



AID: Yousaf Razaq of the Human Relief Foundation with some of the equipment. Below, survivors in Kashmir

Mission of mercy is heading to Kashmir

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by **FIONA EVANS**
T&A Reporter

A mercy mission to take £100,000 worth of medical equipment to people still struggling to rebuild their lives after the South Asian earthquake two years ago has left Bradford.

The equipment, which has been donated by NHS trusts across the country to the Human Relief Foundation, is now bound for the epicentre of the quake region in Muzaffarabad, Kashmir, in a 40ft container.

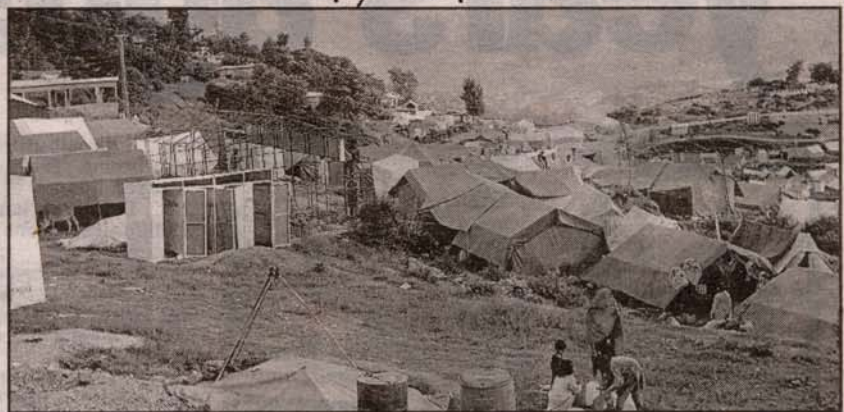
HRF project co-ordinator Yousaf Razaq said: "We have sent nearly £5million worth of equipment over the past four years which would have gone in the bin but has gone successfully to Iraq or Kashmir."

The aid includes cotton bandages, syringes, thermometers, first aid kits, plasters, walking aids, baby warmers, hospital beds, anaesthetic machines, medical books and journals and sewing machines.

"The sewing machines are to train women to get them back into the labour market where they can earn money while the men are re-building the houses," said Mr Razaq.

Mr Razaq, who is based at the charity's base in Claremont, Bradford, recently spent five weeks in Muzaffarabad overseeing a project to build 15 new homes for people who are still living in the wrecks of houses destroyed by the 2005 earthquake.

"Fifteen houses is a drop in the ocean," he said.



"It's like working on one street in the whole of Bradford. People are living in the same tents they were given after the earthquake. They don't talk about the earthquake, but the plea is in their silence – their facial expressions.

"They will never forget but they don't want to talk about it. They want to move on with their lives. The Government is trying but it's a long process. That's why the people of Kashmir rely on non-governmental organisations like HRF. I saw the United Nations out there but all the other agencies seem to have gone now."

The 15 houses will be built on land which is already owned by the people whose homes were destroyed and are based on a Japanese design.

The charity has also been donated another piece of land but money is need-

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ed to build more homes for the next phase of the project.

"That land is worthless without money to build the houses," said Mr Razaq.

Building is due to start next week – with much of the labour being carried out by men whose homes were destroyed.

Anyone who would like to donate can contact the Human Relief Foundation on: (01274) 392727.

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