



Donors Management in Disasters: Kermanshah Earthquake Experience

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Dear Editor,

On November 12, 2017, an earthquake struck Azgaleh in Kermanshah province with a magnitude of 7.3. The number of mortalities was over 600 and the number of casualties about 10000 (1). Tens of thousands of residences were demolished, and thousands of people were displaced in Sar-e-Pul Zahab, Azgaleh, Kuik, and surrounding villages. The population was in urgent need for government and humanitarian aids, especially in the first days of the incident. The financial aids management is an essential and relevant aspect of humanitarian operations. Cooperation and participation are the most critical factors in managing gifts in disasters (2). Humanitarian aids in conflicting situations and disasters are always under many challenges. However, these aids may add more to the problems in the absence of political and governmental commitments (3). Immediately after the earthquake, humanitarian aids came from the Iranian people by the government agencies and individuals from most parts of the country. Government agencies such as the Red Crescent, in addition to their supportive duty, announced account numbers for providing cash assistance, and sufficient information was provided in this regard. In addition, government agencies, banks, and corporations, each formed a public aid agency, and some posted their images among the ruins of the earthquake in the social networks. For various reasons, like the experience from previous disasters and accidents, many people did not trust in governmental institutions, and they went to the earthquake-stricken areas themselves to provide their cash or non-cash aids or instead, they trusted individuals instead of government agencies and provided them with fundraising. Meanwhile, many artists, athletes, and other celebrities were to collect public aids for housing, building shelter, tents, and provision of necessary supplies. Some regarded this as a spon-

taneous and popular movement and admired it; others considered this inconsistency as a ground for disturbance of the relief process in the earthquake-stricken areas by the relief agencies. Despite the presence of many celebrities to help earthquake victims in Kermanshah, it seemed that some of them were to take advantage of these situations so that some of these celebrities could collect billions from people to help earthquake survivors. Although in the initial days of the incident, the celebrities attended the affected areas to take pictures with people, now, after months from the incidents, still there is no clear information on where these cash aids were spent. Although the public remitted large amounts of cash into the bank accounts of the celebrities, these contributions were not well distributed among the victims. Non-systematic distribution of the public aids among the victims and their expressed dissatisfaction has undermined the people's trust in celebrities in the provision of their assistance for the incident.

The experience gained in the Kermanshah earthquake showed that our society faces a new phenomenon in streaming public assistance toward celebrities, partly due to the previous experiences and lack of trust in public and governmental institutions, and partly, because of the new models created in the social networks. The important point in this direction is the lack of a monitoring system in the process of the activities of celebrities. Therefore, during this period, many people raised the question of what happened to the cash gathered in the accounts of celebrities. Of course, it is clear that one cannot expect all people provide their contributions to the governmental institutions, and on the other hand, with the emergence of the phenomenon of celebrities, we should not be indifferent toward it.

First, celebrities should provide the public with a clear

performance report in these situations, and gain legal and supportive benefits to facilitate assistance plans. The government should legally supervise their bank accounts. Second, government agencies such as the Red Crescent and NGOs must engage in reporting to the public transparently so that the public trusts them more strongly to provide their contributions to government agencies. In general, the lack of transparency and supervisory laws is evident, for which, due considerations should be made so that any abusive possibilities and wasting of public contributions are minimized.

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