

UK pledges support for Syrians facing twin threat of conflict and coronavirus

The UK will provide life-saving support to Syrians affected by their country's ongoing conflict and the potentially devastating impact of coronavirus, International Development Secretary Anne-Marie Trevelyan announced at the 'Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region' pledging conference in Brussels today (Tuesday 30 June).

With only half of hospitals fully functioning and more than seven million people internally displaced, there remains a critical gap in basic healthcare alongside overcrowded living conditions – increasing the risk of coronavirus spreading.

The UK is pledging at least £300 million to support vulnerable Syrians with education, healthcare, food and economic recovery. The funding will help stop the spread of the virus by supporting health workers with training, medical supplies and sanitation. Preventing coronavirus in countries with weak health systems helps to protect us all – as no one is safe until we are all safe.

Speaking at the virtual conference the International Development Secretary Anne-Marie Trevelyan said:

The Syria Conflict has now run into its tenth year, and in this time, more than 500,000 people have been killed and more than 11 million Syrians have been uprooted from their homes, families, livelihoods and schools.

We cannot and will not ignore the scale of the coronavirus threat in Syria, which has already been ravaged by almost a decade of conflict. That is why the UK stands with the Syrian people and is providing life-saving support where it is most needed.

The Brussels conference is also raising funds to help countries in the region affected by the crisis, including Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey, which host over five million Syrian refugees.

UK funding will continue to help Syrian households recover from the crisis and become more self-reliant in the long-term. Over the past three years the UK has provided tools, training, and start-up funding to help Syrians in need across the country get a regular income. In her remarks, Ms Trevelyan said emergency humanitarian support was crucial, but the international community must also continue to help Syrians regain their livelihoods.

The UK is helping to ensure more than 500,000 of the most marginalised and at risk children receive a quality education in Syria. This work provides a

sense of stability, safety and routine for Syrian children, a generation which has grown up in this conflict.

Humanitarian access to millions in need within Syria continues to be obstructed by the Syrian regime, which routinely refuses requests from the UN and aid organisations to deliver aid, prolonging suffering. It is essential that the UN Security Council Resolution on cross-border aid is renewed in July. The humanitarian situation in Northern Syria is dire, and humanitarian organisations must have unfettered access to help those in need.

The UK supports the UN-facilitated political process to reach a lasting settlement to the conflict which protects the rights of all Syrians. The UK will not consider providing any reconstruction assistance unless a credible, substantive and genuine political process is firmly underway.

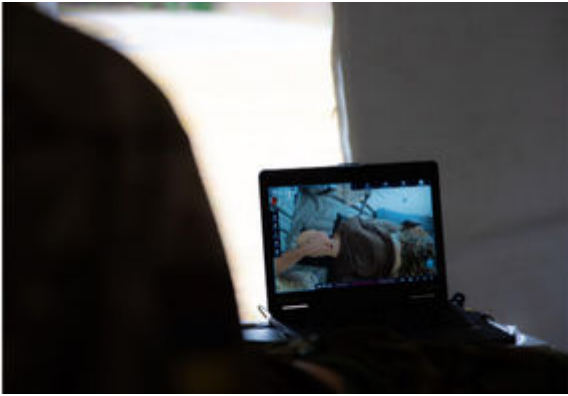
Notes to editors

- In 2020, the UK will provide at least £300 million to the Syria Crisis, bringing our total support to over £3.3 billion since 2012. This funding has provided over 28 million food rations, over 19 million medical consultations, and over 13 million vaccines across the region.
- According to the latest OCHA update, the number of people confirmed by the Ministry of Health to have COVID-19 is: 269 (nine fatalities, 102 recovered). However, testing capacity remains low. There is high risk for the elderly, people with underlying health conditions, vulnerable refugee and IDP populations and healthcare workers.
- The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights estimates 586,100 people have been killed in the crisis since 2011. <https://www.syriahr.com/en/157193/>

[ARTEMIS – jHubMed delivering innovation right where it is needed](#)

News story

jHubMed is working with Proximie to deliver a telemedicine system supporting surgical teams deployed overseas within field hospitals and aboard ships.



The deployed ARTEMIS set-up – with the Proximie software allowing remote advice and annotation onto the surgical field in real-time from a UK based advisor. MOD Crown Copyright.

This is an innovation that will save lives in the field. ARTEMIS is a jHubMed project, funded through UK STRATCOM.

How it works: with the use of a simple, portable, camera and laptop system, ARTEMIS allows a specialist, such as a Neuro surgeon, to provide direct real-time advice to a deployed clinician. It uses Proximie Augmented Reality software allowing the advisor to indicate or mark areas of interest and give visual direction to the Operator as they undertake surgery.

Due to the recording and live streaming functions it will better inform UK surgical teams when preparing for follow-up procedures. Being able to view the operation will provide a unique insight for UK surgeons who will know exactly what techniques were used during the initial damage control surgery. In fact the deployed surgeon can dial into the surgery at RCDM Birmingham and watch/provide detail as the second surgeon works.

Furthermore, through the generation of a unique trauma surgery video library, ARTEMIS will greatly assist Surgical teams in their Clinical pre-deployment training.

What next: ARTEMIS was trialled in Norway with Commando Forward Surgical Group and on Ex SS3 in Oman with 22 Field Hospital. The aim is to have the system available to all the Role 2 and 3 Field Hospitals, RAF Hospital Staging Unit and the RFA ARGUS by Spring next year.

A typical ARTEMIS recording set-up with 2 specialist cameras (one wide angle, one close up/ detail) mounted to the roof of the Role 2 Medical facility. MOD Crown Copyright.

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ESFA to require reduction in subcontracted activity and introduce a new subcontracting standard, following sector consultation

ESFA, as part of new measures, will implement a subcontracting standard and reduce, significantly, the volume of subcontracted activity in the sector.

We will also apply a cap on the volume of subcontracting and will take forward work this academic year to establish the right threshold for that cap and timescales for a staged reduction. All providers' Corporations and Boards who choose to subcontract will have to publish a curriculum rationale for their limited subcontracted activity.

The new measures are being introduced gradually, following a sector wide ESFA [consultation](#) launched earlier this year, to improve the management and oversight of the limited, but necessary, future subcontracting arrangements entered into.

Before the consultation launched, ESFA's chief executive, Eileen Milner [wrote](#) to the sector highlighting concerns about the continued rise in cases of fraud linked to subcontracting arrangements managed by ESFA lead providers despite ESFA's tightening of subcontractor arrangements.

The consultation received over 400 responses, with a large proportion from independent training providers. The majority of proposals were supported, including the requirement for a clear curriculum rationale; control of the volume and value of provision delivered by subcontractors; simplifying third party arrangements with specialist providers such as sport; rationalising funding rules; requiring the publication of fees and charges across all funding streams; and the introduction of an externally validated standard.

Eileen Milner said:

I have been clear that the current arrangements in place for subcontracting were not going far enough from an agency, accounting officer and sector perspective.

We must all be satisfied that public money is being managed properly.

The changes ESFA is introducing will strengthen oversight by lead providers and give confidence that the limited subcontracting that is necessary in the future evidentially and defensibly meets the needs of specific learners or employer, is of good quality and is managed responsibly by the lead provider.

We will work with the sector to test and implement these changes gradually to ensure that the outcome for learners is central.

ESFA will develop the new subcontracting standard through 2020/21, will trial it in 2021/22 and fully implement, once externally validated by audit firms, in 2022/23.

Other areas that will change include:

- placing restrictions and limits on types of subcontracting that have been identified as higher risk
- acting on the use of brokers to 'sell on' provision to subcontractors
- improving, across ESFA, the use of the data and audit returns to identify and act on risks

Although the implementation of these reforms will begin in time for the next academic year, the changes will be brought in over the next three years, to allow for a period of adjustment.

The changes will also need to align to plans for the reform of further education and adapt as necessary.

We will be setting out the detail of these reforms later this year.

You can read the full consultation response on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

[UN Human Rights Council 44: interactive dialogue on the situation of human rights of Rohingya people](#)

Thank you, Madam President.

Thank you, High Commissioner for your update. The systematic discrimination facing the Rohingya in Myanmar prevents them from living safe and dignified lives.

The UK is deeply concerned by the restrictions Rohingya face on their freedom of movement. In recent months restrictions have increased. Noting that Covid-19 creates legitimate, albeit limited, reasons for restrictions, these are disproportionately affecting Rohingya. Systematic barriers to movement prevent most from accessing adequate healthcare. Bureaucratic processes frequently delay their access to medical care causing lasting harm or death.

We welcome Myanmar's commitment to complying with the ICJ's provisional measures, and we call on the Government to demonstrate that by significantly

easing restrictions, reforming documentation and permission requirements in line with recommendations 18-23 of the Rakhine Advisory Commission and recommendation 16 of the Independent Commission of Enquiry.

The UK welcomes the valuable work of the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar in collecting evidence of the most serious international crimes and violations of international law. The Government of Myanmar must cooperate with its mandate. Accountability for atrocities is essential for Myanmar to move towards peace and stability.

High Commissioner,

What concrete steps should Myanmar take to ensure Rohingya have freedom of movement and equitable access to healthcare, education and livelihoods?

[Environment Secretary speech at the COP26 Business Leaders Event](#)

It's a real pleasure to be at this conference today and I wanted to begin by commending the fantastic work of the Council for Sustainable Business. This is an incredibly forward thinking group of companies and you're the early adopters of so many new ways of approaching sustainable business that we can all learn from.

Whether that is water companies who are contributing to peatland restoration, or whether it's some of those fantastic examples we heard of earlier of companies taking individual actions to reduce their carbon footprint. Or whether it's food companies paying special attention to due diligence in their supply chain to prevent deforestation.

I think it's crucial as we start to consider how we can deliver green recovery in the wake of the coronavirus, that we learn from some of the examples you have illustrated today because the coronavirus has brought into sharp focus the importance of our relationship with nature.

Like most new diseases, it's a disease that probably originates from animals – in common with HIV or Ebola – and it's thought to have originated from wet markets; probably from a bat, possibly from a pangolin. It's illustrated again the importance of our relationship with nature and the importance of treating nature with respect, and that the loss of biodiversity and climate change are two sides of the same coin.

It is climate change that is sadly driving the loss of much of our nature and much of our biodiversity. It is climate change that is contributing most to the extinction of species. And yet it is also the case that nature and biodiversity – and the rich biodiversity we contain within our nature can

give life itself, resilience, it enables life to adapt and to evolve – got a very important role to play in contributing to the fight against climate change.

And we're very interested at the moment in driving forward some of the nature based solutions and the role that they can have in tackling climate change and in restoring biodiversity – whether that is a massive expansion of tree planting, both in our farm environment and in some of our upland areas to peatland restoration, which can be a major source of carbon capture, to a new emphasis in our agriculture policy on soil health and the biodiversity that can be contained within that.

Nature has so many of these solutions that can contribute to our battle against climate change and this is a very important year for Defra. We currently have three flagship bills that are making their way through parliament.

We have an Agriculture Bill that puts nature at the heart of our future agriculture policy.

We have a new emphasis on sustainable farming, a new emphasis on nature and allowing habitats to recover and on animal health and animal welfare.

There's a new Fisheries Bill. As well as giving us control of our own waters, it also gives us the power to set the terms of access to our waters, including on the environment. It's a bill that creates some incredibly important environmental objectives, including both on sustainable fishing and climate change.

And finally and by no means least because it is the largest bill by some way: Of course the Environment Bill which sets out an entirely new guidance framework, a new set of targets on areas such as water quality, air quality, biodiversity and waste resource management and introduces new concepts such as biodiversity net gain.

There's also a very important international agenda here, too.

We've had a very good report back from the Global Resources Initiative which was led by Sir Ian Cheshire.

For me, once you've lost ancient woodland, that contributes so much to the health and quality of our environment and is such an important carbon, you will never replace that.

It would take thousands of years to replace it and that is why it is so important that we protect those vitally important forests that we have, the lungs of the world. And that is why I am very interested in doing more to introduce due diligence into the supply chain so that companies really take absolute care of their supply chain and make sure that they are not sourcing products that are contributing to deforestation. We are looking very closely at this report and we are going to be able to say more later this year.

And finally of course next year is going to be a very important year with the

delayed COP 26.

We're working very hard on developing this agenda.

We want nature-based solutions to become an important part of that agenda and that is why so much of what you have been discussing today – some of those fantastic examples of individual companies taking action that I heard about earlier, and of course an appeal to all of you to think about what you might be able to do for next year at COP 26 – is so important.

Because we want to be able to demonstrate the UK is taking a lead in all of these areas both through government with the legislation we're introducing in steps, taking the powers that we now have, but also that British businesses are stepping up to the plate as well and playing their part.

So thank you once again and I look forward to hearing the rest of the conference.