**British government slams UNICEF for 'political stunt' after it funds UK food boxes**

By: Adam Shaw

Fox News

December 17, 2020

<https://www.foxnews.com/world/british-govt-unicef-funds-food-boxes-london>

The British government on Thursday criticized the United Nation’s children’s fund (UNICEF) for what it described as a "political stunt of the lowest order" after the organization pledged money for food boxes in the U.K.

UNICEF plans to give a £25,000 (or nearly $40,000) grant to the School Food Matters charity, which said it will use the money to provide breakfast boxes to schools over Christmas in south London.

Leader of the House of Commons Jacob Rees-Mogg reacted angrily to the news.

"I think it's a real scandal that UNICEF should be playing politics in this way when it is meant to be looking after people in the poorest and most deprived countries in the world where people are starving, where there are famines, and where there are civil wars," he said in the Commons.

"And they make cheap political points of this kind, giving, I think, £25,000 to one council -- it is a political stunt of the lowest order."

The Conservative government came under pressure from activists and opposition MPs over the summer, facing demands for school meals even when the doors were closed. There was similar pressure this winter ahead of the Christmas break.

The move by UNICEF was immediately used by the government’s opponents, who accused leaders of neglecting "hungry children."

"The fact that UNICEF is having to step in to feed our country's hungry children is a disgrace and Boris Johnson and Rishi Sunak should be ashamed," Deputy Labour Party Leader Angela Raynor said, according to The Telegraph.

"We are one of the richest countries in the world. Our children should not have to rely on humanitarian charities that are used to operating in war zones and in response to natural disasters."

But, in the Commons, Rees-Mogg defended the government’s record, and said that free school meals and a series of other initiatives have been expanded to support poor families, leading to 100,000 fewer children in poverty.

"This is a record of success of conservatism and UNICEF should be ashamed of itself," he said.

Later, he responded to a question about the kidnapping of 300 children in Nigeria, adding: "You do wonder that UNICEF might think a bit more about this than faffing around in England."

After Ress-Mogg’s remarks, UNICEF responded, saying it was working to "provide support to vulnerable children and families around the country during this crisis period."

"In partnership with Sustain, the food and farming alliance, over £700k of Unicef UK funds is being granted to community groups around the country to support their vital work helping children and families at risk of food insecurity during the coronavirus pandemic," Anna Kettley, UNICEF U.K.’s director of programmes and advocacy, said in a statement.

"Unicef will continue to spend our international funding helping the world’s poorest children. We believe that every child is important and deserves to survive and thrive no matter where they are born."