

News story: RAF helicopters ready to support French in Mali

The helicopters, from RAF Odiham, are providing niche logistical support to French combat forces conducting counter-terrorism operations as part of Operation Barkhane. UK forces have built three temporary aircraft hangers on the ground, enabling the Chinooks to fly multiple missions each week.

Armed Forces minister Mark Lancaster said:

This deployment demonstrates the vital role our Armed Forces play, working alongside our French allies to tackle terrorism and reduce threats to European and UK security.

The deployment is in addition to the UK's long-standing support of UN, EU and G5 Sahel Joint Force operations in Mali aimed at preventing extremists from using the ungoverned space in the Sahel to plan and launch attacks on Europe, as well as countering the illegal trade in people, drugs, weapons and wildlife.

Minister for Africa Harriett Baldwin said:

This helicopter deployment demonstrates the UK's commitment to do more in the Sahel, alongside £50m of UK Aid providing lifesaving humanitarian support, and a bigger diplomatic network.