

# News story: UK steps up commitment to countering Daesh

44 additional Royal Engineers will deploy to Al Asad Airbase in August, increasing the UK footprint there to over 300 and bringing the total number of British troops in Iraq to over 600. The additional personnel will construct a camp of 80 housing units, a squadron headquarters and offices, freeing up coalition personnel to support counter-Daesh operations in the wider region.

Defence Secretary, Sir Michael Fallon, said:

We are stepping up our contribution to the fight against Daesh and fulfilling Britain's role as a key player in the global coalition.

Daesh is being defeated. Iraqi forces, backed by coalition airstrikes, have now liberated 70% of the territory Daesh held and the victims of its barbarism are being helped by our humanitarian support. These extra troops will help support operations to bring the defeat of Daesh a step closer.

The troops from 5 Armoured Engineer Squadron, 22 Engineer Regiment in Tidworth, are held at readiness for just such a task. They will be deployed to Iraq for around six months and have been tasked with constructing infrastructure including accommodation and offices in the coalition camp.

The deployment will increase the number of UK personnel currently supporting the multinational effort against Daesh to over 600. They are primarily involved in training Iraqi security forces in battle winning infantry, counter-IED, engineering and combat medical skills, with over 58,000 Iraqis trained so far. In addition to personnel on the ground in Iraq, RAF aircraft have carried out around 1400 strikes against Daesh from their base in Akrotiri, Cyprus.