

Falconer announces new funding for displaced people in Lebanon

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UK Minister for the Middle East Hamish Falconer reiterated the UK's call for a ceasefire in Lebanon during his one-day visit to Lebanon. In a major increase in aid to the country, Minister Falconer announced £20.5 million in new support for the Government of Lebanon's crisis response and saw humanitarian projects the UK will fund.

In his meetings with President Joseph Aoun, Prime Minister Nawaf Salam, Speaker Nabih Berri and Foreign Minister Youssef Rajji, Minister Falconer reiterated the urgent need for the ceasefire in Lebanon and expressed support for recent direct negotiations with Israel as the best path to durable peace and security for both sides. Falconer commended the government on its humanitarian crisis leadership. He reiterated the UK's continued support since 2009 to the Lebanese Armed forces, the sole legitimate defenders of Lebanon now over £120 million.

With Minister of Education and Higher Education Dr Rima Karami and UNICEF Representative Marcoluigi Corsi, Minister Falconer visited the Furn El Chebbak public school, now a collective shelter hosting displaced families in Beirut forced to leave their homes as a result of strikes. He heard from families facing the strain of multiple displacements, fleeing with little more than the essentials they can carry and with children facing a 7th year of disrupted access to education.

At the Grand Serail, Minister Falconer met the Government's Disaster Risk Management Unit, which alongside the Lebanese Red Cross is leading the nationally coordinated, data-driven response to the humanitarian crisis. There he expressed his admiration for the efforts of healthcare and first responders. He reiterated that attacks on staff doing these vital roles are unacceptable and that both must be protected by all sides.

The £20.5 million package brings total UK funding since March to £30 million, delivering emergency assistance to displaced and conflict-affected families, including in hard-to-reach areas.

The funding package announced today will support:

- The Government of Lebanon's Shock Responsive Safety Net (SRSN) to deliver emergency cash assistance to conflict-affected Lebanese families, while also supporting Syrian refugees through the World Food Programme (WFP).
- The Lebanese Red Cross, via the British Red Cross, strengthening frontline response across the Disaster Risk Management Unit, Urban Search and Rescue, and Emergency Medical Services, including the provision of critical equipment and supplies.
- Through UNICEF, supporting integrated emergency education, child protection and Gender-Based Violence (GBV) services for women, girls and boys in shelters, temporary learning spaces and Makani centres.

- The ICRC Flash Appeal, ensuring emergency assistance reaches people in hard-to-reach areas in southern Lebanon.

At the end of his visit, Minister Falconer said:

People in Lebanon are yet again living through a devastating conflict that neither they nor their government has chosen, with displacement stripping families of security and dignity. That is why the UK is committing further support, providing vital funding to support those most in need, as part of the UK's ongoing focus on supporting stability.

I met with leaders to welcome the direct talks between Israel and Lebanon. We must see an end to the hostilities in Lebanon and this government will keep working with the Government of Lebanon, local and international partners to get vital aid to those in need and work towards a durable resolution to the conflict.

Conflict in the Middle East is benefitting no one, and the UK remains focused on working with partners to de-escalate and drive forward a political solution.

British Ambassador to Lebanon Hamish Cowell said:

Minister Falconer's visit to Lebanon comes at a crucial moment as the country continues to grapple with the impact of conflict where daily Israeli strikes have displaced over one million civilians and caused widespread death and destruction.

Our support to the Government of Lebanon and local humanitarian partners continues with an additional £20.5 million bringing our support for the humanitarian emergency response to £30 million to date.

The UK calls for a ceasefire in Lebanon. Diplomacy is the right path and we welcome the talks taking place this week.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/falconer-announces-new-funding-for-displaced-people-in-lebanon>