

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE**

Claim No: [                      ]

**QUEEN'S BENCH DIVISION**

**MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS LIST**

**BETWEEN:-**

**(1) AL-KHAIR FOUNDATION**

**(2) IMAM QASIM RASHID AHMAD**

**Claimants**

**-and-**

**TIMES NEWSPAPERS LIMITED**

**Defendant**

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**STATEMENT IN OPEN COURT**

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Solicitor for the Claimant

1. My Lord, I appear for the Claimants in this matter, Al-Khair Foundation ("Al-Khair") and Imam Qasim Rashid Ahmad.
2. Al-Khair is a substantial 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. Al-Khair also runs four schools in the United Kingdom and maintains an extensive UK aid delivery base which has assisted in the national COVID relief programme with, inter alia, food parcels, winter clothing, PPE and laptops for children. Al-Khair has donated £195 million in aid globally over the last ten years. Al Khair also operates three satellite TV channels which broadcast on Sky.
3. Imam Qasim is the founding trustee and the Chairman of Al-Khair and is therefore widely associated with Al-Khair.
4. On 10 December 2020, the Defendant, Times Newspapers Limited published an article in the Times entitled "*Greece accuses charities of helping human traffickers to smuggle*

*migrants*". A version of the article under the same headline was also published by The Times the same day on its website (together the "Articles").

5. As The Times accepts, the Articles would have been understood by readers to suggest 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.
6. 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 accepts 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.
7. As The Times accepts, these allegations were both defamatory and untrue.
8. 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.
9. In recognition of the false and seriously defamatory nature of the allegations the Defendant has published a full apology to Al-Khair and its Trustees on its website and in the print edition of The Times, and agreed to join in the reading of this Statement in Open Court. Further, The Times has agreed to pay Al-Khair and Imam Qasim substantial damages for libel (all of which will be applied to Al-Khair's charitable activities), as well as their legal costs.

Solicitor/Counsel for the Defendant

10. My Lord, on behalf of Times Newspapers Ltd, I confirm all that my friend has said. The Times withdraws these false allegations and apologises to Al-Khair and its Trustees, including Imam Qasim.

Dated: 7 April 2021



Signed: ..... Carter-Ruck, Solicitors for the Claimants



Signed: ..... Times Newspapers Limited