

Statement read by Al-Khair's solicitors (Carter Ruck LLP) outside the Royal Courts of Justice on Thurs 29 April 2021

The publisher of the Times has today apologised in the High Court to Al-Khair Foundation, its Founder Imam Qasim and its Trustees over false allegations they published about them in 2020. The Times has also published a full apology and paid substantial libel damages, plus costs.

Al-Khair is a charity based in England with an international aid-delivery footprint spanning more than sixty countries. Al-Khair is active in the areas of sanitation, sustainability, education, shelter, healthcare and support for vulnerable people, in addition to humanitarian and emergency relief. Imam Qasim is the founding trustee and the Chairman of Al-Khair and is therefore widely associated with Al-Khair.

The claim arose from articles published on 10 December 2020 in the print edition of the Times and online on its website, which falsely alleged that Al-Khair had colluded with criminal human traffickers who were assisting Somali migrants trying to reach Europe from Turkey, thereby putting their lives at risk. This included an incident which led to the deaths of a number of Somalis in the Mediterranean.

The Articles did not refer to Imam Qasim expressly. However, given his widely-known status as the founding Trustee of Al Khair, and his position as its principal figurehead and public face, The Times accepted that the Articles may have been understood by a large, but unquantifiable, number of readers to refer to Imam Qasim and to impute to him responsibility for the alleged activities which were the subject of the Articles.

In fact, as the Times has now accepted, these allegations were both defamatory and untrue. On the contrary, neither Al-Khair nor Imam Qasim have ever been involved in, or provided any support for, the reprehensible and criminal activities which were the subject of the Articles, and there is no basis whatsoever for suspecting them of having done so.

In recognition of the falsity, and gravity, of the allegations against Al-Khair and Imam Qasim, the Times joined in a Statement in Open Court today before Mr Justice Johnson, withdrawing the false allegations and expressing a full apology to Al-Khair and its Trustees, including Imam Qasim. A full apology has also been published on the Times website, on the Times App, and prominently in the print edition of the Times.

The Times has also paid substantial damages to Al-Khair and Imam Qasim, as well as paying their costs. Imam Qasim will be donating their damages to Al-Khair.