



International Development Committee

House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA

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From Sarah Champion MP, Chair

Rt Hon Dominic Raab MP

Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

By email

15 June 2021

Dear Dominic,

Cross-border aid into Syria

I am writing in relation to Bab al-Hawa crossing point between Syria and Turkey, through which the UN delivers aid into Syria. You will be aware that the mandate approving this crossing expires on the 10 July.

Bab al-Hawa is the last remaining border crossing between Turkey and the Syrian province of Idlib. There have been reports that this crossing may close due to Russia vetoing an extension to UN Security Council Resolution 2533. For the civilians in that area, this would be a disaster. Approximately 75% of the population in northwest Syria is dependent on UN aid to meet their needs; around 85% of that aid comes through this border crossing. My Committee has heard regularly of the struggles faced by people in Syria, and how difficult it already is for humanitarian organisations to operate, not least in the wake of covid-19. Closure of this crossing will make the work of these organisations substantially more difficult. As such, the Committee urges you to make strong representations to members of the UN Security Council on the significance of cross-border aid into Syria and the importance of keeping the Bab al-Hawa crossing open.

In relation to the above, the Committee would be grateful for your response to the following questions:

1. What representations have you made to members of the UN Security Council on the need for continued cross-border humanitarian assistance?
2. Will the UK look to reassess its ODA allocations and distribution channels in Syria if cross-border aid is not reauthorised?
3. What discussions have you had with delivery partners on the impact of the UK's reduction in bilateral ODA spend in Syria?
4. What consideration has the FCDO made of alternative options for the provision of aid to communities in Syria if cross-border assistance does not continue beyond 10 July.

Given that the resolution expires on the 10 July, I would be grateful for your response by the 6 July. The Committee intends to publish your response.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S. Champion', written on a light blue background.

Sarah Champion MP,
Committee Chair