

News story: UK personnel depart for NATO Kosovo role

A team of nearly 30 UK troops has left the UK for Southern Europe to join NATO's Kosovo Force, helping to maintain safety, security and freedom of movement.

The year-long deployment will bolster the mission's capability, following a request from NATO for further support to KFOR by allies. Its particular role will be to support KFOR's ability to carry out intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance. The UK team will be based in the KFOR headquarters in Pristina.

KFOR began as a peacekeeping force in the late 1990s. Now it has evolved into a smaller, more flexible body of around 4,200 troops, acting as one of the main security providers in Kosovo. Troops are contributed by some 30 countries, including Germany, Italy, Turkey, Poland and the US, as well as the UK.

At the NATO Summit in Warsaw last year, Allies reaffirmed that KFOR would continue to contribute to a safe and secure environment in Kosovo. It will also continue to adapt. As the Warsaw communiqué made clear, changes to the Alliance's troop presence reflect conditions in the country. The force's overall goal is to enable self-sufficient security in Kosovo.

Defence Secretary Michael Fallon said:

This deployment of troops demonstrates how we remain committed to supporting security and stability in the Western Balkans region. NATO remains a cornerstone of our defence and by defending the security of Europe we strengthen our security at home.

This deployment follows support the UK provided in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2015 to the EU Force (EUFOR).

As the Prime Minister has announced the UK will be increasing its engagement in the Western Balkans, including through our hosting of the 2018 Western Balkans Summit.

The UK has more than 3,000 military personnel deployed on operations around the world, clearly demonstrating Britain's global Defence footprint. The UK continues to meet NATO's target of spending 2% of GDP on Defence, backed by a Defence budget that will rise every year for the rest of this decade.