

Sodexo Cyprus and DIO crowned Team of the Year for Sudan humanitarian crisis support

1 year ago



The Sodexo operational team for the British Forces Cyprus contract with the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) was crowned Team of the Year at the 2024 Public Sector Catering Awards for their collaboration and support in Operation Polar Bear, the largest UK non-combatant evacuation operation involving more than 2,400 British nationals evacuated from war-torn Sudan in the summer of 2023.

The DIO team at headquarters British Forces Cyprus and [Sodexo's](#) contract team in Cyprus played a critical role during the crisis, providing essential welfare services and sustenance to the 2,400 plus British nationals evacuated from war-torn Sudan as well the additional 2,000 service personnel stationed on the island to support the evacuation.

Whilst Operation Polar Bear was a meticulously planned evacuation, the timeline was intense and the demands were ever evolving, military personnel and evacuees were arriving on the island with almost no notice. The [Sodexo](#) and DIO teams in Cyprus worked together on a rapid response and clear commitment to support the national operation, carrying out their responsibilities with unwavering professionalism throughout. The collaborative response acutely illustrated the diligence, resilience and agility of both teams.

From 19 April until the end of May 2023, Sodexo and the DIO teams had to work flexibly and 100% in tune with each other, to react in what was a complex and challenging picture. During this time an additional 100,000 had been prepared and served to the troops involved in the operation and more than 9,000 meals were also provided to the evacuees and supporting personnel.

Mark Baker, Chief Operating Officer [Defence](#), Sodexo UK & Ireland said: “We are immensely proud of the team in Cyprus. They have demonstrated our company values of service spirit, team spirit and spirit of progress time and time again. The team has a close relationship with the DIO team based at the British Forces Cyprus headquarters on the island as we have delivered services on the island since 2003.

“The success of the operation would not have been possible without the outstanding collaborative teamwork of the joint DIO and Sodexo team on the island, demonstrating a strong relationship with suppliers and business partners to create a positive impact at a critical time. Congratulations to all involved.”

The achievements of the DIO and Sodexo’s team in Cyprus have not gone unnoticed. In January 2024, the DIO and Sodexo team were collectively honoured with a prestigious Vice Chief of the Defence Staff (VCDS) Commendation for the crucial role they played in providing essential welfare and sustenance to the British nationals and service personnel during Operation Polar Bear.

The Sodexo team was also recognised in December 2023 at the company’s annual Spirit of Sodexo Awards as one of three teams to receive the coveted CEO award.