

UK boost for UN peacebuilding will help prevent conflicts and humanitarian crises

A new UK £12 million aid package will help the United Nations (UN) to tackle conflicts around the world, Minister for the Middle East James Cleverly announced today (27 May 2021).

The funding to UN peacebuilding programmes will support efforts to prevent conflicts and build peace across the globe. This will support a range of activities in more than 40 countries ranging from pushing for disarmament to empowering women and young people to engage in the political dialogue and peace process.

A surge in conflict around the world since 2010 has drastically increased human casualties. UK aid will help the UN to prevent and deescalate conflict, key to saving lives. For instance the UN Secretary General's Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) will work to:

- prevent and manage conflict during elections in Somalia, and provide mental health support to young people affected by violence;
- rehabilitate and reintegrate former fighters, such as former Boko Haram members in Niger; and
- create a safe environment so that those that have fled from conflict in Sudan can return home.

Minister for the Middle East and North Africa, James Cleverly, said:

We know that prevention is better than the cure. By tackling the drivers and causes of conflict with this new UK aid package, we will help to save lives by intervening before crises spiral out of control.

This helps us at home too. We know how interconnected the world is, and instability overseas increases the risk of organised crime or terrorism at home.

By 2030, 80% of the world's poorest people are predicted to live in fragile and conflict affected states. Investing in conflict prevention is the right thing to do and is also a smart investment, saving lives and further expensive costs including humanitarian assistance, conflict and recovery.

Today's package of support continues the UK's long-running support to the PBF. The UK has provided over £160 million of funding to the Peacebuilding Fund since its inception in 2006, making the UK one of its biggest donors.

Peacebuilding approaches have already been shown to improve the resilience of

fragile and conflict-affected areas, and UK support has already helped the UN to deliver stability in countries at risk of violence, including:

- reducing conflict in parts of Lake Chad by 48% by resolving land disputes, preventing land from being destroyed and improving livelihoods;
- making investments in infrastructure and small businesses for women and young people in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, contributing to a 50% reduction in inter-communal conflict; and
- strengthening the rule of law in Sudan, reducing local conflicts.

Peacebuilding directly supports the priorities set out in the UK's Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy, which details how Britain will tackle violent conflicts and instability in fragile countries. The Integrated Review sets out the Government's vision of the UK's role in the world through to 2030, and the action we will take at home and with other countries to ensure that we are stronger, safer and more prosperous in a more competitive age.

In addition to the UK's development support, the UK is using all of its diplomatic leverage to resolve conflicts across the world – the Integrated Review commits the UK to playing a more active part in international institutions. This includes regularly using its seat at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to call for peace and lobbying for humanitarian access. The UK is the leading voice at the UNSC on conflict prevention, and this support further complements UK diplomatic leadership on peacebuilding.

Notes to editors

- The UK will provide £10 million of UK aid to the United Nations Secretary General's Peacebuilding Fund this financial year. The UK will also provide £2 million of UK aid to the Joint UNDP-DPPA Programme on Building National Capacities for Conflict Prevention, which deploys specialist Peace and Development Advisers to support the UN and national stakeholders in peacebuilding initiatives and projects.