Foreign & Commonwealth Office (UK)

FCO Minister condemns attack in Arsal, Lebanon

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Commenting on the ongoing fighting in Arsal, Lebanon, which has led to the deaths, injuries and abductions of members of the security forces and caused civilian casualties, Minister for the Middle East and North Africa Tobias Ellwood said:

I condemn the attacks against the Lebanese Security Forces and ongoing violence in and around the town of Arsal. Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity must be respected. I urge a swift end to the fighting that started over the weekend. I send my condolences to the Lebanese government and the families of the victims of this violence.

The United Kingdom remains as determined as ever to back stability in Lebanon and is committed to assisting the Lebanese Armed Forces in enhancing security in the border regions.

Such incidents, alongside the terrible daily suffering of millions of Syrians, show that the need for a political settlement in Syria has never been more pressing. The UK is committed to working with the UN's new Special Representative, Staffan de Mistura, and with the moderate opposition, to create the conditions for this.

Further information

Practical UK support for Lebanon's stability has increased tenfold over the last two years. In 2013, the UK government approved £12.2 million to fund the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) to extend the authority of the Lebanese state into contested border areas. This includes a $16 million 'train and equip' programme to strengthen the Land Border Regiments of the LAF. These Regiments monitor 150km of Lebanon's border with Syria. 12 border watchtowers are being constructed along the border with Syria with UK support, and we have delivered 164 Land Rovers, 1,500 sets of body armour, a secure radio communication network, border watchtowers, and HESCO bastion ballistic protection for LAF positions along the border. Over 3500 troops have been trained with UK support, and in 2013, 44 LAF personnel undertook training in the UK. Our programs are responding to the needs set out by the LAF in their five-year Capability Development Plan.

Lebanon is a priority country for the UK's largest ever humanitarian effort in response to the Syria conflict. UK humanitarian and development support to Lebanon has reached £139 million since the beginning of the Syrian crisis, including in vulnerable areas around Arsal.

Foreign Office Minister Tobias Ellwood on twitter

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