

Defence Secretary and Qatari Defence Minister unveil new Joint Hawk Squadron

Press release

The new squadron will deliver training to British and Qatari pilots.



Two Hawk jets over RAF Leeming

Defence Secretary, Ben Wallace MP and the Qatari Minister of State for Defence, His Excellency Dr Khalid bin Mohamed Al Attiyah, have unveiled a new Joint Hawk Training Squadron at RAF Leeming in Yorkshire.

This new Joint Squadron builds on years of close partnership between the Royal Air Force and the Qatari Emiri Air Force (QEAF).

The Squadron will deliver advanced and high-speed jet training to QEAF and RAF pilots in the new Hawks. This will greatly enhance the capabilities of the two Air Forces and improve their ability to operate together.

The Defence Secretary and His Excellency Dr Khalid, a trained fast-jet pilot, travelled to RAF Leeming to see the rollout of BAE Systems' new Hawk Mk167 jet.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:

The UK's defence relationship with Qatar is strong and enduring and it has been a great pleasure to welcome His Excellency Dr Khalid to RAF Leeming.

The new Joint Hawk Squadron not only delivers greater prosperity for British industry, it will also allow our Armed Forces to build stronger relationships and create opportunities for further engagement with our Gulf partners in the future.

Qatar is among the UK's closest partners in the Gulf region. Our Armed Forces work together to address shared security challenges and common threats in the region and beyond. Our defence relationship helps to improve regional stability in the Gulf and helps to ensure the security of the UK.

Training at RAF Leeming is already underway and the first four QEAF student pilots began Hawk training in October. The Squadron will aim to train eight Qatari pilots a year, with RAF student pilots due to join the Squadron in 2022 to train alongside their Qatari counterparts.

The new Joint Hawk Training Squadron builds on the great success of the UK-Qatar Joint Typhoon Squadron based at RAF Coningsby. This Squadron aims to train up to 20 Qatari pilots ahead of the delivery of Typhoons to Qatar in 2023.

Qatar has ordered nine Hawk Mk167 aircraft, which are manufactured in Lancashire by BAE Systems. This is part of a £6 billion package which also includes 24 Typhoons and bespoke training.

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