

March 2015

Response to the ‘Gaza: Six Months on’ campaign by Save the Children

The UK was one of the biggest donors to the crisis last summer, providing more than £17 million in immediate humanitarian assistance. This included £6 million to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) Gaza Flash Appeal which provided rental subsidies and cash assistance; £3 million to the UN World Food Programme (WFP), which provided emergency food vouchers for 300,000 people over one month; £3 million to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC); £3.1 million for the Rapid Response Facility to help partners on the ground provide crucial humanitarian aid, including emergency health care, mental and psychosocial support and projects focused on water, sanitation and hygiene; and £2 million in matched funding for the Disasters Emergency Committee public appeal. The entirety of this pledge has been disbursed to help meet the most pressing needs.

In October, the UK pledged a further £20 million in early recovery assistance at the Gaza Reconstruction Conference in Cairo. UK support includes rubble clearance programmes, reconstructive surgery for those injured in the conflict and support to the private sector so Palestinian businesses can make the repairs they need to get back into business. The UK was also the first donor to support the Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism and we are pleased to see that over 58,000 people have now been able to buy materials to repair their homes. We have already disbursed £5 million of our £20 million pledge and are working hard to disburse the remaining funds over the course of the coming financial year to continue to support those in need.

Our aid is saving lives, but I agree that political progress is needed if we are to see a more sustainable solution for Gaza. DFID works closely with the Foreign Office and EU partners to call on the Government of Israel to improve movement and access into and out of Gaza and to call on the PA to show leadership in making progress on governance and security for Palestinians in Gaza as well as the West Bank. We need a durable end to the cycle of violence and an agreement to address the underlying causes of the conflict and transform the situation in Gaza. There is no alternative that can deliver peace and security for both Israelis and Palestinians.

DESMOND SWAYNE