

Press release: Prime Minister announces UK aid to boost Jordan's prosperity

Prime Minister Theresa May will today (28 February) set out an increased UK aid package of support to help Jordan's economy become more self-sufficient at a major international conference in London.

The Prime Minister will use the 'Jordan: Growth and Opportunity' conference to call on global leaders and businesses to follow the UK's lead and invest in Jordan's future.

Today's announcement will provide new investment grants to create new jobs, boost productivity and increase the country's economic resilience.

The package will be tied to Jordan's own ambitious plans, with most grants linked to delivery of reform. It will help to stabilise Jordan's economy and support the country's promising entrepreneurs as they build small and medium sized businesses.

The UK sees Jordan as a critical partner at the heart of an unstable region and will continue working closely with its key ally in the interest of mutual security, stability and prosperity.

Speaking from the Jordan conference, International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt said:

Jordan is a nation which is doing the right thing. It is reforming its economy, investing in its people and in the wake of the conflict in Syria has taken on a huge share of the responsibility of providing a safe haven for millions of refugees. It is a beacon of stability amid the conflict and uncertainty of the Middle East.

We must stand by Jordan and support its ambitious plans for economic reform. We will all benefit from the greater stability, security and trade that growth in Jordan will bring.

Today's UK aid support includes:

- using Britain's development programme in the UK's national interest and in close partnership with the private sector – announcing that the UK will underwrite a \$250 million World Bank loan to Jordan;
- a new £14m contribution to a new World Bank-led trust fund for Jordan. This pools international donations which will be spent on modernising government systems, promoting exports and making doing business easier;
- a new £50m contribution to a multi-donor fund to provide low-interest loans tied to reform and a Youth, Technology and Jobs programme with a

- focus on jobs and business opportunities for Syrian refugees;
- a new partnership between the UK Government and Government of Jordan to strengthen commercial relationships and unlock investment opportunities;
- the deployment of top British experts to work with Jordan's economic institutions, to help modernise its banking system, improve its business environment and boost its tax revenue; and
- using English language training to help further enhance cooperation with Jordanian military and border forces. This will lead to more effective joint operations between the UK and Jordan, enabling better security for both countries, as well as smoother trade and travel for English speakers.

By supporting Jordan's long-term prosperity, the UK will boost the potential of the country as its future trading partner, support stability in the Middle East and tackle international threats like global terrorism.

Support to Jordan follows the bold new approach set out on the PM's visit to Cape Town last summer where she announced that international development should be done with the UK's national interest in mind.

The UK aid package announced today involves expertise and funding from across the UK government, including the Department for International Development, Department for International Trade, Home Office, the British Council and the Conflict Stability and Security Fund.

The event in London will champion Jordan as a key partner for international trade, underlining the power of investment to enable countries to move to a future beyond aid.

Notes to editors

Today's announcement takes the UK's bilateral support to Jordan up to £650 million over five years, a doubling of the UK's previous funding. In addition, the UK will underwrite a \$250 million World Bank loan to Jordan. Over the last five years, the UK's support was around £300 million to Jordan.

Over the next five years the UK's bilateral support to Jordan includes:

- The UK will provide a new £50 million to the World Bank's Global Concessional Financing Facility over the next four years. This will include grant-financing to enable Jordan to undertake key economic reforms and will go towards a Youth, Technology and Jobs programme with a focus on jobs and business opportunities for Syrian refugees; and
- A £14m contribution to a new World Bank led trust fund for Jordan. This pools international donations which will be spent on modernising government systems, promoting exports and making doing business easier.

In addition to the UK's bilateral support the UK is also helping Jordan in the following ways:

- using Britain's development programme in the UK's national interest and in close partnership with the private sector – announcing that the UK

- will underwrite a \$250m World Bank loan to Jordan;
- a contribution to a global finance initiative supporting SMEs, enabling banks to give out more loans to Jordanian entrepreneurs setting up small and medium-sized businesses;
 - a partnership between the Bank of England and the Central Bank of Jordan which will support Jordan's reform of its banking system. This will include technical expertise to enhance the stability and resilience of the financial system, maintain price stability and reduce wider economic risks;
 - the UK government and Government of Jordan will launch a new partnership to strengthen commercial relationships, boost trade between the two countries and unlock investment into Jordan. Staff from the UK's Department for International Trade will work with the Jordanian embassy to support Jordanian companies looking to invest in the UK and British and international companies hoping to export to Jordan. The Department will also be providing direct support to His Excellency the Minister for Investment on his economic transformation programme, with a focus on trade and investment. The unique partnership will increase bilateral trade between the two countries and help create jobs and ensure economic stability;
 - the Home Office's Immigration Enforcement International (IEI) has started a programme of English language lessons for Jordanian Border Officers based at Queen Alia International Airport in Amman. This commenced in January 2019 and will continue until March 2020;
 - an agreement between the UK Office of National Statistics and the Jordanian Department of Statistics (DoS) to work together on a new strategy that supports the Jordanian government to use data to improve its policy making;
 - a pledge by HMRC to work together with the Government of Jordan's Income and Sales Tax Department to design new systems to increase tax revenue and prevent tax avoidance; and a BEIS mentoring programme to help Jordan in reforms aimed at making it easier to do business in the country. This will help attract future international investment in Jordan.
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[Speech: Jordan: Growth and Opportunity, the London Initiative – 28 February 2019](#)

Your Excellency Prime Minister, distinguished Ministers, esteemed Private Sector CEOs and partners, civil society leaders, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I am delighted to be opening Jordan: Growth and Opportunity, the London Initiative.

We all agree; Jordan's prosperity is critical to the international community.

In a region marred by conflict, Jordan has long been a beacon of stability and peace. A steadfast ally in the fight against Daesh and global terrorism.

A generous host to a huge influx of refugees sheltering from the war in Syria. And a powerful voice of reason on the global stage.

Jordan has also weathered many storms.

The recent dramatic increase in population straining its infrastructure and services.

Its economy buffeted by global financial crises, deprived of the key markets in Iraq and Syria, and hit by rising energy costs.

And more recently, a painful sequence of deep fiscal adjustments.

Jordan is resilient, and Jordan is determined.

Today we come together with a new focus: to unlock growth, jobs and investment for Jordan – critical to building resilience for the country and the region.

Jordan is uniquely positioned to take advantage of emerging global trends and become a regional economic dynamo.

It is a safe, stable haven, and a gateway to Asia and beyond.

I am delighted to welcome so many private sector partners here today as a signal of your interest in Jordan's promise.

UK companies like Jaguar Land Rover have spotted the huge potential of Jordan, as the Chief Executive will tell us later.

And Jordan's burgeoning tech start-up scene is generating international buzz.

75% of the Arabic content on the internet is generated in Jordan, that's extraordinary.

And at Davos, I met the CEO of Expedia.

He was warm with praise for Jordan – and its youthful, educated workforce – having successively set up a software hub in Amman.

Because countries, like companies, are powered by their people.

68% of Jordan's population are below the age of 30 and full of aspiration.

This is an enormous opportunity.

A young, educated population with the potential to drive Jordan's success.

And I am delighted to welcome a group of young Jordanians who are

participating in today's conference.

They have fed in their aspirations and solutions to today through consultations in Jordan organised by the Crown Prince Foundation.

These are the engineers who will be part of high-end infrastructure.

These are the innovators who will power tech start-ups,

These are the young women and men ready to step into the booming professional services sector.

They are the young people that are the future of Jordan.

Today, His Majesty King Abdullah II and His Excellency the Prime Minister will set out ambitious – and detailed – plans for delivering economic growth.

They target nothing short of economic transformation.

Moving to a new model that is driven by the private sector rather than public-sector growth.

One that is led by and for Jordan's dynamic young population.

And unlocking jobs for women is essential for Jordan's economic development.

70% of unemployed women in Jordan have university degrees.

And the Government of Jordan has ambitious plans, to bring more women into the workforce.

With reform to public and private sectors and the re-opening of its borders, the next five years offer an unprecedented opportunity for Jordan's economic transformation.

It is an opportunity to create a trading partner for the UK, at the heart of the Middle East.

But Jordan needs support from the international community to achieve its goals.

Jordan and the UK have both been clear, that this is not a typical development summit.

Today we hope to build a coalition – of global leaders, businesses and investors – to support Jordan and its plan for growth.

That is the London Initiative.

We want to send a very clear message to all the key international players, from international finance institutions to bilateral donors and the UN, we are fully behind the Government of Jordan's courageous reform commitments.

All the international partners here today have been steadfast in their

support to Jordan as it has sheltered refugees.

They are fully in support of Jordan's future resilience and prosperity.

The UK has confidence in Jordan's vision and is mobilising its best experts behind it.

As we fast approach the date for our exit from the EU, we will do so with confidence and optimism.

We are a trading nation, whose success depends on global markets.

That is why the UK will strengthen its role as the champion of emerging economies, to ensure there continues to be strong markets where British companies can do business, and where Britain is seen as the partner of choice.

We lead by example – with our commitment to spend 0.7% of national income on aid, and 2% GDP on defence.

Our support for Jordan demonstrates that Britain will not take a back-seat in the world after we leave the EU.

We will continue to stand up for what we believe in, and support our friends, allies and our future trading partners around the world.

And the surest investment any country can make is in the education of its young people.

English is the global language of business. And evidence shows that English language skills significantly enhance job prospects and wage levels for Jordanians.

The Prime Minister has long been a leader in education. In fact, I first met him in a school.

He says the English language is the passport to the global economy.

So, I'm pleased to be able to make a comprehensive English language education offer to Jordan.

This will include £25m over five years to support the Jordanian government's efforts to equip 200,000 young people in Jordan with English language and business skills for the 21st Century.

This will enable Jordanians to take a leading role as their private sector world opens up.

In addition, The British Council will form a new partnership with Jordan's Crown Prince Foundation and our own Prince's Trust.

A three-year pilot will give thousands of young people the technical, entrepreneurial and people skills they need in business.

And other UK government departments will also use their expertise.

For example, our Department for Education and Ofsted, the schools' inspectorate, will help drive up education standards, develop a strategy for better use of technology in schools, and help Jordan evaluate school inspections.

And I will be signing an agreement with the Government of Jordan later today to drive forward education reform and create new opportunities for future generations.

And of course, it is important that vulnerable children, including Syrian refugees, can access education.

When I visited Jordan last year, I saw how the UK is helping to ensure a brighter future for Syrian refugees and their host communities.

This includes helping the Government of Jordan to deliver its commitment to give every child in Jordan an education.

And, importantly, I saw projects that give everyone in Jordan a chance to fulfil their potential.

This included visiting Om Ammar inclusive school to see how UK aid is supporting Mercy Corps to provide education for children with disabilities in Government of Jordan public schools.

The UK will extend an extra £3.35 million to help UNICEF address the urgent needs of children not enrolled in any kind of education and double our support for Mercy Corps' inclusive education programme.

This will ensure that no talent is wasted, and everyone has a part to play in Jordan's growth story.

Since the Syria crisis began, the UK has contributed over £2.46 billion to help those affected. We will continue to provide that support.

Today I can announce a further £50 million UK aid package that will help over 22,000 Syrian refugees with cash transfers, giving them the flexibility to decide how their family's needs should be met.

These transfers themselves are simple, efficient and a good use of aid – avoiding the storage and transport costs associated with other forms of aid.

And they give refugees choice and dignity.

There is no doubt that Jordan has shouldered a huge amount of the fallout from the Syria conflict and their support for refugees needs to continue.

But with international backing, Jordan can also prosper on its own terms.

That is why the UK is making Jordan a trailblazer for a new model of aid.

First, this means being led by Jordan's own priorities.

We are using the UK aid budget for Jordan to back Jordan's vision for reform which will help the economy grow, as well as maintain vital humanitarian and education support.

Because I want to put our development budget, our expertise, our links to the City of London at the centre of our approach to building global economies.

To use the convening power of governments in a new way, which incentivises reform and powers the private sector, creating opportunities for British, Jordanian and international business.

Making business, not aid, the motor for growth and jobs.

Today we're meeting in King's Cross, previously a deprived neighbourhood of London and now a thriving hub for business, tech and the creative arts, transformed by the partnership of private and public sectors.

This is what we are doing in Jordan. Aid, targeted at making markets work; and that is the future.

And the UK is not alone. We have brought all of you together today.

Britain is leading the international community to promote peace and prosperity in an unstable part of the world.

By doing so, we are creating exceptional, game-changing opportunities for both Jordan, and the UK, and helping to turn huge potential into global success.

-ENDS-

[News story: New process for artists and sportspeople entering from Ireland](#)

It will be free to use and mean that eligible individuals in sporting and creative industries will be able to work in the UK for up to 3 months, bringing into line their entry conditions when arriving from other destinations.

These new arrangements will allow musicians and sportspeople from countries such as Australia and America to apply for leave to enter remotely, putting an end to their requirement to apply for a visa to perform in the UK when entering through Ireland.

This change follows close work with the sector and builds on the government's already strong commitment to the creative industry. In June 2018 for example the exceptional talent visa was opened up to include leading fashion

designers.

Immigration Minister Caroline Nokes said:

Our creative industries are world leading. Not only do we produce elite talent, but we also host some of the most exciting live events in the world.

Ensuring the best international talent can perform in the UK is vital for the creative industries' continued success and that is why we launched this new process, ensuring creative talent can easily arrive to perform in the UK directly from Ireland.

I look forward to continuing to work with UK Music and the wider sector so our leading live music industry can continue to thrive.

UK Music's CEO Michael Dugher said:

I am delighted to have worked, alongside our Live Music group, with the Home Office to identify a solution so that non-EU artists and their crews can still enter the UK via Ireland under a Certificate of Sponsorship.

The live music industry, which contributes around £1 billion to the economy, will put this into practice so that we can continue to attract the biggest and most talented global artists to perform at our world-leading concerts, festivals and venues.

Individuals will be required to have a Certificate of Sponsorship under the Tier 5 (Temporary worker – Creative and Sporting) route, which has been in existence since 2008. It provides an option for those non-EEA, non-visa nationals in the sporting and creative sector to undertake short-term engagement in the UK without being required to hold a visa to enter the UK.

You can read detailed [common travel area](#) information on the process.

[Press release: Timeshare claims specialists wound-up by courts](#)

Meredith Pritchard Claims Consultants Ltd (MPCC) and First Law Solutions Ltd (FLS) were wound-up in the public interest on 22 February 2019 at the High Court (Manchester) before District Judge Obodai. The Official Receiver has been appointed liquidator of the companies.

The court heard that MPCC and FLS offered timeshare claims management services, helping clients get out of their existing timeshare contracts and pursue compensation claims against providers.

MPCC traded between October 2016 and August 2017, before FLS continued MPCC's activities, and both companies shared the same director – Stephen Paul Fairclough (59) of Chester.

While carrying out confidential enquiries, investigators found that between the two companies approximately 113 clients had typically paid either £1,950 or £5,950 dependent on the services being purchased. In return, customers expected that lawyers based abroad would be instructed on their behalf to relinquish their timeshare and in some cases seek compensation.

But investigators established that while lawyers may have been instructed in some cases, MPCC and FLS were unable to demonstrate any significant evidence of clients having their contracts relinquished or of compensation being paid.

Investigators also discovered that MPCC received income of more than £440,000 and that FLS received £110,000. Despite this, investigators were unable to identify any payments made by MPCC to overseas lawyers, while FLS only made payments to overseas lawyers totalling £13,000 during the period of the investigation.

The Insolvency Service presented petitions to the court on the grounds that both companies traded with a lack of commercial probity by failing to provide contracted services in a timely manner or at all. This included accepting payments in respect of non-viable claims, charging excessive fees, and using misleading and aggressive sales techniques.

It was also alleged that MPCC and FLS did not maintain, preserve and/or deliver up full accounting records and that they were remiss in complying with statutory obligations to file annual accounts and confirmation statements. In the case of MPCC only, it was alleged that the director had failed to fully co-operate with the investigation.

David Hope, Chief Investigator for the Insolvency Service, said:

People genuinely sought out these companies for help to get them out of difficult situations concerning their timeshares. However, many customers did not receive the services they were led to expect, despite paying over significant fees.

Securing winding-up orders through the courts will protect any more people from being duped by MPCC and FLS and the Insolvency Service will continue to protect consumers by closing down rogue companies that operate in this way.

All public enquiries concerning the affairs of the company should be made to:

The Official Receiver, Public Interest Unit, 2 Floor, 3 Piccadilly Place, London Road, Manchester, M1 3BN. Email: piu.north@insolvency.gsi.gov.uk.

Meredith Pritchard Claims Consultants Ltd – company registration number 10395171 – was incorporated on 26 September 2016. The company’s registered office is at 20 Nicholas Street, Chester CH1 2NX.

First Law Solutions Ltd – company registration number 9351120 – was incorporated on 11 December 2014. The company’s registered office is at 20 Nicholas Street, Chester CH1 2NX.

The petitions were presented under s124A of the Insolvency Act 1986 on 12 December 2018.

Company Investigations, part of the Insolvency Service, uses powers under the Companies Act 1985 to conduct confidential fact-finding investigations into the activities of live limited companies in the UK on behalf of the Secretary of State for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS). Further information about live company investigations is available [here](#).

You can also follow the Insolvency Service on:

[News story: 2019 Appointment of Chair to IRP](#)

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