

News story: RAF Typhoons intercept Russian fighters in Estonia

The RAF jets scrambled yesterday (Thursday 30 May) to intercept two Russian SU-30 Flanker fighters, two SU-24 Fencer attack aircraft and an AN-12 transport aircraft flying off the north coast of Estonia.

Armed Forces Minister Mark Lancaster said:

Our commitment to NATO and European security is unwavering and our brave RAF pilots have shown once again that we are ready to respond to any threat to the UK and its allies. Alongside our NATO allies, we must remain vigilant and aware of Russian military activity.

This was a routine NATO mission for the Typhoons which took over the NATO Baltic Air Policing mission from the German Air Force last month. The presence in the Baltics provides reassurance that the UK is here to work in partnership with Estonia.

A Typhoon pilot from XI(Fighter) Squadron, attached to 121 Expeditionary Air Wing (EAW), was conducting Quick Reaction Alert duty when the scramble was called. He said:

We were scrambled to intercept a group of four Russian fighters. The intercept was routine and we stayed with them for around 25 minutes during their transit from mainland Russia to the Kaliningrad oblast.

Once complete with this task we hauled off and conducted a further intercept of a Russian AN-12 aircraft travelling much lower and slower along the same route. The intercept of all five aircraft was uneventful and conducted in a professional manner throughout.

This is the fourth Quick Reaction Alert (QRA) scramble since the RAF deployed in April 2019 as part of Baltic Air Policing. The RAF operates alongside its NATO allies to deter Russian aggression and assure NATO allies of the UK's commitment to collective defence.