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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**Broad Based Group Asks Obama to Fix Security Laws that Harm U.S. Charities**

Washington, DC – June 4, 2010

Today, on the anniversary of President Obama's speech in Cairo, eight additional organizations joined 30 U.S. charitable organizations asking the President to take immediate action to address problems national security laws have created for legitimate U.S. charitable, development and peacebuilding programs.

While much of the attention on Obama's remarks on charitable giving focuses on individual donors, the letter notes that "the problems you cited adversely impact all kinds of charities, humanitarian aid groups, grantmakers and donors."

There is ample evidence that the chilling legal environment for charities has negatively impacted programs that provide vital services, especially abroad. Today, after sending the updated list of signatories to the White House, **Kay Guinane, Charity and Security Network Program Manager said, "Fixing the problems for zakat must address the entire chain of charitable operations, from donors to the ultimate beneficiaries. In the end, the tragedy of the current rules is that people in need are suffering because of them."**

The group of charities asked for "a White House directive to all federal agencies mandating revision of their current policies and practices to conform to basic humanitarian principles." It noted the following deficiencies in the current legal regime:

- Absence of clear standards for designating charities as terrorist organizations:
- Inadequate humanitarian exemptions to the laws banning material support to terrorism
- No protections for good faith acts
- Absence of due process rights
- Indefinite freezing of assets
- Harassment of donors and consequent chilling effect

The letter notes that U.S. charities have suggestions for solutions to the problems and asks the White House to meet to discuss them. **The updated letter is online at**

**[http://www.charityandsecurity.org/system/files/June 4 2010 Letter to Obama.pdf](http://www.charityandsecurity.org/system/files/June_4_2010_Letter_to_Obama.pdf)**