

UK Minister for Middle East visits Turkey

In Ankara, the Minister discussed a range of bilateral issues spanning foreign policy and development cooperation with Turkey's Deputy Foreign Minister Sedat Onal, Presidential Adviser Ibrahim Kalin and Deputy Defence Minister Yunus Emre.

Talks covered regional issues including Iran and Iraq, the ongoing need to confront Daesh, the Middle East peace process, as well as the conflicts in Syria and Libya.

Syria and the humanitarian crisis in Idlib was a core focus of Dr Murrison's meetings. In Gaziantep, the Minister witnessed first-hand the impact of the Syrian conflict, and how the UK is supporting Turkey in hosting more refugees than any other country in the world.

He also met refugees who had fled the conflict as well as Heads of UN Agencies in Gaziantep and Syrian and Turkish NGOs.

Speaking at the end of his visit Dr Murrison said:

"Turkey is an extremely important partner for the UK. I'm grateful to my Turkish counterparts for their perspectives on how we can work together towards shared goals; regional stability and relief for refugees.

"In Gaziantep, I saw for myself the impact UK aid is having, enabling vital health and education services to vulnerable people who have suffered unimaginable trauma in Syria.

"From staff at UN agencies, refugees and NGOs, I heard powerful and emotional testimonies about life in Northern Syria and the appalling escalation of violence. The latest attacks are exacerbating an already dire humanitarian situation. All parties must adhere to agreed ceasefires, respect international humanitarian law and protect civilians and aid workers."

The UK continues to be a leading donor to the Syria humanitarian response, to date committing £2.81 billion, our largest ever response to a single humanitarian crisis. Since 2012, across Syria and the region, we have provided over 28 million food rations, over 17 million medical consultations, and over 12 million vaccines. UK aid provides life-saving support to millions of Syrian refugees.