

SUMMARY STATEMENT
International Rescue Committee v. Mohammed
Docket No. 49678

This appeal arose from a dispute concerning the distribution of charitable donations to aid refugees who were the victims of a mass stabbing incident in Boise, Idaho, in 2018. Mustafa Mohammed and Ekhlas Al Khudhur (“Appellants”) challenged the magistrate court’s order approving the final distribution of funds as proposed by the International Rescue Committee (“IRC”). IRC calculated the final distribution of donated funds to the families using a formula of its creation based on the objective methodology and principles of Kenneth Feinberg, an expert on compensation fund valuation and distribution following high-profile, mass tragedies.

After the magistrate court approved the distribution, Appellants appealed to the district court. They argued that the magistrate court erred in concluding there was a trust because they “believe[] the monies given to the families were not intended to be the corpus of a trust, but were instead intended to be a gift.” In the alternative, Appellants argued that the application of Feinberg’s methodology was outside IRC’s discretion and a breach of its fiduciary duties. Appellants also argued that the magistrate court erred by not allowing them to present evidence concerning the nature of their families’ injuries and future medical needs. The district court, acting in its intermediate appellate capacity, affirmed the magistrate court’s order, holding that a trust was created and that the proposed distribution method for the donated funds were within IRC’s discretion as trustee.

Appellants then appealed to the Idaho Supreme Court, which affirmed the decisions of both lower courts. The Supreme Court concluded (1) there was substantial and competent evidence in the record to support that a trust was formed, (2) that IRC’s final distribution was reasonable and within its discretion, and (3) there was no abuse of discretion by the magistrate court in limiting the evidence at the hearing to the issue raised in the pleadings.

******This summary constitutes no part of the opinion of the Court, but has been prepared by court staff for the convenience of the public.******