

UK Minister visits Syria border to push for continued humanitarian access

Press release

Minister for the European Neighbourhood, Wendy Morton, visited the Bab al-Hawa border crossing between Turkey and northern Syria and reiterated the UK's call for the essential aid corridor to remain open.



The Minister for the European Neighbourhood, Wendy Morton, visited the Bab al-Hawa border crossing between Turkey and northern Syria today (29 June) to see first-hand how vital UK and international humanitarian assistance is reaching 2.4 million Syrians every month.

Her visit comes ahead of a crucial vote on 10 July, when United Nations Security Council (UNSC) members will decide whether to keep this crossing open.

The UK's position is clear: the Bab al-Hawa border crossing must remain open and other border crossings must be reopened so that life-saving food, shelter and medical supplies can be delivered and vital aid operations can continue. The border from Turkey is currently the only authorised route for UN-coordinated humanitarian aid to reach the more than 2 million people in north-west Syria who have been displaced from their homes.

Russia and China have used their veto power to reduce the number of border crossings available leaving only Bab al-Hawa, making it more difficult to respond to rising humanitarian needs in the region. These two countries continue to place political support for the Assad regime above life-saving support for the Syrian people. The UK urges all UNSC members to vote to expand humanitarian access into Syria to avoid an even greater deterioration of the dire humanitarian situation in the north west of the country.

FCDO Minister for the European Neighbourhood Wendy Morton said:

The Bab al-Hawa border crossing must remain open so that life-saving humanitarian assistance can reach the most vulnerable

Syrians. Between 2020 and 2021, the UK provided clean drinking water to over 225,000 people, health consultations to more than 400,000 Syrians and formal education to over 200,000 children in north-west Syria – all through this vital aid crossing.

The UK, as a force for good in the region, will be voting in favour of maximum humanitarian access at the UNSC so that charities operating in north west Syria can continue their life-saving work. More than 13 million Syrians remain in dire need of support across the war-torn country.

Minister Morton also reaffirmed UK support for Turkey's efforts to maintain the ceasefire and to protect defenceless civilians fleeing the Syrian regime's barbaric and wholly unjustified assaults. Turkey is a close friend of the UK and a NATO ally on the frontline of some of the most serious challenges the world faces. The UK will continue to support Turkey as it helps refugees from Syria, including through our pledge of £427m to the EU Facility for Refugees by 2025.

Notes to editors

- To date, we have committed over £3.7 billion in response to the regional Syrian crisis, 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 21 million medical consultations, 6 million cash grants/vouchers, 10 million relief packages and over 14 million vaccines.

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