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## Yarmouk refugee camp

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From: **AINAGCorrespondence@fco.gov.uk**

Sent: 27 April 2015 12:48:00

To: **lphr@live.co.uk**

Our reference: EMOP/197/2015

27 April 2015

*Dear Mr Shourou,*

Thank you for your email of 08 April to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), enclosing a letter to the Foreign Secretary, about Syria. The Near East Department (NED) of the FCO has been asked to reply.

Thank you for the comments in your letter, these have been noted by the Foreign Secretary's Private Office and a copy of your letter has been passed to the Syria Team in the FCO where they have also been noted.

Like you, the Government is deeply concerned by the terrible situation in the Yarmouk refugee camp in Syria where intense fighting is continuing between various armed groups, including ISIL and Jabhat al-Nusrah. In March 2015 there were some 18,000 civilians, including 3,500 children, some of whom have been living under siege for nearly two years, who remained trapped in the camp with no access to humanitarian assistance. We condemn in the strongest terms the grave crimes committed by ISIL and Jabhat al-Nusrah against civilians in the camp, and call on all parties to the conflict to protect civilians, ensure humanitarian access to the area, and allow the safe passage and evacuation of civilians.

The UK is supporting United Nations Relief & Works Agency (UNRWA) to ensure that the needs of highly vulnerable Palestinians are addressed both inside Syria and in neighbouring countries. To date, the UK has allocated £28.5million to provide food parcels, relief items (blankets), hygiene packs, education and cash assistance for Palestinian refugees affected by the violence in Syria and the region. We continue to support UNRWA in its call for all sides to allow uninterrupted, safe and substantial access to enable the provision of humanitarian assistance and services to those in need.

The UK also continues to be at the forefront of the international humanitarian response, having pledged a total of £800 million in response to the humanitarian crisis in Syria and the region. This is the UK's largest ever response to a humanitarian crisis and we are the second largest bilateral donor. This funding is providing support including food, medical care and relief items for over a million people including those affected by the fighting in Syria, as well as to refugees in Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey and Iraq. We are continually pressing for better access and protection for humanitarian convoys inside Syria, including at the UN Security Council, so that aid can get to the millions in need inside the country.

Tackling the threat posed by ISIL demands a long-term, comprehensive and coordinated international response. There are no short cuts or quick fixes. In both Iraq and Syria, people want stable, inclusive, non-sectarian governments that can provide prosperity and security, but instead they find themselves on the front line in resisting terrorists and extremists. The UK and its allies will continue to support them and to play a strong and active part in the international coalition that is degrading ISIL. Both our national security and the security of the region depend on tackling this scourge.

The UK's priority in Syria has always been to achieve a political settlement and to help alleviate humanitarian suffering in order to save lives. The only sustainable solution to the crisis in Syria is to reach a negotiated political transition by mutual consent – this is the principle in the Geneva Communiqué. We must stick to this fundamental principle, endorsed by the United Nations and the Security Council. We will continue to support the moderate opposition, to increase the pressure on the regime, and to push for a political solution, working closely with our international partners, helping to ensure that peace talks can bring an end to this terrible conflict, and with it provide hope to the Syrian people.

On behalf of the

Near East Department

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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