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Department
for International
Development

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Jo Swinson MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Dear Jo,

Thank you for your email of 7 May to the Rt Hon. Mark Field MP on behalf of your constituent, about Yemen. I am replying as the Minister responsible for our relations with the Middle East and North Africa.

I share your constituent's concerns about the effects of the conflict on Yemeni civilians. I am acutely aware that during armed conflict, civilians often pay a heavy price. Addressing the humanitarian crisis in Yemen is a priority for the Government. We are at the forefront of the international response in Yemen as a donor to the humanitarian situation and as the pen-holder on the UN Security Council.

The British Government is the fifth largest donor to Yemen. We have prioritised life-saving interventions including food and nutrition support to 1.7 million people and clean water and sanitation for an expected 1.2 million people. On 24 February, the Prime Minister announced that the UK would be providing £200 million in funding for 2019/2020, which will meet the immediate food needs of 4 million Yemenis every month. On World Food Day, 16 October 2018, the UK announced a package of £96.5 million which will help UNICEF tackle malnutrition in Yemen over the coming three years.

The UK has also taken the lead in lobbying across the international community. We urge all parties to the conflict to ensure rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access and we continue to work to secure funds for the international humanitarian response to the crisis. The UK has also been clear on the importance of continued humanitarian and commercial access through Yemen's ports, including Hodeidah and Saleef, through which 80 per cent of Yemen's import needs are met. From the Prime Minister down, the UK has been engaged closely with our regional and international partners on this issue.

On 16 January, the United Nations Security Council voted unanimously to adopt Security Council Resolution 2452, which was drafted by the UK and established a six month UN mission to monitor the Hodeidah ceasefire. This follows the adoption of Security Council Resolution 2451, a UK-led resolution to bolster the UN Yemen peace process and build on diplomatic momentum after Stockholm.

The UK has played a central role in diplomatic efforts to seek a peaceful solution to the conflict in Yemen. Resuming peace talks is the top priority and we welcome the work of the UN Special Envoy for Yemen Martin Griffiths in trying to achieve a political settlement. The Foreign Secretary visited the region on 1-4 March as part of a sustained UK diplomatic campaign to support the UN-led peace process, and he discussed the political and humanitarian situation with officials in Riyadh, Abu Dhabi, Muscat and Aden. His visit to Aden on 3 March was the first visit to Yemen by a Western foreign minister since the start of the conflict in 2015. In addition, the Foreign Secretary hosted a meeting of the Yemen Quad on 26 April, where members discussed the next steps in the UN-led peace process and how best to support the efforts of UN Special Envoy Martin Griffiths. On 22 January, the Foreign Secretary announced £2.5 million in additional funding to the peace process in Yemen. This will fund immediate activities to support the implementation of the Hodeidah agreement. Exact activities are being determined based on need, in close consultation with the UN.

We welcome the beginning of Houthi redeployment in Hodeidah, a crucial first step in the plan to implement the Hodeidah Agreement. This was the first such withdrawal by the Houthis since the conflict began in 2014. The UK encourages both parties to continue to constructively engage with the Special Envoy Martin Griffiths and the Head of the UN Mission in support of the Hodeidah Agreement, General Lollesgaard. Implementing Hodeidah is part of a critical step towards the shared goal of a political solution to the Yemen conflict.

The British Government will remain at the forefront of efforts to find a political solution to the conflict. We will continue discussions with partners on how the UN Security Council can support the UN Special Envoy Martin Griffiths on the political process and improving the humanitarian situation.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Murrison', written in a cursive style.

The Rt Hon. Dr Andrew Murrison MP
Minister of State for the Middle East and North Africa