



THE FIRE BRIGADES UNION

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PARTNERSHIP PROJECT DELIVERS FIRE ENGINES TO IRAQ

Two fire engines have been successfully delivered to firefighters in Iraq and Kurdistan thanks to a partnership between the Fire Brigades Union (FBU), Perkins Engines Company and the Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service.

A team of FBU officials undertook the humanitarian trip, after securing support from Perkins and Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service.

The team started from Peterborough in Cambridgeshire, and from there the two engines were driven across ten different countries and covered a total of nearly 5000 kilometres.

Travelling via the channel tunnel the vehicles were handed over to officials of the General Federation of Iraqi Workers in Du Hok in Kurdistan. From there the fire engines were taken on to Irbil in Kurdistan and Baghdad in Iraq.

Adrian Clarke regional official of the FBU for the East of England said: “In my experience this was a unique partnership led by a trade union and supported by both a public service and a private industry company to deliver humanitarian help to another part of the world. Fire fighters in Iraq face probably the most dangerous working conditions of any firefighters anywhere in the world at present.”

Previous visits by FBU officials delivering much needed fire kit to firefighters in Iraq had highlighted the desperate need for fire engines and equipment to carry out their duties.

Following consultations between the FBU and Chief Fire Officer Tom Carroll of the Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service an agreement was

reached for the FBU to purchase two appliances that had finished their operational service in Cambridgeshire and were due for disposal.

Before travel the Fire and Rescue Service's vehicle maintenance department serviced both fire engines. Firefighters also helped ready the engines for the trip as well as helping with supplying equipment to go on them. This ensured that the Iraqi and Kurdistan firefighters had a basic firefighting and rescue capacity when they were delivered.

Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service's Chief Fire Officer Tom Carroll said: "We were only too pleased to be able to support the FBU with their venture. It is good to know that kit and fire engines that have served us well in Cambridgeshire for a number of years and come to the end of their useful life for us, can help our firefighter colleagues in Iraq and Kurdistan provide a better service for their communities."

As one of the vehicles was powered by a Perkins diesel engine the FBU decided to contact Perkins Engines in Peterborough and request its help. Perkins responded immediately providing support both financially and logistically. Along with a financial donation Perkins supplied a basket of service parts for the engines. The company also gave the team a list of distributors in every country which the vehicles would travel through and instructed these distributors to support any requests for assistance.

The engines proved to be extremely reliable with the only vehicle breakdowns being electrical faults.

Marion King, marketing communications manager at Perkins Engines said: "We were delighted to be able to support such a worthwhile humanitarian project.

"After meeting Adrian Clarke, who explained the background to the trip, we immediately agreed it was something Perkins wanted to support. Our sponsorship committee decided to assist with the cost of the trip but we also wanted to help ensure the vehicles made it to their final destination.

"We spoke to our distributors throughout Europe and the Middle East and they all agreed to provide assistance to the team throughout their trip.

"We were delighted to hear both vehicles had been delivered safely and that the Perkins engine had performed extremely well throughout the journey."

Mr Clarke added: “The FBU has long been supporting our fellow firefighters in Iraq and without the help of these partners this project would not have happened. Both Perkins Engines and Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service should be congratulated on their support of this life saving project and they should be proud that they employ people who not only talk the talk on diversity issues but that they are also prepared to walk the walk with their individual actions. The fact is that these fire appliances that served the communities of Cambridgeshire are now carrying on what they were designed to do and are helping to save lives once again”.

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Notes for Editors.

There are two different fire services in Iraq. These are the oil field firefighters and the civilian fire service which performs the same function as the fire service in the UK.

The General Federation of Iraqi Workers is newly formed since the fall of the Saddam Hussein Regime and is the equivalent of the TUC with unions affiliating to it.

The Kurdistan Workers Syndicate Union is the TUC equivalent in Kurdistan.