Foreign & Commonwealth Office (UK)

This week at the Foreign Office

2013-02-22

Lebanon

The Foreign Secretary

William Hague visited Lebanon this week

, and highlighted the importance of Lebanon's role in the region. He said: "In these difficult times, it is especially important that Lebanon remains united in its diversity. 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."

The Foreign Secretary visited a distribution centre in Lebanon for Syrian refugees and announced the

UK will allocate £11.15m toward humanitarian relief in Lebanon

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The Foreign Secretary met with Lebanese leaders and offered

UK support for stability

and pledged a further

£1m to the Special Tribunal for Lebanon

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Syria

The EU agreed to amend the arms embargo on Syria and extend it for three months. The Foreign Secretary

welcomed the decision

he said: "It will allow us now to supply a greater range of equipment to help to protect civilian life in Syria."

The UN Commission of Inquiry confirmed that the Assad regime bears overwhelming responsibility for the situation in Syria, and for the worst human rights violations and abuses. The Foreign Secretary said: “We

welcome the Commission’s call for the UN Security Council to refer Syria to the International Criminal Court

, a course of action that we strongly support.”

Yemen

Foreign Office Minister Alistair Burt

welcomed the UN Security Council statement

and expressed concern at the interference by former President Saleh in political transition in Yemen. The Minister said: “It sends a clear message about the international community’s full support for President Hadi’s leadership and recognises the significant progress made so far.”

South Georgia & the South Sandwich Islands

Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall’s TV program looked at fish stocks around the South Georgia & the South Sandwich Islands.

Foreign Office Minister Mark Simmonds welcomed the programme

and said: “By demonstrating that a truly well-managed and sustainable fishery can be delivered around South Georgia, the UK is showing leadership to others.”

Japan

Baroness Warsi called on Japan to reconsider its policy on the death penalty

following the execution of three people this week. She said: “There is no conclusive evidence that it has any value as a deterrent, its use undermines human dignity and any miscarriage of justice is irreversible and irreparable.”

Also this week

The Foreign Secretary

visited Moldova and showed support for its European aspirations.

Alistair Burt

welcomed the appointment of 30 women to Saudi Arabia’s parliament.

Alistair Burt

submitted a rebuttal letter to The Independent

in response to their misrepresentation of the UK’s export control policy for Sri Lanka.

The Foreign Secretary

congratulated the President and people of Ecuador on their successful elections.

Source: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/this-week-at-the-foreign-office--113