

25th hijri anniversary of the registration of the first charitable organization

November 30th, 2024

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In the early 1960s, there was a great need in Saudi Arabia to address the care and welfare of orphans, the elderly, and the disabled populations. This social outcry resulted in charities created to support these special populations.

As these different charities came into existence, the Saudi government became one of their largest supporters until they could stand firmly on their own. In a 10-month period in the hijri years 1406-1407 (1985-1987), the government granted these charities 47,416,662 Saudi rials or US\$12,644,443. This clearly shows that the Saudi government had a vested interest in the success of these charities for the sake of the people in need.

The Al-Wafa Charitable Society, the first of its kind in the country, was founded on 19 Safar 1383 (10 July 1963).

By 1406h (1985-1986), there were 870 charitable organizations within the country. These included the Disabled Childcare Society and the Smoking Prevention Society.

In 1408h, the Saudi government celebrated the 25th hijri anniversary of the registration of the first charitable organization in the country. For this special occasion, the government issued a set of two postage stamps on Oct. 26, 1987.

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The two commemorative stamps are illustrated in Figure 1. The low denomination stamp has a face value of 50 halalas, and the high denomination is 100h.

The stamps are listed in Vol. 6A of the 2025 *Scott Standard Postage Stamp Catalogue* as numbers 1062-1063. A collector is expected to pay a retail value of \$2.40 for a mint, never-hinged set in the grade of very fine or \$1.05 for a used set.

The stamps were designed and issued by the Directorate General of Posts at the Ministry of Posts, Telegraphs and Telephones in the kingdom. The stamps were printed locally at the Government Security Printing Press in Riyadh.

The quantity issued was small; only 800,000 sets were produced.

The stamps are multicolored, and printed on white, unwatermarked paper. They are perforated gauge 12.



Figure 1

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The two stamps have the same design. They also have the same Arabic and English inscriptions.

The design features a woman with a baby in her arms and two small children at her left side. All four people are standing in the palm of an outstretched white hand, as if it is supporting them. All four are faceless, but one can tell that the two children standing are a boy and a girl.

In the upper right corner is the Saudi Arabian national emblem, a palm tree above two crossed swords. The collector will not find the name of the country anywhere on the stamps. This is because as of 1982, Saudi Arabia started using its national emblem on its stamps instead of the country name.

Below the national emblem on the right side of the stamps is the hijri year “1408” written in Arabic. Below it, is the corresponding Gregorian year, “1987.”

In the two lower corners are the denomination and currency, in English at left and Arabic at right.

On the left side of the stamps, there is Arabic text that reads from top to bottom. It is equivalent to “(The passing of) 25 years on the registration of the first charitable organization.”

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The design and the bilingual text are surrounded by a decorative rectangular frame. The frame color appears to be bluish green on the 50h stamp, and black on the 100h stamp.

Today, the available number of complete fault-free sets is less than the quantity produced. I have seen a sheet of the 50h stamp and two and a half sheets of the 100h stamp with no gum. In addition, I have seen mint and used stamps from both denominations that contained faults such as thins, tears and missing perforations, as well as creases.

The stamps are readily available in mint condition. They are known in singles, pairs, blocks of four and larger multiples. Also, they can be found in full sheets. Collectors prefer mint, never-hinged stamps.

Postally used stamps of both denominations can be easily obtained on or off paper. Some of the stamps seen have faults, such as creases, tears and missing or bent corner perforations, as well as thins.

Singles and blocks of four of both denominations are found canceled-to-order on or off paper. Some of the stamps that are off paper still retain their original gum. I have also seen half a sheet of the 50h stamp canceled-to-order in Riyadh. On this half sheet, the gum on the stamps is pristine.

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Both denominations are known on commercial covers. If you are a postal history collector, make certain the stamps on the covers don't have faults.

First day covers exist. Those seen were unaddressed and did not go through the mail.

Philatelic covers can be found with singles or blocks of four. Some covers are addressed and have traveled through the mail.

Not all governments fund charitable organizations. The Saudi government saw the benefits of these charities for its citizens, and the value of donating millions to support those in need. These charities brought awareness of the struggle of special populations to donors and government officials alike. It was quite right for the government to honor those programs 25 years later. These stamps are the perfect way to remind us not to turn our eyes away from those who are less fortunate.

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Complete sheet of 50h

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