Foreign & Commonwealth Office (UK)

Foreign Secretary underlines UK support for stability in Lebanon

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Foreign Secretary William Hague today met Lebanese leaders, visited a food aid distribution centre for Syrian refugees and launched a survey for Lebanon’s onshore oil and gas.

The Foreign Secretary met with President of the Republic Michel Sleiman, Prime Minister Najib Mikati and Speaker of Parliament Nabih Berri. The Foreign Secretary handed the President a letter from Prime Minister David Cameron setting out the UK’s enhanced offer of support for Lebanon’s stability, through working ever more closely with the Lebanese Armed Forces (

LAF

). He also met the Army Commander, General Jean Kahwaji, and senior

LAF

officers. Through our increased cooperation, the UK will support the

LAF

to train over 2,000 troops in the coming year.

Speaking about the visit the Foreign Secretary said:

I was delighted to be able to visit Lebanon and reiterate our staunch support for Lebanon’s stability, against an uncertain regional backdrop. In these difficult times, it is especially important that Lebanon remains united in its diversity. Today I have assured Lebanon’s leaders that the UK will play its part, through our political efforts, through our enhanced support to the army, and through our solidarity with the Lebanese people.

I am also pleased to announce that the UK will be contributing a further £1m to the Special Tribunal for Lebanon in 2013. This takes our total contribution to £4.3M, and underlines our support for the tribunal, which is working to end impunity for political assassinations in Lebanon. The UK is committed to supporting the search for justice within Lebanon.

At the World Food Programme distribution centre for Syrian refugees in Burj Hammoud, Beirut, the Foreign Secretary announced the UK's allocation of £11.15m toward humanitarian relief in Lebanon, taking the UK's overall support to the response in Lebanon to over £19.5m. He called on all donors to deliver swiftly on their pledges to ensure aid reaches those who need it most in Syria, Lebanon and across the region.

During his visit, the Foreign Secretary launched a survey by British seismic surveying company Spectrum for onshore oil and gas, with Minister of Energy and Water Gebran Bassil. The two Ministers discussed strategic opportunities in the Lebanese oil and gas sector. The Foreign Secretary highlighted the importance of transparent mechanisms and accountable management of oil and gas revenue, for the benefit of the Lebanese people.

The Foreign Secretary also met with former Prime Minister Fouad Siniora, head of the Future parliamentary bloc, and discussed the UK's support for Lebanese stability, elections, and the humanitarian crisis in Syria.

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