



Department
for International
Development



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

Rt Hon James Cleverly MP
Minister of State

Chris Doyle
Director
Council for Arab-British Understanding (Caabu)

Our ref: 204497

By email to: doylec@caabu.org

10 July 2020

Dear Chris,

Thank you for your letter of 6 July to the Foreign Secretary, noting the dire economic and humanitarian situation in Syria, and highlighting the importance around securing continued cross-border access. I am responding as the Minister responsible for the Middle East and North Africa.

The UK is equally concerned at the continued economic and humanitarian plight of the Syrian people. Both the International Development Secretary and I highlighted this concern in our remarks at the recent Brussels IV 'Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region' conference and the UK hosted side-event. In particular, the UN Emergency Response Coordinator, Sir Mark Lowcock, noted at the Brussels Conference, that the significant downturn in the Syrian pound has caused the prices of essential items – such as food, medicines and fuel – to soar. This has exacerbated food insecurity levels, with the World Food Programme estimating that 9.3 million people in Syria have inadequate access to food.

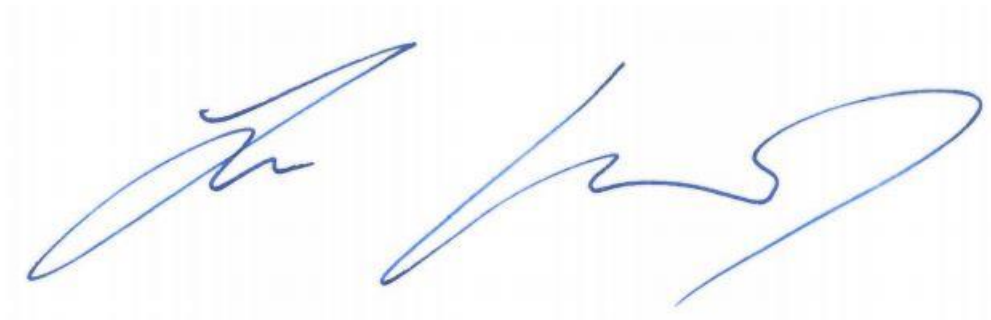
I agree that the international community should not stand back and watch. The UK has spent over £3 billion in response to the Syria Crisis, our largest-ever response to a single humanitarian crisis. Since 2012, across Syria and the region, UK-funded programmes have provided over 28 million food rations, over 19 million medical consultations, and over 13 million vaccines.

UK aid continues to address food insecurity; between April to December 2019, our support helped distribute over 11,500 food rations, each covering the food needs of one individual for one month. We have also been monitoring the impact that COVID-19 has had on the humanitarian situation. In May the UK announced £24 million to support our partners in responding to the virus. Our support is helping provide food, healthcare, water and sanitation to help mitigate the impact of COVID-19.

With the plummeting economy and COVID-19 exacerbating an already challenging humanitarian situation, it is very important that the UN Security Council cross-border resolution is renewed and that mandated cross-border access to north east Syria is restored. We continue to raise the importance of renewing UNSCR 2504 and are pushing

for the reinstatement of Yaroubiya crossing, both for 12 months at the UN Security Council.

I hope this outlines the UK's continued support to the Syrian people, and our continued efforts to secure mandated cross-border access in the north west and north east Syria ahead of UNSCR 2504's expiration on 10 July.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several fluid, connected strokes. The signature is positioned centrally on the page, below the main text and above the printed name.

Rt Hon James Cleverly MP
Minister for the Middle East and North Africa