

Press release: PM dedicates £1bn in aid money for Syrian refugees and host countries

The Prime Minister will today set out the details of a £1 billion jobs and education package to support the most vulnerable victims of the Syrian conflict.

The overseas development funding, an allocation of £840 million pledges made last year at the London Syria Conference along with £160 million of new money, will provide vital support for refugees and the countries hosting them across the region.

This includes Jordan where there are currently over 650,000 registered Syrian refugees. The Prime Minister will witness the challenges facing Jordan first-hand today as she visits a school in the country educating young Syrian refugees and Jordanian children.

Today's announcement comes ahead of a UK co-hosted Syria conference in Brussels later this week and builds on the UK's leadership at the London Syria Conference last year, where the UK made education for children and the creation of jobs in the Middle East the main focus. At the event – following extensive UK lobbying – more than £9.6 billion was pledged in total by the international community, bringing hope to millions of people across the region.

The package of UK support will focus on creating new incentives for refugees to remain close to home so they don't feel forced to make the perilous and potentially life-threatening journey to Europe.

It will focus on providing more education, skills and jobs for refugees and others in countries like Jordan that border Syria, bringing them the stability and resilience to cope with the ongoing influx of people seeking shelter and giving those people the chance to build themselves meaningful long-term futures in the region.

The UK support includes:

- humanitarian aid including food, vaccinations, shelter and basic health care for millions of vulnerable people inside Syria and across the region
- education for tens of thousands of children in Jordan and Lebanon over the next 3 years, along with work to improve standards and provide vocational training for pupils in Jordan, making it easier for families to build a future in the region
- new funding for infrastructure in Jordan and Lebanon potentially creating thousands of new jobs, providing refugees and host communities with opportunities in the region while supporting vital building work

- potentially including waste water plants, schools and roads
- new support and advice to small and medium-sized businesses in Lebanon to create more jobs for host communities and Syrian refugees
- British expertise and technical advice to the governments of Jordan and Lebanon to accelerate private sector-led growth and job creation

Speaking ahead of her visit to Jordan, the Prime Minister said:

Hundreds of thousands of people have lost their lives and millions more have been forced to flee their homes by the barbarity of the Syria conflict. The UK has led the international response to the defining humanitarian crisis of our generation, and will continue to set the pace.

The ambitious approach agreed in London last year is delivering real results and giving refugees what they want – opportunities and education close to home that provide a meaningful alternative to risking their lives trying to reach Europe. This is clearly in the UK's national interest.

I will be urging the countries attending the Brussels Conference to follow Global Britain's lead and deliver on the promises we made in London by stepping up assistance to the millions of people affected by the ongoing Syria conflict and helping to build resilience across the region.

We are a kind and generous country that will never turn our backs on those who so desperately need our support.

The [London Conference on Syria](#) and the region took place on 4 February 2016 and was co-hosted by the UK, along with Germany, Kuwait, Norway and the United Nations. It brought together more than 60 countries and organisations, including 33 heads of state and Governments. In excess of £9.6 billion was pledged by the international community – the most that has ever been committed for a humanitarian crisis in a single day.

Historic 'Compact' agreements struck with Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan as part of the London Conference aimed to create at least 1.1 million jobs in the region. Refugee-hosting countries agreed to ensure that no child missed out on the chance of an education as a result of the conflict, including a pledge to deliver education to all refugee and host community children in countries neighbouring Syria.

Tens of thousands of Syrian refugees have now received new training and job opportunities and nearly half a million Syrian refugee children are now in quality education in both Lebanon and Jordan.

The UK committed £1.2 billion in new funding at the London Conference, taking our total commitments at that point to more than £2.3 billion. By the end of 2016, the UK had delivered £550 million in new funding, £40 million more than the £510 million it had pledged for 2016.

Total UK funding for the Syria crisis now stands at £2.46 billion.

The Brussels Conference will take place on 4 and 5 April and will bring ministerial representatives from a large number of delegations, including the EU and the region but also the wider international community, the United Nations, major donors and civil society, humanitarian and development organisations. The UK is once again co-hosting the Conference, along with the European Union, Germany, Kuwait, Norway, Qatar and the United Nations. The Foreign Secretary and the Development Secretary will jointly represent the UK.

Press release: UK and Iraq signed a historic Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

On 5 March, Frank Baker, Her Majesty's Ambassador to Iraq, and Prof. Dr. Abdul Razak Abdul Jaleel Al- Essa, the Acting Minister for Finance, signed a historic Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). Under this new agreement, UK Export Finance (UKEF) will work closely with the Iraqi authorities to identify suitable infrastructure development projects to utilise UKEF's export finance support for UK companies.

This landmark agreement reaffirms the UK's commitment to its friendship with Iraq, and its support for continued economic cooperation and development. This particular MoU will support investment in critical infrastructure in Iraq. This infrastructure, like water and electricity, will improve the lives of millions of Iraqis. It will also help reinvigorate the private sector in Iraq, and may lead to new jobs for Iraqis.

UKEF is able to consider applications to support eligible infrastructure development projects in Iraq where the project sources goods and services from the UK. The support can take the form of loan guarantees or direct loans.

UKEF and the Government of Iraq are already exploring a number of projects for support under the MoU which will benefit from high-quality goods and services from the UK, and improve quality of life across Iraq.

[News story: UK-India economic and trade relations to take centre stage on two-day visit](#)

[unable to retrieve full-text content] Philip Hammond will visit Delhi and Mumbai as part of the 9th UK-India Economic and Financial Dialogue (EFD), hosted by Indian Finance Minister Arun Jaitley.

[Press release: New support to help workless families and improve children's lives](#)

[unable to retrieve full-text content] New plans to help workless families break the cycle of disadvantage have been announced, as part of building a fairer society.

[Keir Starmer letter to David Davis raising ongoing concerns about the impact of Brexit on Gibraltar](#)

Keir

Starmer MP, Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Exiting the UK, has written to

David Davis this evening to raise ongoing concerns about the impact of Brexit on Gibraltar.

Keir's

letter follows a conversation with the Chief Minister of Gibraltar, Fabian Picardo, earlier today.

In

the letter Keir highlights three major concerns:

- 1.

The application of any new UK/EU trade deal on services to Gibraltar.

2.
Agreement on the continuation of access Gibraltar's access to the UK market.

3.
Agreement on the application to Gibraltar of any new trade deals the UK does with third countries.

Keir

Starmer said:

"This afternoon I spoke with Fabian Picardo [Chief Minister of Gibraltar] and it is clear there are serious and ongoing concerns about the situation in Gibraltar. The Government need urgently to address this and to provide clear reassurances for British citizens in Gibraltar."

Ends

Notes

to editors:

.

Full
copy of the letter to David Davis below:

Dear
David,

After
discussions this afternoon with the Chief Minister of Gibraltar, Fabian Picardo, I am writing to raise a number of important issues concerning the ongoing situation in Gibraltar.

The
Chief Minister emphasised three outstanding concerns to me, all of which I hope
you will consider and respond to as a matter of urgency.

**1: Application of any
new UK/EU trade deal on services to Gibraltar**

A concern that the UK should be firm in continuing to defend the position that any new agreement which may emerge from these negotiations should
cover Gibraltar.

The Chief Minister emphasised that the UK cannot just accept the Council's draft parameter, setting out Spain's position that any new trade deal
can only apply to Gibraltar as a result of a bilateral agreement between the

UK

and Spain. A tough line needs to be taken and maintained.

2. Agreement on the continuation of Gibraltar's access to the UK market

A concern that the Government of Gibraltar needs to be able to finalise the agreement with the UK to demonstrate that Gibraltar will have continued access to the UK market. This is important in respect of all services but in particular, in respect of financial services (especially insurance) and online gaming services. I am told that the wording used to date has been very helpful as political commitment but that a proposed one page agreement has not yet been finalised despite finding considerable favour and traction with colleagues in the Joint Ministerial Committee (JMC) from the Department for Exiting the EU and the Foreign & Commonwealth Office.

3. Agreement on the application to Gibraltar of any new trade deals the UK does with third countries

I understand that this is also agreed but that Gibraltar need a very clear public statement of this. Clear language from yourself and The Secretary of State for International Trade on this point would be helpful to Gibraltar.

As you and I discussed over the weekend, the sovereignty of Gibraltar should not be used as a bargaining chip in Brexit discussions. It is vital that the interests of British citizens in Gibraltar are protected and that ongoing uncertainty over Gibraltar is resolved urgently.

I look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely,

**Keir
Starmer QC MP**

**Shadow
Secretary of State for Exiting the EU**

**MP
for Holborn & St Pancras**