

Yemen: New UK aid will help stop the spread of coronavirus

A new package of UK aid worth £160million will help fight coronavirus and address the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Yemen, Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab announced today.

Speaking ahead of today's UN conference on Yemen's humanitarian crisis, the Foreign Secretary, Dominic Raab, said:

This targeted UK aid package will mean the difference between life and death for thousands of Yemenis who now also face the threat of coronavirus. Our support will help ensure families can feed themselves and access clean water and medical care.

I pay tribute to aid workers on the frontline who are working around the clock to get help to where it is needed. To achieve lasting peace, Yemeni leaders must urgently agree to the UN Special Envoy's peace plan to bring an end to this terrible conflict.

Even before the pandemic, Yemen was already experiencing the largest humanitarian crisis in the world with more than 24 million people, over 80% of the population, requiring some form of assistance. Nearly a quarter of Yemen's districts have no doctors and only half of the country's health facilities are still functional, with 20 million people lacking any access to medical care.

The Foreign Secretary is expected to tell delegates at the virtual UN High Level Pledging Event for the Humanitarian Crisis in Yemen that aid workers will struggle to deliver this assistance unless restrictions placed upon them, particularly by the Houthis, are lifted.

The UK's package, from the UK's Department for International Development (DFID), will help to tackle the spread of COVID-19 in Yemen and expects to provide over 700,000 medical consultations, train 12,000 healthcare workers to work safely in a COVID-19 environment, and provide a much-needed boost to nearly 4,000 health centres to continue providing existing health services.

International Development Secretary Anne-Marie Trevelyan said:

Yemen is suffering the world's worst humanitarian crisis with millions of people at risk of starvation. The ongoing conflict as well as the coronavirus outbreak could make what is already a dire situation worse.

The UK continues to be at the forefront of the humanitarian response. Today's UK aid pledge will help feed millions of Yemenis

who face constant uncertainty over when they will eat their next meal.

The new funding also aims to provide support to at least 300,000 vulnerable people each month to help them buy food and household essentials, treat 40,000 children for malnutrition and provide 1 million people with improved water supply and basic sanitation.

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITORS

- The new package takes the total amount of UK funding since the conflict began to £970 million. This support has provided urgent funding for food supplies for vulnerable households as well as health care and sexual and reproductive health services.
- The World Health Organisation's "optimistic" estimate is that over an 18 month period there will be over 16 million coronavirus cases in the country. The death toll will be significantly higher if access for health workers and aid agencies remains restricted.
- DFID has already provided £150 million to the IMF's Catastrophe Containment and Relief Trust, will provide the world's poorest countries, including Yemen, with IMF debt relief over the next six months.
- UN data shows that restrictions on access, particularly in Houthi controlled areas, are now affecting the delivery of assistance to almost 9 million people across Yemen, an all-time high.

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