

RAF delivers UK aid to Turkey for Syrians in crisis

The UK Government has delivered vital humanitarian aid to the Turkey-Syria border, which will provide much-needed relief and protection for Syrians amid the worsening humanitarian crisis in Idlib.

An RAF C-17 carrying 37 tonnes of UK aid landed in Hatay, Turkey, yesterday afternoon. The supplies on board include tents to provide life-saving shelter, hygiene kits, blankets, water purification tablets, cooking equipment and lanterns for around 300 families who have been forced to flee their homes and seek safety in harsh conditions.

This comes as schools, nurseries and hospitals are targeted by Syrian regime bombing.

The aid flight is in addition to £89 million of UK aid for Syria – announced last week – to help protect victims of violence, which included tents, thermal blankets, clothing, food, clean water and medical supplies, among other measures.

The aid supplies are being distributed in the worst affected areas including Idlib in north west Syria, with the cooperation of the Turkish Red Crescent.

It comes as Defence Secretary Ben Wallace visited Ankara today to hold talks with his Turkish counterpart, Hulusi Akar, to discuss how the UK can further support Turkey, and those Syrians in desperate need. This follows the Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab's meeting with his Turkish counterparts in Ankara last week to discuss the continuing violence in Syria and the UK's support to the crisis.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:

The people of Idlib have suffered enormously during this conflict and these crucial supplies delivered by our military will provide shelter for hundreds of families in desperate need.

We stand in solidarity with Turkey after the losses they have suffered, and the UK will do what we can to offer support.

For the sake of both nations, the wider region and security across the entire globe, the ceasefire in Idlib must continue to be respected.

International Development Secretary Anne-Marie Trevelyan said:

It is a tragedy that almost a million people – mostly women and

children – have been forced to flee their homes in the past 100 days as the ruthless Assad regime and its Russian backers relentlessly bombed their homes and killed their families.

Too many innocent people are struggling to survive in freezing conditions without a roof over their head.

Through UK aid, delivered by our world-class troops, the British people are helping to save lives, boost regional security and stop the cruel suffering of defenceless Syrians in this warzone.

The UK is one of the largest bilateral donors to the Syria crisis, providing more than £3.1 billion to trusted partners in Syria and the region since 2011. From day one, we have been at the forefront of the humanitarian response providing more than 28 million food rations, 19 million medical check-ups and 12 million vaccines across Syria and the region.

The UK has also helped more than 140,000 people to get clean drinking water and provided psychosocial support to almost 28,000 people, including over 1,000 children.

Turkey is the largest refugee hosting country in the world. Working with our European partners, the UK has helped to support the education of more than 635,000 Syrian refugee children in Turkey and provided over 8 million primary healthcare consultations for the most vulnerable Syrian refugees to help alleviate pressure on Turkish communities and maintain regional security.

During his visit to the country, Mr Wallace will also meet other members of the Turkish government and lay a wreath at the Anitkabir Mausoleum, paying his respects to the founder of The Republic of Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk.

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Notes to editors:

- Images of the aid delivery are available from www.defenceimagery.mod.uk
- Last week, DFID announced £89 million of UK aid to protect victims of violence as the Syrian regime increases attacks in Idlib:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-aid-protects-victims-of-violence-as-syrian-regime-increases-attacks-in-idlib>
- For more information, please contact the Ministry of Defence press office on 020 7218 7907 or the Department for International Development press office on 020 7023 0600.