

New UK Aid for displaced people in Lebanon as Minister visits Beirut

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Minister for the Middle East in Lebanon on first visit since regional escalation and pledges new humanitarian funding

- Minister calls on all parties to end hostilities in Lebanon.
- UK reaffirms support for direct negotiations between Lebanon and Israel.
- Stability and security in the Middle East will be critical for Antalya Diplomatic Forum.

On the first UK ministerial visit to Lebanon since regional escalation, Minister for the Middle East Hamish Falconer has today (16 April) reaffirmed UK support for the country and announced over £20m in fresh humanitarian funding.

During the one-day visit to Beirut, the Minister met with Lebanese leaders to discuss efforts to deliver regional stability and security.

He reiterated the urgent need for the ceasefire to extend to Lebanon and expressed support for recent direct negotiations with Israel as the best path to enduring stability and security for both sides.

In a major increase in aid to the country, Minister Falconer announced new support for the Government of Lebanon's crisis response and saw the humanitarian projects the UK will be funding. The projects are delivering life-saving aid and support to some of the most vulnerable families affected by conflict, including those who have been forced to leave their homes as a result of missile strikes.

The Minister also expressed thanks to healthcare workers and first responders during a meeting with them. He reiterated that both must be protected by all sides and that attacks on staff doing these vital roles are unacceptable.

The £20.5m package includes vital assistance to displaced people and those in hard-to-reach areas. It includes funding for the Lebanese Red Cross' rescue and medical teams, ensures shelters support women and girls and provides a boost to critical national crisis response systems. It forms part of a wider package for support to Lebanon and follows the £9.5m the UK government announced earlier this year to respond to the humanitarian crisis.

Minister for the Middle East Hamish Falconer said:

Conflict in the Middle East benefits no one. The UK is working with partners to de-escalate and pursue a political solution.

People in Lebanon are again suffering a conflict they did not choose, with displacement

robbing families of security and dignity. The UK is increasing support for those most in need, reflecting our commitment to regional stability.

In Beirut I met leaders and welcomed direct Israel-Lebanon talks. We need an end to hostilities. This government will work with Lebanon and international partners to deliver vital aid and support a durable resolution. In Antalya, I will reinforce de-escalation efforts regionally.

The visit came as the country continues to face the impact of conflict between Hizballah and Israel, which has displaced over a million civilians in Lebanon and caused widespread death and destruction.

The Minister met with Lebanon's President, Speaker of Parliament, Prime Minister, and Foreign Minister to emphasise the UK's support for an urgent end to hostilities in Lebanon. He welcomed the Government of Lebanon's leadership during the humanitarian crisis, as well as direct talks with Israel and their decision to ban all Hizballah's military activities.

Following his visit to Lebanon, the Minister will represent the UK at the Antalya Diplomatic Forum, with a focus on shaping diplomacy and foreign policy for the future.

He will take part in a panel session outlining the importance of stability in Syria and will meet with several Middle Eastern counterparts to discuss the need for immediate de-escalation in the region and the freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz.

The UK remains committed to supporting efforts to deliver peace and stability across the region, including calling for the immediate and unconditional reopening of the Strait and respect for the fundamental principles of freedom of navigation and the law of the sea to be upheld.

Notes to Editors:

The funding announced today includes:

- £12.3m for the Government of Lebanon's Shock Responsive Safety Net and World Food Programme to ensure civilians can meet their basic needs.
- £2.9m for the Lebanese Red Cross to provide key relief items (food, hygiene kits, mattresses, blankets, etc), equipment including ambulances and critical capacity to the Government of Lebanon's Disaster Risk Management Unit.
- £3.1m via UNICEF to support to children and vulnerable families in shelters and non-formal education spaces. Depending on location and individuals, support includes education, psychosocial support, and different levels of child protection & GBV services. Also includes technical assistance to Government of Lebanon on integrated & specialised services.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-uk-aid-for-displaced-people-in-lebanon-as-minister-visits-beirut>