

New UK aid will ensure millions of Palestinian refugees receive education, healthcare and food

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It comes as the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), which provides essential services to Palestinian refugees in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria faces unprecedented financial difficulty.

Over the past year services to Palestinian refugees have come under increasing pressure. In Gaza, where there has been a significant deterioration in both the humanitarian and economic situation, food is often unaffordable for many where over half of the population is unemployed and a million people are living on less than £3 a day.

Minister for the Middle East, Dr. Andrew Murrison, said:

Today's new UK aid package is a vital lifeline for Palestinian refugees who are facing greater uncertainty than ever before. Our support will help UNRWA ensure families have enough to eat, providing basics such as flour, chickpeas and rice. It will also help to keep over half a million children in the classroom and provide essential access to healthcare for more than three million Palestinian refugees.

The UK has been a long-term supporter of UNRWA. It provides stability in the region, which is crucial for Palestinians, but also the region and the wider world, including the UK. I am deeply concerned about the unprecedented challenges UNRWA faces. Unless additional funding is secured, UNRWA may struggle to continue providing food aid in Gaza. I urge other donors to join us in stepping up their support for UNRWA at this critical time.

Only a political solution can provide a just, fair, and realistic settlement for Palestinian refugees, and until that time the UK remains firmly committed to supporting UNRWA's work and Palestinian refugees across the Middle East.

Last month, on his first visit as Minister for the Middle East, Minister Murrison visited Gaza where he saw first-hand the important work UNRWA is doing to deliver for Palestinian refugees.

Notes to editors

- Today's announcement of an additional £19 million to UNRWA is new funding from the UK's Department for International Development and takes UK support to UNRWA for 2019/20 to £65.5 million.
 - The package was confirmed by Ambassador James Roscoe, Head of Open Societies and Partnerships at the UK Mission to the United Nations, at the UNRWA Pledging Conference in New York today (25 June 2019).
 - UK support to UNRWA is helping to achieve Global Goals 1 and 2 by helping to end extreme poverty and hunger by providing food, vouchers and cash to Palestinian refugees and Global Goals 3 and 4 by providing education and health care services.
- **General media queries (24 hours)**

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