

# Press release: UK deployment in Mali reaches the next stage

Three Royal Air Force Chinook helicopters from RAF Odiham, supported by around 90 British troops, are now on the ground and ready to begin providing logistical and troop movement support to our allies.

Armed Forces minister Mark Lancaster said:

“The UK and France have a unique security and defence relationship that has lasted for more than a century and this deployment demonstrates our shared commitment to tackling terrorism, instability and reducing threats to European security”

The Chinooks will provide niche logistical support and will also help improve safety by moving troops by air, rather than ground where they are more vulnerable to attack.

The UK has been a long-standing supporter of UN and EU military operations in Mali and has worked with international partners to prevent extremists from using the ungoverned space in the Sahel to plan and launch attacks on Europe, as well as counter the illegal trade in people, drugs, weapons and wildlife.

This is in addition to existing wider support to Africa including doubling our UN peacekeeping contribution with additional deployments to South Sudan and Somalia.