

EUROPEAN UNION

SYRIA TRAVEL INFORMATION & ADVICE



Lancashire
Constabulary

police and communities together

We have been sharing the following public safety messages with partner agencies and those involved in travel to Syria for some time but we want to reach more people across Lancashire with this information which is also being circulated in other parts of the UK.

CONFIDENTIAL ANTI TERRORISM HOTLINE
0800 789 321
CONFIDENTIAL ANTI TERRORISM HOTLINE

PREVENT ENGAGEMENT TEAM
01772 413 366
PreventTeam@lancashire.pnn.police.uk

It is the intention of Lancashire Constabulary to ensure that our residents are fully informed around the ongoing conflict in Syria.

We want to 'appeal' to people to share this advice with members of the community and enable them to make 'safe' decisions.

The quickest, most effective way you can help the Syrian people who are suffering is to support the humanitarian effort. The UK Government has already provided 167 million in aid to the region. A number of UK charities such as the DEC who have experience of working in dangerous environments are running campaigns to help alleviate the humanitarian crisis and provide vital medical assistance, food and shelter. The website <http://helpforsyria.org.uk> contains some alternative suggestions rather than travelling to the region.

The Charity Commission website should be used to check that a charity is registered. If a charity isn't registered, you cannot be sure that donations to the charity will be used as you intend.

Check that your chosen charity is registered at www.charitycommission.gov.uk

The whole of Syria and some surrounding areas are unsafe. There have been significant numbers of deaths and injuries. Terrorist groups target UK nationals and there is a high threat of terrorist activity. **A number of UK nationals have died fighting in Syria.** Normal access to phones, internet, cash, power, medical assistance and travel is disrupted.

The Syrian opposition has been clear that **foreign fighters are not welcome.** UK nationals who travel to Syria to fight may unwittingly assist the Assad regime's claim that they are fighting foreign terrorists. On 25/6/13, the Syrian government issued a new law stating that individuals who enter Syrian territories illegally will be sentenced to 5 to 10 years in prison and/or a fine of 5 to 10 million Syrian pounds.

UK nationals who travel there will attract the attention of the UK authorities. Persons engaged in terrorist activity, supporting it abroad or returning to the UK having been involved in the conflict, whether travel is to Syria or elsewhere, may be prosecuted under UK Terrorist Legislation in UK Courts.

There are serious concerns that anyone gaining access into Syria, whether it be for humanitarian reasons or because of a desire to support the Syrian opposition, may be targeted for recruitment by extremist groups. This could have significant repercussions for the safety of the individual concerned.

It is our advice that people should NOT travel to Syria.

We recognise that some people will feel compelled to travel to the region to deliver aid themselves. Sending aid via freight is safer than road convoys. The following guidance has been gathered from a range of sources including those who have travelled to the region and those adversely affected.

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/syria>

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/turkey>

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) advise against all travel to Syria and several towns and border areas in Turkey . British nationals in Syria have been told to leave by any practical means. The FCO is not able to provide consular services or help evacuation from the country.

Ensure that you are working with an international charity officially registered with the Charity Commission. Where people have attended with smaller charities unknown in Turkey they have been denied access or significantly delayed. Charities unknown to the Free Syrian Army could also be considered as hostile. Ensure that representatives from your chosen charity liaise with the Turkish authorities as convoys need to enter through agreed routes or they may be delayed or turned back.

If using any decommissioned Public Service vehicles such as ambulances, ensure you take the de-commissioning certificates with you or again this may be questioned at borders.

Ensure any travellers have more than one form of identification in case question marks are raised over a document. Also take photocopies of all documents so that you can hand over a copy if required, rather than lose sight of documents whilst they are taken to be copied.

Ensure thorough checks are regularly made of all vehicles and luggage and be vigilant when stopped as there is a chance people may try and use the convoy to plant things.

Do not allow people under 18 to join a convoy.
Do not allow further people to join the convoy on route. Ensure you comply with the legal requirements (i.e. vehicle insurance) for each Country through which you intend to travel.

If taking money abroad ensure you follow the advice found on the HM Revenue and Customs website. Log on to www.hmrc.gov.uk and search 'cash declaration'.

Please note that any amount of cash can be seized by the authorities at ports if they suspect it be unlawful. As such we advise taking documentary evidence as to where the cash, cheques, orders, drafts etc has come from, and what it is intended for. Such evidence may include bank statements, purchase agreements and supporting letters from accredited charities.

Radicalised individuals and those who have undergone terrorist training or fighting abroad may present a real danger to local communities when they return to the UK.

In order to keep communities safe we appeal to the public to share any concerns about travel to Syria, concerns for family members, any other information or activity that you think we need to be aware of and to do so confidentially by contacting:-

More information is available from the:-

PREVENT ENGAGEMENT TEAM

Tel: 01772 413366 (Police HQ) or

01254 353541 (Blackburn) 01282 472652 (Burnley & Pendle)

Email: PreventTeam@lancashire.pnn.police.uk

The Telegraph, 22/11/2013

Four British citizens have died fighting for Syrian rebels linked to Al-Qaeda, amid fears that the country's civil war is increasingly attracting individuals from the UK.

The Independent, 25/11/2013

A sixth British jihadist has reportedly been killed fighting in Syria.

BBC News, 25/11/2013

Syria's government and opposition will meet for the first time in Geneva in January in an attempt to establish a transitional government.