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## Turkish Waqf After the 2004 Aceh Tsunami

**Alaeddin Tekin\*** and **Arshad Islam\*\***

**Abstract:** This paper studies waqf projects including schools, mosques, orphanages and housing built by Turkish aid agencies in Aceh province of Indonesia after the 2004 Aceh Tsunami following the Indian Ocean Earthquake. Such projects continue to be actively supported and to serve the Acehese community, playing an important role with local organizations. Besides the Turkish Government, NGOs such as Turkish Foundation Institutions including the Turkish Red Crescent (Kızılay), Deniz Feneri and Humanitarian Relief Foundation (IHH) are the main groups considered in this study. The paper situates Turkish waqf in the long-term history of relations between Turkey and Aceh, dating from the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century, which was reinvigorated by Turkish solidarity following the 2004 tsunami. Essentially, the fact that there is a serious lack of literature on studies of these institutions and activities and their deeper cultural significance is the main rationale for presenting this work. The main purpose of this study is to examine the foundation and relief works from Turkey to Aceh after the shocking earthquake of 9.1 magnitude, which resulted in 126,741 deaths, 93,285 missing and massive destruction of property and infrastructure on 26<sup>th</sup> December 2004 in Aceh.

**Keywords:** Aceh, Indian Ocean, 2004 Tsunami, Turks, Waqf

**Abstrak:** Ini adalah kajian mengenai projek waqf oleh agensi bantuan Turki di wilayah Aceh, Indonesia selepas Tsunami Aceh pada 2004 yang disebabkan oleh gempa bumi di lautan India. Projek ini termasuk bantuan kepada sekolah,

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masjid, anak-anak yatim dan pembinaan kawasan perumahan. Agensi bantuan Turki memainkan peranan secara aktif bagi memberi sokongan berterusan dan berkhidmat kepada komuniti Aceh dan organisasi tempatan. Selain kerajaan Turki, badan bukan kerajaan Turki seperti Institusi Yayasan Turki, Bulan Sabit Merah Turki (Kızılay), Deniz Feneri dan Yayasan Bantuan Kemanusiaan (IHH) adalah organisasi yang dibincangkan di dalam kajian ini. Kajian ini meletakkan Waqf Turki di dalam sejarah hubungan jangka panjang diantara Turki dan Aceh yang bermula sejak dari pertengahan abad ke-16. Hubungan ini diberi nafas baru apabila pihak Turki memberi solidariti selepas Tsunami di Aceh pada 2004. Walaubagaimanapun, terdapat kekurangan kajian kesusasteraan mengenai institusi ini dan aktiviti yang dilakukan yang boleh memberi kesan mendalam terhadap budaya Aceh. oleh itu, tujuan utama kajian ini adalah untuk membincangkan asas penubuhan waqf dan kerja-kerja bantuan dari Turki selepas gempa bumi berukuran 9.1 yang menyebabkan 126,741 kematian, 93,285 kehilangan dan kemusnahan harta dan infrastruktur pada 26 December 2004.

**Kata Kunci:** Aceh, Lautan India, Tsunami 2004, Turki, Waqf

## Introduction

To examine Turkish waqf activities in the aftermath of the 2004 Aceh tsunami (hereinafter ‘the tsunami’) requires situating this latter-day generosity in the context of long-term charitable efforts rooted in the Ottoman state and the historical relationship between the Turks and the Acehnese. Waqf is a social institution that continues to exist throughout the Islamic World, despite concerted attempts to destroy it in the modern period. It has penetrated into the social, political and economic structures of the communities living in a vast region of the world since the 9<sup>th</sup> century and is a very important social institution that can maintain numerous socio-economic activities even today. Some researchers define waqf as the most important and comprehensive institution established and developed in Islamic societies (Kozak 1994: p. 14). It may also be said that the waqfs are institutions that reduce the income gap between the rich and the poor and play an important role in the development of societies.

Turkish nations converted to Islām en masse during the mid-10<sup>th</sup> century, and quickly embraced Islāmic traditions, including waqf. The most extensive examples of Turkish-Islāmic waqf culture were

instituted under the Ottoman Sultanate, whose official awqāf (khayrah) were spread throughout the Islāmic world for 400 years (from the 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries) on average. From the Balkans to Yemen, Morocco to Tabriz, these waqfs in Ottoman lands were undoubtedly important social institutions. For instance, at the time of the Ottoman withdrawal from Egypt, there were at least 264 mosques and madrasas built by official awqaf in Cairo alone. Hundreds of such Turkish awqaf are spread all over the Islāmic World, such as the Kulliyyah of Selimiye in Edirne, Registan Kulliyyah of Uluğ Bey in Samarqand and the Kulliyyah of Gazi Hüsrev Bey in Sarajevo in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Yediyıldız 2012: pp. 481-83).

In Turkish culture and history institutions of awqaf are given special importance and the diversity and functionality of these waqfs in the Ottoman period is remarkable. It is possible to see examples of these institutions even in very detailed areas, beyond the basic needs of the society, education, health and social security. In acknowledgement of this situation, Western social historians used the phrase “the heaven of waqf” to describe 16<sup>th</sup>-century Ottoman society (Yazgan 1977: p. 13). These waqfs were also an important part of the Ottoman economy as well as the responding to the needs of the society. About 15.97% of the Ottoman economy in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, 26.80% in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and 15.77% in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was controlled by these waqfs (Buluş 2009: p. 27). According to the calculations made, 300 administrative units called sancak each administered nearly 1000 awqaf in the Ottoman Sultanate, and their budgets could reach one-third or a fourth of all the State’s budget (Yediyıldız 2012: p. 484). From 1718 to 1800 a total of 687 new waqfs were established in Aleppo alone by the Ottoman administration, and it is possible to see the Ottoman foundations in areas not under formal Ottoman suzerainty, such as Algeria and India (Çizakça 2000: p. 22).

In summary, the Ottomans had an extensive and comprehensive financial and material infrastructure of awqaf throughout the whole of the Muslim world, and almost all public-oriented services that the state was obliged to fulfil were carried out by these institutions (Bayartan 2008: p. 161). Prior to the Proclamation of Tanzimat (1839), education and training, health, municipal services, social assistance and solidarity, and all kinds of religious and moral services from which the community benefited, including military institutions, were sustained by these

awqāf (Akgündüz 1988: p. 2). Given this deep and enthusiastic cultural legacy, the tsunami kick-started a return to primordial Turkish Muslim generosity as manifest in awqāf culture.

### **An Overview of the Relationship Between the Turks and the Acehnese Throughout History**

The work of awqāf can be very meaningful for communities with historical ties. Approximately 438 years before the tsunami, the Ottoman Sultan Selim II (1566-1574) promised to help the Acehnese against the incursions of the Crusaders, but he was unable to send substantive aid to Aceh because of a rebellion attempt in Yemen (Reid 1969: p. 404). However, the same unqualified concern for the Acehnese people was displayed by the Turkish people throughout history. The formal relationship between the Ottomans and Aceh began in the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century, but informal contacts were established long before, as evinced by the presence of Turks in Malay literature and about the Acehnese in traditional Turkish literature. The information about Turks in the Malay literature is found in oral literary lore (Braginsky 2015: p. 10), like Hikayat Aceh (Iskandar 1948), Hikayat Amir Hamzah (Ahmad 1987), Hikayat Bayan Budiman (Winstedt; Olof 1960), Hikayat Bustan al-Salatin (Iskandar 1966), Hikayat Meukota Alam (Sabil 1982), Hikayat Muhammad Hanafiyah (Brakel 1975) and Hikayat Perang Setambul (Braginsky 2015: pp. 266-67). In classical Turkish literature, information about Acehnese is mostly included in the geographical books like Kitab-ı Bahriye or Book of Navigation (Ökte 1988), Miratü'l-Memalik (Ahmed Cevdet H. 1313) and Tarih-i Hind-i Garbi (1987).

Banda Aceh, a major port of the Sultanate, had established trade relations with Istanbul, the metropolis of the Muslim world that controlled trade between the Red Sea and the Mediterranean, in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The Portuguese traveller Tom Pires who visited Aceh in 1511 noted the visible Turkish influence in the region (Di Meglio 1970: pp. 117-19; Göksoy 2004: p. 15). However, the first formal relations between the two countries were established in the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century when Portuguese occupied Malacca and many Muslim Sultanates in the region, especially the Sultanate of Aceh, appealed to the Sublime Porte for help from the Caliph against the Crusading invaders. The Ottoman Sultan, Suleyman I (1520-1566), gave a positive response to the request of the Sultan of Gujarat, and to the Acehnese Sultan Alâeddin Ri'ayat Shah al-Kahhar (1537-1571) (Şah 1967: p. 373).



An epistle dated 7<sup>th</sup> January 1566 was sent by the Acehese Sultan to Suleyman the Magnificent explicitly requesting aid against the Portuguese (Şah 1967: pp. 186-87). When the ambassador arrived in Istanbul, Sultan Suleyman I was away on his last campaign to Szigetvar in Hungary, and he passed away to be succeeded by his son, Sultan Selim II (1566-1574) (Göksoy 2004: pp. 41-42). Consequently, the Acehese ambassador had to wait nearly two years in Istanbul to get a positive reply.

The new Sultan gave an audience to the Acehese ambassador, and after listening carefully he promised to issue an edict to send military aid (7 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri 1998: pp. XIX-XX). Sultan Selim II also sent a letter to the Acehese Sultan stating the details of the promised aid in his official response, confirming the assistance of 15 galleys, two galleons and a substantial number of troops (Şah 1967: p. 378). When the mission was en route to Aceh, a Zaidi rebellion broke out in Yemen. Consequently, the fleet was split into two flotillas, the larger of which was re-directed to suppress the rebellion in Yemen, while a token force of only two ships continued on to Banda Aceh (Uzunçarşılı 1983: p. 31-32; 7 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri 1998: p. XXII). The Ottoman soldiers sent to the Aceh permanently settled there and never returned to their homeland, and it is believed that these soldiers were buried in the Turkish graveyard of Banda Aceh that exists today.

It is known that relations between the two states continued until the first quarter of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, especially during the reign of Acehese Sultan Iskandar Muda (1607-1636). The Turkish military experts sent to the region in the 16<sup>th</sup> century established a military academy named Askar-i Bayt al-Muqaddas during the period of Iskender Muda (Göksoy 2004: p. 57). After his reign no formal relations were established between the two states until the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Diplomatic correspondence was resumed when the Acehese Sultan Mansur Syah sent a letter to the Ottoman Sultan Abdulmecid I (1839-1861) in 1849, swearing fealty to the Ottoman Caliphate (Kadı 2011: p. 167). However, the irreversible decline in the Ottoman Empire led to it being preoccupied with its own internal affairs and a desperate drive toward Westernization, away from its traditional Islāmic impetus, until the pan-Islāmic vision of the last de-facto Caliph, Sultan Abdulhamid II (1876-1909), who was particularly concerned about the Aceh-Dutch War of 1870-1903. Sultan Abdulhamid II was able to make policy in different areas in this region

using the authority of the Caliphate (From the Ottoman Archives: BOA, Y PRK BŞK 55-41. BOA, Y A HUS 297-35-1. BOA, Y A HUS 398-110-1. BOA, Y A HUS 386-52-1. BOA, İrade Dahiliye, 1313, 2020). At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, both states ceased to exist, but the relationship between their peoples was re-established a century later in 2004.

### **The Types of Turkish awqāf in Aceh**

The main objective of this study is to examine the Turkish waqf in Aceh after the tsunami, largely based on interviews conducted during the fieldwork in the region, to begin tentatively exploring this phenomenon, as there have been no previous studies on this topic. The interview target group included specifically selected people directly involved in managing the Turkish waqf institutions. Another important source of study is the annual reports of Red Crescent and IHH, which are the main Turkish waqf institutions in Aceh. Their statistical reports are greatly helpful to quantify the waqf projects and their impacts. Another important source used in this study is Turkish newspapers and Anadolu News Agency reports. As a result of this work, the areas of interest of these awqāf and the beneficiaries and their positive attitudes can be easily visualized by the Acehnese people.

#### *Housing*

Most houses in the province were destroyed or become dysfunctional after the tsunami. Some villages in Aceh were wholly destroyed, two of which, Lampuuk and Bitai, were rebuilt by the Red Crescent (Kızılay), a Turkish relief foundation. According to the report prepared by Red Crescent for the end of 2005, a total of 1050 houses were built in these two villages, comprising 700 in Lampuuk and 350 in Bitai (Red Crescent Activity Report 2005: p. 39).

The above villages were made by the financial support of the Turkish Red Crescent society, and in recognition of their efforts and gratitude both villages were named as ‘Turkish villages’ (Turki Lampuuk and Turki Bitai) (Picture 1). Even before the tsunami Bitai village was referred to as a Turkish village, because these settlements were originally made by Turkish soldiers who came to Aceh in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and made it their permanent abode, as attested to by the Turkish martyrs’ cemetery in the area. A Turkish flag motif is emblazoned at the entrance of all the houses built in the villages and the entrance of both

villages have large gates written on each gate the Turkish Red Crescent Village (Perkampungan Bulan Sabit Merah Turki Bitai/Lampuuk).



*Picture 1. The entrance of Lampuuk and Bitai village, pictured by Alaeddin Tekin*

In an interview with Azimah Binti Abdul Aziz, a resident of Bitai village and caretaker of the Turkish martyrs' cemetery, she reported that the population of the village decreased to 75% of the pre-tsunami level due to the loss of life. She lost her own baby in her arms during the tsunami, and she continued her recollections thus: "I was very happy when Turks came. We lost everything in the tsunami and we were living in a ruined shed. But now we have a house, and not only me, everyone had a house. The whole village folk pray every day for the Turkish waqif (Interview with Azimah on April 6, 2018.)."

Lampuuk is a larger village than Bitai, a settlement located 15 km west of the capital Banda Aceh, and it is one of the villages most damaged and devastated by the tsunami. The population of Lampuuk are not certain how many people were in the settlement when the

tsunami occurred, but their estimates range from 5,000 to 6,000. After the tsunami residents were reasonably sure that the survivors, numbered around 400 (Kenny 2010: p. 110). The newly built houses in Bitai village are identical in design to the Turkish houses. According to the villagers the quality of these houses built by the Turkish awqāf are the best in Aceh, and they are very convenient for them. The houses were given free of charge to the villagers (Interview with Muhammad Rizki on April 9, 2018). It is reported that the houses built by the Turkish Red Crescent in Lampuuk village were chosen as the model houses by the Indonesian Authorities. It has been accepted as a model for similar help offered by other countries (<http://www.haber7.com/print/458333>).

On the occasion of the completion of the housing project and award of the title and possessions of the houses, a small ceremony was organized in the village of Lampuuk in 2006, in which Mehmet Ali Şahin, the Deputy Prime Minister of Turkish Republic, and the Red Crescent delegation were the guests of honour. Mehmet Ali Şahin in his press statement said that the Indonesian authorities expressed that the newly built houses are luxurious, and the Deputy Prime Minister retorted “What we like for ourselves the same we want for our Muslim brothers. If it is worthless for us so we do not see it as worthy for our Muslim brothers (<http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/dunya/acede>).” Turkish Red Crescent Chairman Tekin Küçükali was also there in the ceremony and categorically stated in his speech that they found exemplary cooperation there, and as a result of this they built 1050 houses, four schools and a community centre, as well as restoring the Ottoman graveyard and mosques.

Küçükali stated that they wanted to show the concern and interest of the Turkish people for education worldwide, and he believed that the children who “will study at these schools built by the Turkish Red Crescent will sustain and strengthen the bond of Islāmic brotherhood and amity between the two countries.” Lastly, Ebubakar, the governor of Aceh said that “We understood that every cloud has a silver lining. We have had great happiness thanks to the Turkish people who built these houses through the Red Crescent. These works gave us great relief and somewhat minimize our sufferings (<http://www.hurriyet.com.tr>).” These housing projects were solely attributable to the efforts of the Turkish awqāf, which were welcomed and remembered by the Acehese people to the present.

### *Schools*

After the tsunami that many schools were damaged, and the education system was disrupted for quite a long time. The Turkish Red Crescent's works attracted the attention of local people in rebuilding schools and its scope of education support services, including the following:

- A. In Lhokgna province, basic educational and stationery equipment were provided to equip 1000 students studying in four schools, along with essential equipment like computers and photocopy machines.
- B. New school buildings were constructed, including eight classrooms, hostels, a storehouse, basketball and volleyball courts and a library.
- C. Educational support kits were provided to Masjid Kueh for kindergarten, primary and high school levels and many other school buildings were repaired, and maintenance work was carried out. The current SMP 3, secondary school and the construction project of other school buildings including eight classrooms, hostel, cafeteria, basket and volleyball court and library were completed in the same province. The additional schools were opened after the launching ceremony held on October 11, 2005 (Red Crescent Report 2005: pp. 36-37).

To reactivate the education system in province three more schools were constructed by the Turkish Red Crescent, including two in Peukan Bada and one in Lhokgna: SMPN secondary school, SMU high school and SD primary school. We visited SMPN 1 Bulan Sabit Merah Turki Peukan Bada (Turkish Red Crescent Secondary School) on the spot and got an opportunity to chat with the teachers and students in the school (Picture 2). We interviewed Busyra Humam, a teacher who has been teaching in the school since the tsunami, who stated that there are 40 teachers and 500 students (150 male and 350 female students) and the school has 18 classrooms. Busyra elaborated that Turkish Red Crescent society provided uninterrupted funding for the school over the previous three years (Interview with Busyra Humam on April 7, 2018). The School consists of three buildings and large grounds, in which stands a statue of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.



Picture 2. SMPN 1 Bulan Sabit Merah Turki Peukan Bada (Turkish Red Crescent Secondary School), pictured by Alaeddin Tekin.

Suleimaniyah Waqf is another Turkish private foundation and NGO involved in educational activities in the province. The main aim of this foundation is to support students of Tahfīz (memorizing the Qur’ān). According to the information given on their official website it has 2,200 students lodged in seven schools housed in 34 hostels throughout Indonesia (<https://www.uicci.org>). We visited Pondok Pesantren Tahfidzul Qur’an Sulaimaniyah in Aceh and had the opportunity to get acquainted with the students studying Tahfīz. However, our knowledge about this foundation is limited because the managers did not want to share any details.

### *Mosques*

Another major work of Turkish foundations was restoring damaged mosques and building new ones in the provinces where this was required. The Light House Association (Deniz Feneri Derneği), a Turkish waqf institutions, built Masjid Bitai with local architectural design in Bitai

village, which was opened to the public in 2006. Since 2013, Ustaz Di Dahlan, the imam of the mosque, has led the congregational prayer and rural children study the Qur'an regularly (Interview with Di Dahlan on April 6, 2018). Adi, aged 38 years, is the muezzin who is also responsible for cleaning the mosque. He lives in an adjacent house built by the Turks as part of the waqf, and he was very thankful to the Turkish waqfs for giving the mosque new life (Interview with Adi on April 6, 2018). Masjid Rahmatullah, the second-largest mosque in Aceh that can accommodate 500 people was partially damaged in tsunami located in Lampuuk rebuilt by the Turkish Red Crescent. Tungku Suleyman Muhammad Amin, the imam of the mosque, stated that it receives hundreds of visitors (Interview with Amin, on April 9, 2018), and in order to preserve the memories of the destruction of the tsunami it hosts a photo gallery (Interview with the Manager of Masjid Rahmatullah, Syahrizal, on April 9, 2018). Zeynel Abidin Hospital Mosque was restored by the Turkish Red Crescent in 2005; its interior walls were coated by ceramics and its wooden ceiling and roof were restored. Masjid Cot Goh and Masjid Al Felah were also built by Red Crescent in Aceh (2005 Activity Report: p. 39).

#### *Istanbul Baba Murat Korkmaz Orphanage*

The great challenging task for the Turkish Foundation Institution İnsani Yardım Vakfı (IHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation) was accommodating 540 orphans, who lost one or both parents. The IHH provided food, clothing and shelter; health and education support are provided as well as psychological support (Yurdakul 2009: p. 102), with an orphanage spread over five acres that includes a prayer room, library, utility room, dining hall, guesthouse and two dormitories. This is perhaps the most evident example of Turkish waqf culture performing socio-economic welfare activities in this province.

Istanbul Baba Murat Korkmaz Orphanage was founded for girls and was originally managed by Turks, but it is now under the management of Wahyu Rismawan, an Indonesian. It hosts 91 orphans whose needs are provided for by the Turkish management, including educational scholarships. They admit school-going girls aged between 10-11 years old who continue to stay until the age of 22-23 when they complete graduation. They go to school by buses and minibus daily. These girls are educated in their required field of education so that they are able to

start working immediately, mostly as teachers. The students are given inclusive knowledge of the Qur'an (Interview with Rismawan, on April 9, 2018). They receive three meals a day and the institution employs 18 staff members, including cooks, drivers, teachers and security staff. In addition, a monthly scholarship is allocated according to the age of each student. The orphanage officials allow students to contact the different institutions of higher learning in Turkey and Malaysia for higher studies and provide them all sorts of support.

We had the opportunity to interview a few orphans who are staying at the orphanage to discuss their future goals. Wasmiani, a boarding student at the orphanage since the tsunami, said that "I do not want to leave from here and I want to help the fellow orphan sisters and even thinking to open a new orphanage." She is very much excited "I cannot forget the day of disaster and my difficult childhood which I had experienced; I do not want it to happen to other children as I was lucky. Turkish people came and protected us. I pray for them every day (Interview with Wasmiani on April 9, 2018)." During our interview session with Nur Laili and Nurul Hafni, orphans aged 10 and 17, they expressed their greatest dream to study in Turkey and so that they may know the Turks closely (Interview with Nur Laili and Nurul Hafni on April 9, 2018).

The IHH annual reports since 2006 show the years of enrolment of students in the orphanage, and in 2015 there was a total of 115 orphans who had stayed in it hostel (The 2015 working report of IHH). In 2016 there were 387 registered orphans in Aceh who were financially supported by this waqf (The 2016 working report of IHH). "We brought 70 more orphan girls from Aceh and these girls began to work together and their number has been reached to 86 girls from Aceh (<https://aa.com.tr/tr/yasam/acenin-yetim-kizlari/42232>)."

The performance of the foundation of IHH is accepted by the people of the province. In 2012, the Indonesian authorities awarded them and honoured for these waqfs (<https://dogruhaber.com.tr/haber/53579>).

Finally, according to the 2005 Turkish Red Crescent activity report, after the tsunami in Aceh, two orphanages were repaired and restored (Red Crescent Report 2005: p. 39), however no more detailed information has been given about these institutions. During the field work we did in the region, we could not find any evidence of these two



orphanages mentioned. It must be noted that the activities of the Turkish Foundation institutions have been carried out in Aceh since the tsunami in a systematic manner as of 2018, with sustainable management practices.

### *Other awqāf Works*

The graves of the Ottoman soldiers who came to Aceh and lost their lives while helping the Sultan of Aceh against the Portuguese attack in 16<sup>th</sup> century is located at Selahaddin graveyard in Banda Aceh (Picture 3). The caretaker of these graves at Selahaddin in Banda Aceh is a descendent of the Ottoman soldiers (<https://aa.com.tr/tr/dunya/acede-osmanli-ruhu>). Azimah Binti Abdul Aziz claims that she is a Turkish descendent that her grandfather, Tungku Syaikh Ahmad, was originally a Turk and the caretaker of the Turkish martyr graveyard. After the Tsunami this Turkish graveyard was ruined but it was subsequently rebuilt by the Turkish Red Crescent. According to Azimah, her entire family grew up listening the stories of heroism of the Turks who died here (Interview with Azimah on April 6, 2018).



*Picture 3. Selahaddin Turkish Graveyard in Aceh pictured by Alaeddin Tekin.*

Turkish foundation institutions built a Community Center in the province in 2005 (Picture 4), on 7.665 m<sup>2</sup> of Banda-Aceh Municipality land. It consists of recreational facilities such as a sports complex, children's playground, cinema-theatre hall lyceum and prayer room (Red Crescent Report 2005: p. 41). The name Community Center is named after Sultan Selim II, and it is free of charge for community use. It offers English courses, counselling and seminars to disaster victims to regenerate their self-confidence (<https://aa.com.tr/tr/dunya/turk-kizilayi-ace>).



Picture 4. Sultan II. Selim Aceh Community Center; by Anadolu news agency.

Undoubtedly, the Turkish awqāf is active in the field of healthcare services. The restoration work of Zeynel Abidin Hospital Pediatrics Clinic began operating on 5<sup>th</sup> August 2005, and its Neonatal and Pediatric Intensive Care Units have trained local health doctors and nurses. In addition, two military hospitals, Mescid Kueh and Posko 85, have provided free healthcare services to 17,727 patients. They were donated to the Indonesian Red Cross Society, which was a major coordinator of local aid delivery in situ (Table 1). Within the scope of these health services, X-ray films and blood bags amounting to USD 491.582,18 were given, and about 13,604 people were treated by 19 local psychologists at a camp in Lhokgna Province (Red Crescent Report 2005: pp. 38-41).

ROW	SECTOR	EXPENDITURE (USD)
1	EMERGENCY AID	929,151.79
2	EDUCATION	1,298,813.79

3	SUBSTRUCTURE	8,906.92
4	BRANCH DEVELOPMENT	251,143.07
5	HEALTH-WATER	1,700,476.16
6	RESTORATION	1,136,718.22
7	PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT	230,362.26
8	OPERATION SUPPORT	778,316.16
	TOTAL	6,333,888.37

*Table 1. Other Spending Amounts, from Red Crescent 2005 Activity Report, (1 January 2005 - 31 December 2005), p. 41.*

According to Muhammad Sabik, an activist and academic, Turkish foundation institutions were the first to offer support agencies to Aceh from three days after the tsunami (when large air cargo began arriving), while other aid organizations arrived by April 2015. The Light House Association (Deniz Feneri) and Red Crescent (Kızılay) were the first institutions to provide first aid in Aceh, and after disaster management activities, Turkish waqf institutions started reconstruction work (Interview with Muhammad Sabik, on April 10, 2018). Turkish waqf was particularly active in supporting various activities related to orphans.

## **Conclusion**

Although the experience of Turkish waqfs have been encountered in numerous diverse ways throughout the world over many centuries, the example of Aceh in Southeast Asia is a new turning point in reasserting this glorious philanthropic tradition and in building links between Turks and the people of Southeast Asia. This paper, based on interviews with Acehnese people and analysis of the fieldwork of the Turkish waqf activities in Aceh after the tsunami, has given an historical overview of the relationship between the two communities, noting the significance of the longstanding historical links between these two societies, which has been hitherto neglected in academic and mainstream considerations.

The fact that almost all the Turkish waqfs institutions actively involved in reconstruction after the tsunami are still vigorously working today is an indication of the extent to which these foundations are welcomed by the Acehnese and the longstanding and sustained commitment of Turkish aid activists to continue their humanitarian and selfless efforts. These waqfs support mosques, schools, orphanages and

health institutions, mainly administered by the Turkish Red Crescent (Türk Kızılayı), Denizfeneri and IHH.

This paper posits that these efforts mark the resurrection of the historical ties and fraternity between the Ottoman Empire and the Aceh Sultanate, which started in the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century and became moribund over the century preceding the tsunami. These two communities, which are very distant from each other in many fields such as culture, geography, and politics, are brought together by Islām, which is common phenomenon for solidarity and cooperation which they have shown throughout history, and which continues to inspire universal respect and humanitarian assistance.

“I cannot forget the day of disaster and my difficult childhood which I had experienced; I do not want it to happen to other children as I was lucky. Turkish people came and protected us. I pray for them every day”

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