Foreign & Commonwealth Office (UK)

Foreign Secretary: UK aid to support Syrian refugees in Lebanon

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Speaking at the World Food Programme distribution centre in Bourj Hammoud, Beirut, today, the Foreign Secretary William Hague said:

We are all too familiar with the desperate humanitarian crisis caused by the appalling situation in Syria. More than 800,000 Syrians have fled their country into neighbouring countries: into Iraq, into Turkey, into Jordan – and the largest number of all, into Lebanon, where there are now nearly 300,000 refugees here.

I pay tribute to the Lebanese people for the generosity of their response, and their determination to look after people in their hour of need. But it is very important that the international community does everything possible to help. We all agreed to do so at the recent donors' conference in Kuwait at the end of January, and the United Kingdom is very much committed to that. We are one of the largest donors in the world helping refugees who have fled Syria, through United Nations agencies and non-governmental organisations.

So I want to announce today that the United Kingdom will pledge another $17m for Lebanon, from the funds we have committed to the humanitarian response. The total UK humanitarian support in Lebanon will now be over $30m. This will help to provide what people urgently need: clean water, food, blankets and life-saving medical supplies. I hope it will make an important contribution to that, and that other countries will also act quickly to turn their pledges into action and deliver the money that is so much needed.

What we need above all is a solution to the crisis in Syria, and this is no substitute for that. We continue to work every day on trying to find that diplomatic and political solution, and we will continue to do so. But in the absence of a solution, we have to do everything we can to help people in urgent need – and to help Lebanon to help people who are in urgent need. So the United Kingdom will continue to do that. I hope that the commitments I am announcing today will help to look after more of the people who urgently need that help.

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