

UK Plans Medical Evacuation for More Injured Children from Gaza

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The UK government is preparing to expand its medical evacuation scheme for children from Gaza, with up to 300 expected to be brought to Britain for urgent treatment. The initiative will prioritise children in need of specialist care unavailable locally, offering access to NHS services and fast-tracked visas for patients and their family members.

At present, a limited number of children have been brought over through a charity-backed partnership with Project Pure Hope. Two girls, aged five and twelve, were among the first to arrive in the UK earlier this year to receive life-saving surgery and treatment for critical eye injuries. Not long after, a 15-year-old boy, Majd al-Shaghnoobi was also evacuated. They are currently undergoing recovery with wraparound support, including mental health care and housing.

Government sources confirm that plans are underway to formalise the process, shifting from the current charity-led arrangement to a broader, NHS-supported model. Under the updated framework, the Home Office is expected to expedite medical visas and carry out security and biometric checks for accompanying relatives. Priority will be given to cases where treatment cannot be delivered in Gaza or neighbouring countries.

While the government has pledged a £7.5 million aid package to support emergency medical relief, frustration has grown over the pace of action. Baroness Arminka Helic has publicly criticised delays, highlighting that repeated appeals from NGOs and humanitarian advocates have gone unanswered for months. Legal representatives for three children still in Gaza have initiated formal proceedings, arguing the government has a precedent in assisting Ukrainian children and should apply the same urgency here.

The backdrop is increasingly urgent. Gaza's health system is on the verge of collapse, and organisations such as UNICEF report tens of thousands of children have been killed or injured since October 2023. Other nations, including Ireland, Italy, and the UAE, have already taken steps to fly out paediatric patients for emergency care.

The UK's updated evacuation programme is expected to commence in the coming weeks, offering a lifeline to children with the most severe injuries and the fewest options.