UK based media enquiries and engagement should be dealt by Islamic Relief UK. It will also outline procedures that should take place when engaging with the media for field offices, partner offices and at head office as well.

## **1.2 Key contacts and spokespeople**

For Islamic Relief Worldwide, the first point of contact for all media related enquiries is the International Media Coordinator. If the coordinator is not available, suitable cover from within the Communications and External Relations Division will be on hand to respond.

Key spokespeople include:

- Chief Executive Officer
- Board of Trustees
- Director of Global Communications and External Relations
- Director of the International Programmes Division
- Country directors/Heads of mission
- Subject and issue experts
- Selected desk coordinators
- International Media Coordinator

The CEO is the official spokesperson for the organisation. Although there are occasions where they may not be available to act as spokesperson or may not be the right person to comment or represent the organisation. This could include issue specialists or the Board of Trustees. The list above includes staff that should be media trained to respond to requests or are required to represent Islamic Relief Worldwide in the press (See 2.4).

In an emergency or crisis communications situation, the communications division will coordinate the organisation's response or position with support from different departments, divisions, partners and field offices. In a major crisis, the CEO will be main spokesperson for the organisation, unless they designate another spokesman on a particular issue.

In the field country directors or heads of mission in cases of reporting on updates from a particular crisis or conflict would be best placed to take part in interviews.

# Procedures for dealing with the media

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There are two types of engagement with the media – proactive and reactive.

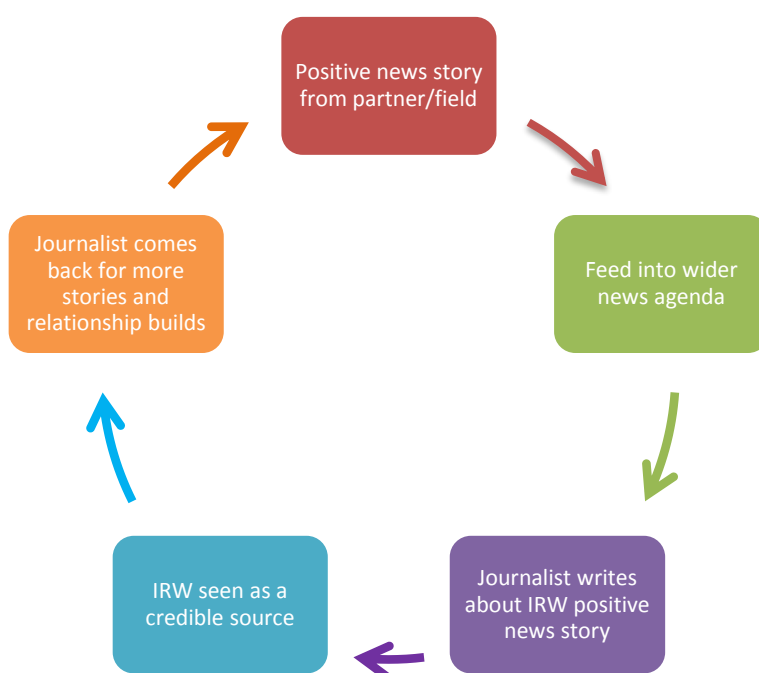
The communications division will aim to balance their approach to by promoting stories from across Islamic Relief Worldwide, and the global family; alongside responding to positive and negative news stories from around the world. In any case, any media enquiries should be in the first instance forwarded to the Communications Division via the International Media Coordinator.

## 2.1 Proactive

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Proactive stories will be fed to the media via the communications division. This will involve building relationships with journalists and publications around the world in order to promote the work of the organisation that will enhance its reputation and standing. In many cases, stories can be used to fit into a wider news agenda e.g. World Refugee Day, International Women' Day etc. These relationships can be used to address reactive, potentially negative stories.

Below is a process of how a proactive cycle works:

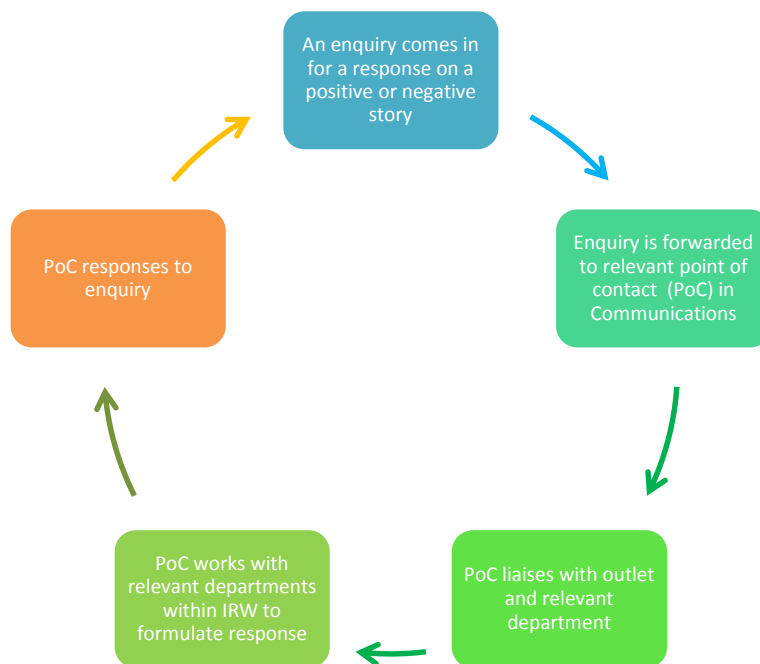


## 2.2 Reactive

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Reactive communications has a lasting impact on institutional reputation and public support. Regardless of whether the story is positive or negative, how well we convey our message to the public greatly depends on what is reported to the news media as well as outlets Islamic Relief Worldwide controls such as the website and social media. This is especially true in a crisis when images formed from crisis reporting are especially important in shaping long-lasting public impressions of the organisation.

Reactive engagement should also be seen as an opportunity to build relationships with relevant journalists that can be used for proactive purposes as well.



## 2.3 Crisis Communications

Crisis communications occur on several different levels across the Islamic Relief family. The following outlines a breakdown:

Type	Definition	Team involved?	Example
<b>Local</b>	A field or smaller partner office encounters a crisis communications situation	IMC, Head of Mission/Country Director, Field office communications staff, Director of International Programmes, Director of Communications	Issue of misappropriation of funds and equipment in a field office
<b>Partner Office</b>	A communications situation with a major partner office (USA, South Africa, Canada, Malaysia etc)	IMC, Director of Communications, Partner office communications, IRW Legal, CEO Office	Allegations of staff or volunteers having links to terrorist, extremist or designated groups
<b>International</b>	An International event impacting Islamic Relief as family	IMC, Director of Communications, Partner office communications, IRW Legal, CEO Office, BoD	International legal issue i.e. designation or the kidnapping of a staff member

The process is similar to a reactive media request and depending on type of request will involve a number of staff members from across the Islamic Relief family.



## 2.4 Media Training

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Every staff member that conducts a media interview should at the very least receive support and a briefing from the Communications Division. The ideal situation would be that all designated spokespersons undertake media training prior to conducting interviews. Training would generally involve a full day intensive course with an experienced external trainer on broadcast interview skills.

Alongside this, staff members on the roster of spokespeople undergo a refresher training at least every 18 months. This will take place in-house in either London or Birmingham.

The responsibility for media training lies with the International Media Coordinator.

## 2.5 Staff engagement with the media

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The following processes should take place if a member of staff is contacted by any media outlet: print, broadcast or online.

- Unless directly authorised to do so by the International Media Coordinator or the Global Director of Communications, you may not engage directly with the media on behalf of Islamic Relief. This includes releasing information to the media, issuing press releases or statements, and giving interviews.
- If you are contacted by a journalist, reporter or any other media representative, do not engage in direct discussion or indirectly comment on anything they say. Take note of their enquiry and contact details and tell them that their enquiry will be passed promptly to the International Media Coordinator. Pass the details immediately to the Media Desk.
- If the International Media Coordinator asks you for information or other input in relation to a media enquiry, you must prioritise this wherever possible. You should respond as requested by the deadline given or advise as to any difficulties meeting the deadline.
- Any requests from other organisations, such as external partners, to provide comments / approval for press releases or other publicity must be passed to the International Media Coordinator for approval.
- If you become aware of a media issue which could have an adverse impact on Islamic Relief's operations, reputation or brand, escalate this to the International Media Coordinator.
- Be aware that what you post on publically accessible platforms such as social media may be visible to the media. Refer to the Social Media Policy for more information.

## 2.6 Communications Division Contacts

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