



Department  
for International  
Development



**Amy Randall**  
Head of Syria Policy

Dr Haytham Alhamwi  
Mazen Ejbaei  
Dr Fadel Moghrabi  
Dr Amer Masri  
Clare Connolly  
Catherine Anderson  
Samuel Rushworth

Our ref: 188750

Rethink Rebuild Society  
Unit 7, Longsight Business Park  
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Manchester  
M13 0PD

27 November 2018

Dear Dr Alhamwi, Mr Ejbaei, Dr Moghrabi, Dr  
Masri, Ms Connolly, Ms Anderson, Mr  
Rushworth,

Thank you for your letter of 8 November to the Prime Minister and others regarding the humanitarian situation in Rukban camp, to which I am responding as Head of Syria Policy at the Department for International Development.

The Government very much shares your concern at the dire humanitarian situation in Syria, including in Rukban where an estimated 50,000 people remain with limited access to vital medical facilities, medical supplies, and food due to the lack of sustained access provided to humanitarian actors.

As such, in recent months, along with our international partners, the UK Government has continued to press the regime and its backers to facilitate the provision of unconditional and sustained humanitarian access to the camp in order to avoid a humanitarian tragedy.

Last month we were pleased to finally see the delivery of aid to the camp through a successful interagency convoy from Damascus. This convoy provided food parcels, hygiene kits, plastic sheeting, and new-born baby kits as well as other vital assistance including an emergency vaccination programme for over 5,000 children. It also allowed the UN to carry out a needs assessment which is essential in informing the international humanitarian community of the specific ongoing needs within the camp.

Whilst the convoy represented a significant achievement, as the first aid delivery to Rukban since January 2018, the Government remains acutely aware that it must not be viewed as a one-off event. We continue to work together with our international partners to push the regime and its allies to allow further, regular, aid convoys to access the camp as a matter of urgency.

The UK continues to examine the most effective and efficient way of providing aid to hard to reach areas such as Rukban; currently, the best method is to provide such assistance by road through partners who understand the situation on the ground, and in coordination with other international donors. The UN, Red Cross Movement and NGO partners are best placed to deliver such aid given their considerable expertise and capacity to assess needs and deliver humanitarian assistance.

As well as extensive international lobbying, the UK Government funds UNICEF to provide life-saving water and medical assistance to Rukban camp residents. This includes contributing to the construction of a new water system and helping fund the UN clinic in Rukban to provide vaccinations; malnutrition screening; and consultations for children and pregnant women.

Please be assured that the UK Government will continue to support those most acutely in need in areas such as Rukban, and advocate on the international stage for improved humanitarian access and protection of civilians from harm across Syria. We remain the second largest bilateral donor to the humanitarian response in Syria since 2011, committing over £2.7 billion in Syria and the wider region over that time, and continue to take a leading role in the international response to this crisis.

Yours sincerely,

***Amy Randall***

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