

Press release: New emergency UK aid for Sierra Leone landslide victims

The UK is stepping up with new emergency support that will provide clean water, food and medicines to assist people in the communities worst affected by the devastating floods and mudslide in Sierra Leone, International Development Secretary Priti Patel announced today.

UK aid is already ensuring vital humanitarian assistance is getting to people caught up in the crisis through pre-positioned supplies following the Ebola outbreak. Today's £5 million package – new money specifically for the humanitarian crisis in Freetown – includes support to:

- UNICEF to provide clean water and essential medicines for 5,000 people. UNICEF will also provide food, water and counselling for 1,500 children;
- A group of NGOs, led by Oxfam, to provide clean water and sanitation facilities for 3,000 people, vital to stopping the spread of deadly diseases such as cholera;
- UK charity Street Child to provide clothing and bedding for 3,000 children; and
- Emergency funding to meet needs on the ground as they continue to evolve.

International Development Secretary Priti Patel said:

This tragedy comes shortly after the Ebola crisis which Sierra Leone has worked so hard to recover from. Britain was at the forefront in tackling that deadly disease and we remain shoulder to shoulder with Sierra Leone today after these devastating events.

The UK was among the first to respond to this emergency, with personnel at the scene within just hours of the landslide to help co-ordinate the emergency response.

Our new support will provide basic life-saving supplies like food, water, shelter and clothing to people who have lost everything. The international community must follow our lead and step up to the plate.

Two world-leading British humanitarian experts will arrive in Freetown today (18 August) to provide specialist advice and expertise to help with response efforts.

Through our existing programmes in Sierra Leone, we are making sure hospitals are stocked with critical drugs. UK aid is also supporting disaster response experts from the World Health Organisation to reduce the risk of the spread of disease.

The Start Fund, a network of NGOs which is supported by the UK, has also been mobilised. The network has made £400,000 available for NGOs to provide urgent help to people affected by the mudslides.

Notes to Editors

- The £5m announced today is new money specifically for the humanitarian crisis in Freetown, Sierra Leone following this week's flooding and mudslides.
- By pre-positioning critical supplies such as food and medicine, as well as providing training on emergency operations, we have enabled the Government of Sierra Leone to respond quickly.
- The Ministry of Health and Sanitation has also activated the emergency 117 number, originally supported by the UK and used to report suspicious deaths during the Ebola epidemic, to ensure all those that need community support can access it.
- We have offered the Government of Sierra Leone vital humanitarian supplies, including generators and tents, to help those affected and stop the potential spread of disease.
- The UK's leadership in responding to this disaster goes beyond the support provided by the British Government – once again, British NGOs and businesses have been quick to step forward to offer vital help.
- This is an ongoing and evolving situation of which details are still emerging – we remain open to doing more as a clearer picture is established.