



Department for  
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Foreign, Commonwealth  
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**Foreign, Commonwealth  
& Development Office**

King Charles Street  
London  
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To: All MPs and Lords

16 March 2022

Dear Colleagues,

### **Why donating cash rather than goods is better for Ukraine**

Firstly, thank you to colleagues who have been in touch over the last few weeks on this matter. It is clear that you and your constituents are making great efforts to support those who have been forced to flee their homes because of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. As President Zelenskyy said when he spoke directly to us last week, “we are looking for help from civilised countries, and we are thankful for this help”.

As such, we wanted to give you an update on the best ways to do this.

#### How Government is supporting Ukraine’s immediate humanitarian needs

As the Foreign Secretary wrote in her letter of Monday 7 March, the UK has now committed £394m in aid, including £220m in humanitarian assistance which will be used to save lives; and protect vulnerable people inside Ukraine and in the wider region.

The government’s focus is on supporting the UN and other humanitarian partners to respond effectively to the deteriorating humanitarian situation; as well as strengthen the effectiveness of the overall international humanitarian response.

#### Advice for the public and organisations

We welcome the public’s eagerness and generosity to support the people of Ukraine at this time of crisis. It is fantastic that the Disasters Emergency Committee’s appeal for Ukraine has now reached more than £130m, including £25m in government funding, our largest ever aid-match donation. Details of the appeal and how to donate can be found on [www.DEC.org.uk](http://www.DEC.org.uk).



We do however request that organisations and people who would like to help do so by donating cash through trusted charities and aid organisations, rather than by donating goods. The Polish Embassy in London also reiterated this request in their [statement](#) of 01 March.

Cash can easily and safely be transferred quickly to areas where it's needed. Individuals and aid organisations can then use it to buy what's most appropriate at that moment. If your constituents or organisations have excess donated goods they could consider donating these to a charity shop who may, depending on the nature of these items, be able to sell these to raise cash which may support the Ukraine crisis. Alternatively, local fund-raising efforts using donated goods can also raise cash.

Unsolicited donations of goods, although well-meant, can obstruct supply chains and delay more urgent life-saving assistance from getting through given the huge logistical and coordination challenges associated with handling and onward distribution. Goods provided may not be what is most needed and run the risk of not reaching affected populations, including looting and theft or being sold further on informal markets thereby distorting the local economy. Distribution is difficult to control and manage well, particularly in conflict affected contexts – the most vulnerable like women, the elderly, disabled and children often do not receive goods.

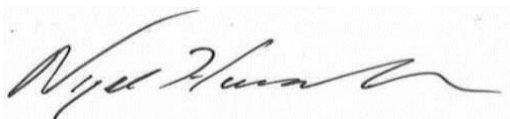
If members of the public or organisations would still like to take forward a donation of goods we encourage them to reach out to a charity or organising body based in country to establish what is needed and how to deliver it safely before they begin to collect goods. Some useful links can be found in the attached Annex.

Once this has been done, to help facilitate transportation the Government has removed the requirement to complete unfamiliar customs paperwork. [Guidance](#) is here and an Export Support Service helpline available on 0300 303 8955. Charities can also contact their online [support team](#).

We will continue to update you and keep you abreast of developments as the situation continues to evolve.

With thanks to you and your constituents for their generous offers of help. We have also included a link to more information on what your constituents and local charities [can do to help](#) the people of Ukraine.

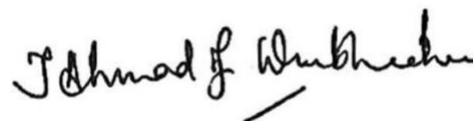
Best wishes,



**Nigel Huddleston MP**  
Minister for Sport, Tourism, Heritage  
and Civil Society



**James Cleverly MP**  
Minister of State for Europe and  
North America



**Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon**  
Minister of State for South and Central Asia, North Africa,  
UN & The Commonwealth Prime Minister's Special Representative  
on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict

## Annex

- In Poland the authorities have issued a statement calling on the UK public not to provide further in-kind donations, as previously mentioned above. Specific offers can still be channelled through their official website (<https://pomagamukrainie.gov.pl/>) and a Polish NGO forum coordinated by PHA (Polish Humanitarian Action) includes a number of national and international NGOs and the Polish Red Cross. You can register to be part of that forum [here](#) or contact the Polish Red Cross (PCK) [head.office@pck.pl](mailto:head.office@pck.pl).
- In Romania the government has set up a platform to coordinate donations and to link them with needs on the other side of the border (<https://www.gov.ro/ro/ucraina-impreduna-ajutam-mai-mult>). Note this website is currently only available in Romanian.
- FCDO is in touch with the Governments of Hungary, Slovakia and Moldova as to whether they have plans to set up similar coordinating bodies. We are similarly not aware of any body endorsed by the Government of Ukraine able to coordinate the delivery of already donated goods directly into Ukraine.
- Where private sector organisations wish to explore in kind donations, we encourage them to explore opportunities through any existing partnerships with the UN, the Red Cross or NGOs that they already have in place; or reach out to established registered charities on The Charity Commission and Fundraising regulator website at [Gov.UK](#).
- The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) also encourage companies to refrain from sending unsolicited donations that may not correspond to identified needs or meet international quality standards. Financial/cash donations are more effective than in-kind donations. However, for businesses wishing to contribute in-kind goods or services, please reach out to OCHA with as much detail as possible, including what items they may wish to donate and how much, the time frame for delivery, details on shipping and any other conditions. They can then guide business to most appropriate recipient organization(s). Companies with employees, suppliers, or customers in the country or region, or those with existing agreements with responding humanitarian organizations should aim to provide support directly to these groups. For more information, please contact [ocha-ers-ps@un.org](mailto:ocha-ers-ps@un.org).