

RAF jets in Lithuania intercept Russian aircraft

News story

Royal Air Force Typhoon fighter jets deployed to Lithuania have conducted their first intercept of Russian aircraft as part of the NATO Baltic Air Policing mission.



A Russian aircraft is intercepted by an RAF Typhoon flying from Siauliai Air Base in Lithuania.

The Typhoons launched on 2 June 2020 to intercept a Russian intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) aircraft operating over the Baltic Sea.

Around 150 personnel, who together form 135 Expeditionary Air Wing (EAW), are in Lithuania to fly over Baltic skies to deter any threats to NATO Allies' airspace – monitoring and investigating any aircraft flying near Lithuanian airspace with transponders switched off or without a flight plan.

A Typhoon pilot from 6 Squadron, attached to 135 Expeditionary Air Wing, was on Quick Reaction Alert (QRA) duty when the scramble was called. He said:

The scramble was called to intercept a Russian IL-20 COOT ISR aircraft. The initial scramble was a real shot of adrenaline, but once airborne it was important to remain calm and professional and make the intercept as expeditious as possible to ensure we maintained both the safety and integrity of NATO airspace. This is what all of our training is designed to prepare us for however, at the end of the day it's just my job.

This intercept is part of the routine NATO Air Policing mission that has been conducted to police the skies since 2004. The current RAF mission began on 1 May 2020 when 135 EAW took over the enhanced Air Policing role working alongside the Spanish Air Force detachment at Siauliai Air Base.

Wing Commander Stu Gwinnutt, 135 EAW Commander stated:

It is great to see all of the training come together in a timely response and a successful QRA mission for NATO Baltic Air Policing.

The RAF contribution to NATO deployments supports efforts to reassure our Allies and demonstrates the UK's wider commitment to the security of the region.

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[DIO completes essential improvements at RNAS Yeovilton](#)

News story

The Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) has completed and handed over to the Royal Navy a project at Royal Naval Air Station (RNAS) Yeovilton.



Image of the RNAS Yeovilton Bowser Park. Copyright Mott Macdonald, 2020.

The project included work to improve essential access and egress to its sites from the public highway and provision of a new Fuel Bowser Vehicle Park which will remove the potential risk of a fuel spillage from the fuel tankers used on site. Additional works included bringing an existing gymnasium back into use and improvements to an electronic firing range.

Final work on the contract was completed and officially handed over to the Royal Navy this week, 1 month ahead of the customer agreed delivery date.

All parties have collaboratively worked to maintain momentum on the project

and deliver this essential project for the MOD. The project adapted working practices to ensure health and safety of all staff following new government and construction industry guidelines related to Covid-19.

Of particular importance was ensuring that disruption to public highway was kept to an absolute minimum and that the work did not disrupt Navy flying operations. DIO's approach ensured that the Navy was able to continue all of their critical outputs while the work was taking place. Navy was also able to continue with activities including Navy Air Day which is a huge public event.

Simon Jones, DIO Senior Project Manager, said:

DIO is proud to deliver this project at RNAS Yeovilton which has improved the infrastructure and buildings on the site. We used our expertise throughout DIO along with our partners Mott Macdonald and Galliford Try Ltd to deliver this technically challenging project.

The project team worked together collaboratively to overcome a range of construction challenges which required continual rescheduling and working in multiple areas simultaneously to complete the project ahead of schedule especially in these unprecedented times.

I am very proud how all parties pulled together to complete their respective tasks for this Defence project.

Mark Wusthoff, Area Director for Galliford Try Building South West, said:

We are delighted to have worked with the DIO and Mott Macdonald at RNAS Yeovilton, delivering another technically challenging project at the world-leading facility.

The safe and successful completion of our works, ahead of schedule, against the backdrop of the pandemic, is testament to the collaborative approach employed between all parties.

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**[British High Commissioner meets
Special Adviser to the Prime Minister](#)**

on health ahead of the Global Vaccines Summit in the UK

World news story

The UK has pledged a record funding of £1.65 billion to GAVI, the Global Vaccine Alliance, which distributes vaccines in the poorest countries.



British High Commissioner Christian Turner with the Special Adviser to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Health Dr Zafar Mirza

British High Commissioner Christian Turner met with the Special Adviser to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Health Dr Zafar Mirza today to exchange views on the eve of the virtual Global Vaccines Summit being hosted by the UK on 4 June.

The UK has pledged a record funding of £1.65 billion to GAVI, the Global Vaccine Alliance, which distributes vaccines in the poorest countries. The UK aims to raise a further £7 billion through the Vaccines Summit to support GAVI's important work and in the virtual summit to ensure that a corona vaccine is available for all countries, including Pakistan.

In the meeting, Dr Zafar Mirza pledged Pakistan's participation and support to the Global Summit including Prime Minister's Imran Khan's call for 'people's vaccine against COVID19 and thanked the High Commissioner for UK's help to Pakistan in fighting coronavirus including immediate health and humanitarian assistance.

During the meeting, the British High Commissioner Christian Turner said;

This is a global pandemic which needs a global response to find a global vaccine made available for all. I am pleased that the UK is co-hosting the Global Vaccines Summit to ensure that; and to support PM Imran Khan's call for a people's vaccine against Covid19.

The UK and Pakistan is the best example of international friendship – and that matters more than ever now. In Pakistan, we are repurposing our multi-million pound UK aid programme to help defeat this terrible virus and mitigate its impacts.

SAPM Health Zafar Mirza said;

The Government of Pakistan fully supports this very important initiative. GAVI needs to be strengthened and its funding for the next 5 years needs to be ensured. Pakistan is also one the largest recipients of GAVI and we're thankful to the UK and other donors for their impactful work in immunising children.

We look forward to the development of Coronavirus Vaccine and its equitable distribution to all countries. PM Khan has already given a call for 'people's vaccine' to be available to all.

Note to editors:

- The UK has so far pledged £764 million of UK aid to end the coronavirus pandemic as quickly as possible. By preventing the virus from spreading in vulnerable countries, we will save millions of lives around the world and reduce the risk of future waves of infection.
- Prime Minister Boris Johnson committed record funding of £250m at the Coronavirus Global Response Initiative the UK co-hosted in May to raise funding for research and development into vaccines, effective treatments and better testing.
- The UK is proud to pledge £1.65 billion to Gavi for 2021-2025. This will support Gavi's mission to immunise a further 300 million children and save up to 8 million lives.
- Gavi is a major investment for the UK and this has paid dividends, over 760 million of the world's poorest children have been vaccinated through Gavi support since 2000, saving 13 million lives whilst promoting global health security and greater primary healthcare. The UK is proud to have played a significant role in delivering these extraordinary results, through our contributions to Gavi since its inception, in 2000. We remain committed to prioritising the interests of the world's most vulnerable and disadvantaged people.
- As hosts of the 2020 Global Vaccine Summit, our priority will be to help Gavi secure the funding it needs to further deliver its life-saving work. The UK will also demonstrate its continued leadership in global health, innovation, technology and private finance mobilisation.
- Pakistan is the largest recipient of Gavi support with over US\$ 929 million disbursed for immunisation between 2000 and 2016; £20.2 million disbursed in 2018/2019. The UK share of disbursements to Pakistan amounts to approximately £154 million for the investment period 2016-2020.
- Around 84% of Gavi support in Pakistan is for vaccines, including inactivated polio virus, measles, pentavalent, pneumococcal vaccines and

Rotavirus vaccine which was introduced in 2016

- The UK is repurposing its Department for International Development (DFID) aid programme to focus on coronavirus. This includes providing immediate health and humanitarian assistance to detect the virus, boost local health systems, and protect communities.
- UK aid helps to tackle the global challenges of our time and is building a safer, healthier, more prosperous world.
- UK aid is funding a £2.67 million package to the World Health Organization (WHO) to help to improve the preventive, testing and treatment services in 27 districts across all five provinces of Pakistan.
- UK aid has given £1 million to the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) in Pakistan to tackle swarms of locusts up until 30 September 2020.
- The UK aid is also giving funding of £2.5m to the Pakistan Humanitarian Pooled Fund (PHPF) through OCHA which is linked to strategic objectives outlined in the Pakistan Preparedness and Response Plan and Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) for Pakistan.
- In partnership with the UN Joint Programs team £888,337 is being provided to fund psychosocial support services for women and girls who face violence in the home, as well as raising awareness for precautionary measures against coronavirus and its symptoms.

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For further information

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[unable to retrieve full-text content] Latest information and actions from the Education and Skills Funding Agency for academies, schools, colleges, local authorities and further education providers

Homes England agrees funding packages worth £300m to accelerate delivery of 20,000 London homes

- In Brent Cross, a £148 million funding facility will fund land and infrastructure works needed to unlock delivery of 6,700 homes.
- At Silvertown Quays, a £105m debt facility will unlock a minimum of 3,000 homes.
- At Barking Riverside, a £56 million funding package will deliver upfront infrastructure for the 10,000-home scheme.

Homes England, the government's housing agency, has agreed funding packages totalling £309 million to accelerate construction at three major London housing developments.

The three schemes, in Brent Cross, Silvertown and Barking Riverside, have a total capacity for up to 20,000 new homes.

The loan funding, from the government's £4.5 billion Home Building Fund, will enable the schemes to invest in infrastructure necessary to speed up the construction of thousands of new homes in the capital.

In Brent Cross, a £148 million funding facility will enable the Brent Cross South Limited Partnership (BXS LP) – a partnership between Barnet Council and developer Argent Related – to fund the land and infrastructure works needed to unlock the delivery of 6,700 homes. The homes will be delivered approximately four years faster than they would have been without the funding, on a 180-acre brownfield site which stretches from the North Circular Road to Cricklewood Lane between Hendon Way and the Edgware Road. In addition, BXS LP will deliver Grade A office space and retail as well as leisure facilities, new schools, community facilities and new and improved parks, altogether providing for 25,000 jobs.

The Silvertown Partnership, consisting of an affiliate of Starwood Capital Group and Lendlease, will use a £105 million debt facility to unlock a minimum of 3,000 new homes at Silvertown Quays. The major 62-acre brownfield development in the Royal Docks, Newham, also has planning approval for office, brand, retail and leisure space. Millennium Mills, a former mill and local landmark, will be brought back to life and a new pedestrian and cycle bridge across Royal Victoria Dock will link the site to Custom House Crossrail station to make it one of the best-connected regeneration sites of its size in London. By providing finance that will help tackle high up-front infrastructure costs, Homes England's investment will also support the restoration of Millennium Mills and the dock walls themselves, which have previously been a barrier to development of the scheme.

Lastly, Homes England has agreed a funding package worth £56 million to deliver upfront infrastructure at Barking Riverside, a 179-hectare development of over 10,000 new homes. Homes England's funding will support the acceleration of the provision of services, roads and social infrastructure, as well as helping unlock previously challenging areas of the site and increasing potential capacity by an additional 1,000-2,000 homes. Barking Riverside is being delivered by Barking Riverside Limited, a joint venture between the Mayor of London and housing association L&Q, who have committed to providing a wide range of housing tenures and up to 50 percent affordable housing. Plans for Barking Riverside also include 65,000 square metres of commercial and leisure space, as well as healthcare facilities, seven new schools, large public open spaces and a new London Overground station.

Housing Minister Rt Hon Christopher Pincher MP said:

"Our commitment to get Britain building is central to the mission of this Government, which is why last month I ensured home building can restart in a way that is safe.

"This investment from our £4.5 billion fund is a real statement of intent, delivering up to 20,000 homes, thousands of jobs, and putting in place the schools, retail and leisure spaces needed to form strong, vibrant communities."

Gordon More, Chief Investments Officer at Homes England, said:

"Despite the unusual and challenging situation the housebuilding sector, and indeed the whole country, is currently facing, Homes England remains open for business and committed to helping our partners deliver much-needed new homes.

"By investing in projects on this scale and allowing funding to be recycled into future phases of development, we are able to support significant schemes where commercial lenders may not. This means these three major developments can invest in the infrastructure they need to deliver in these uncertain times and accelerate the delivery of new homes."

André Gibbs, Joint CEO of Brent Cross South DM, said:

"This loan will assist in funding the infrastructure required to deliver 6,700 new homes as well as 3 million square feet of state-of-the-art offices, support retail and public amenities. At this challenging time, it is a great boost to the project that will allow us to maintain momentum and to secure the earliest possible delivery of vital homes."

Graham Stark, Project Director for Silvertown Quays at Lendlease, said:

"This facility will support the creation of a brand-new piece of the city at a location with immense potential. By reviving the last major underdeveloped site in the Royal Docks, we will be creating a superb new development with the ability to generate considerable benefits for the local community."

Matthew Carpen, Managing Director of Barking Riverside Limited, comments:

“This funding represents an important new partnership as we push forward in the delivery of necessary infrastructure, world-class public realm and new facilities for the local community and London as a whole. Up to 50 percent of the homes unlocked will be affordable, with significantly enhanced connectivity and increased opportunities for local people and future residents.”

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