British
Consulate-General
Jerusalem

Press release

New UK aid package to meet immediate needs of Palestinians through UN Relief and Works Agency

London, 5 Sep. 2018 - Minister for the Middle East announces new support to help UNRWA to continue delivering healthcare and education to Palestinians.

The UK will step up its support to the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) to help ensure vulnerable Palestinians are able to continue accessing vital healthcare and education services, Minister for the Middle East Alistair Burt has announced.

The UN agency, which is facing severe financial pressure at a time of unprecedented demand, is a lifeline for millions of Palestinian refugees across the Middle East.

Today's announcement of additional UK aid support from the Department for International Development aims to help UNRWA keep schools open for over 500,000 children, and provide medical care for 3.5 million refugees.

Minister for the Middle East Alistair Burt said:

" UK aid support through UNRWA provides an essential humanitarian and stabilising force in the Middle East, educating hundreds of thousands of children every year and providing healthcare to some of the most vulnerable Palestinian refugees. Today's UK aid package reaffirms our unequivocal support to this UN agency and the important work it does.

"We are deeply concerned about the devastating impact a shortage of funds for UNRWA could cause on those that rely on its services, as well as the consequences this could have for regional stability.

"Whilst today's UK aid announcement will help to meet immediate needs, we are clear that the UK cannot act alone. For the sake of millions of Palestinians, the international community and other donors must follow our lead and step up support to UNRWA to ensure its vital services are not interrupted."

In March the UK announced that it was providing financial assistance earlier than originally planned to ensure some of the poorest Palestinians continue to receive education and

healthcare. In June the UK provided an additional £10 million to help address the unexpected shortfall in funding, and meet growing beneficiary needs, particularly in Gaza.

Notes to editors

- Today's £7 million announcement brings the total UK contribution to UNRWA's Programme Budget to £45.5m.
- In the financial year 2018/19, the UK has already provided £38.5m to UNRWA to ensure core programmes and services remain uninterrupted.
- The £7 million is being provided by DFID in addition to its existing programme in the Occupied Palestinian Territories – this has been reallocated from other DFID programmes.