

Policy paper

The Humanitarian Medal

The Humanitarian Medal for service in support of human welfare during or in the aftermath of a crisis

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Details



Eligible Humanitarian Responses

On 30 January 2025, the Government announced that His Majesty has approved the first three eligible responses for the Humanitarian Medal which will be awarded to eligible individuals who assisted with His Majesty's Government's response to:

- the earthquake in Morocco in September 2023;
- the flooding in Libya in September 2023 and
- the ongoing conflict in Gaza.

Background to the Humanitarian Medal

On 19 July 2023 the Government announced the introduction of a Humanitarian Medal. The Humanitarian Medal will be awarded to those in public service and members of organisations that contribute on behalf of HM Government, such as charities, which respond in support of human welfare during or in the aftermath of a crisis - for example, in combating a life-threatening crisis; providing disaster relief or aid provision; whether in hazardous circumstances such as conflict zones or otherwise; both in the UK and internationally.

The Humanitarian Medal will only be awarded to serious (level 2) or catastrophic (level 3) emergencies:

For UK Emergencies:

- Serious Emergency (Level 2) - One which has, or threatens, a wide and/or prolonged impact requiring sustained central government coordination and support from a number of departments and agencies, usually including the regional tier in England and where appropriate, the devolved administrations. The central government response to such an emergency would be coordinated from the Cabinet Office Briefing Rooms (COBR), under the leadership of the lead government department.
- Catastrophic Emergency (Level 3) - One which has an exceptionally high and potentially widespread impact and requires immediate central government direction and support. Characteristics might include a top-down response in circumstances where the local response had been overwhelmed, or the use of emergency powers were required.

For International Emergencies:

For international responses the [IASC Humanitarian System-Wide Scale-Up Protocols](#) are considered.

- Level 2 emergencies - A level 2 international emergency is a situation, both caused by long term issues and those with little or no warning, that threatens the lives and well-being of large numbers of the population. It requires extraordinary action to ensure their survival, care and protection.
- Level 3 emergencies - Level 3 response is activated when a humanitarian situation suddenly and significantly changes and, following an analysis of five criteria - scale, complexity, urgency, capacity, and reputational risk - it is clear that the capacity to lead, coordinate and deliver humanitarian assistance and protection on the ground does not match the scale, complexity and urgency of the crisis.

Organisational eligibility

UK Emergencies:

Organisations eligible for the medal will have been deployed on behalf of, formally and directly funded by or formally endorsed by HM Government. Organisations such as charities that attend an incident uninvited by HM Government will not be eligible.

International Emergencies:

Organisations directly funded by HMG (excluding multilateral agencies such as UNICEF, WHO etc) would be eligible. Individuals working for those organisations would not have to be British to qualify.

NGOs both registered with the UK Charity Commission and whose activities HMG endorse in that specific response for a specific time period, would also be eligible, regardless of whether they were directly funded by HMG. Individuals working for those organisations would not have to be British to qualify.

Individual eligibility is set out in detail in the command paper linked above.

There is no public nomination process for the Humanitarian Medal.

Government departments will be responsible for developing a case for the Committee on the Grant of Honours, Decorations and Medals (the policy committee for the honours system), following which a recommendation may be made to His Majesty The King for the Medal to be awarded. A clasp will be used to designate each use of the Medal.

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