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I am delighted at the announcement of the first awards of the new Humanitarian Medal to those who attended recent events abroad. The Government announced this new award in 2023 for volunteers, public servants and others responding to disasters globally and to those providing a humanitarian response on behalf of the UK government.

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 the UK Government's response to:

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

On behalf of the Institute, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to all recipients of this long overdue award.

I do, however, have to note that news of the award first came to light immediately following the UK response to the Turkey and Syria Earthquake of 2023.

The men and women of the UK Government's rescue team in particular, including USAR technicians, dog handlers, medics and a structural engineer operated in the most traumatic of circumstances to carry out the highest number of live rescues from an earthquake response in the team's 30-year's existence. These lifesaving rescues were made in the most dangerous of circumstances, many taking place during the numerous aftershocks which posed a real threat to the lives of team members meeting the threshold of Hazardous service in a Catastrophic (level 3) emergency as defined by the Command paper

We are naturally extremely disappointed that the UK-ISAR response to Turkey is not being recognised, given the response would act as an exemplar for future awards. This decision is a real blow to our members and it is hoped that retrospective consideration of the Humanitarian Medal *and* of awards for brave conduct will be made in due course.

Michael Fleckney, Chairman, Institute of Search and Technical Rescue

Ends. For further info, contact: admin@rescue-institute.org

