

RAF Typhoons scrambled from Ämari Air Base to intercept a Russian military transport aircraft

Royal Air Force (RAF) Typhoon fighter jets operating from Ämari Air Base in Estonia launched on Sunday 28th July to intercept a Russian IL-76 military transport aircraft that was flying close to Estonian airspace.

This is a routine NATO mission for the Typhoons which provides reassurance that the UK is here to work in partnership with Estonia.

Defence Secretary, Ben Wallace, said:

As this latest Quick Reaction Alert demonstrates, the RAF are frequently called upon to use their world class skills and capabilities to help police and protect the skies over the Baltics.

Our personnel deployed to Estonia and around the world are always ready to react to any scenario as we continue our commitment to our NATO allies.

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

We were scrambled to intercept an aircraft that was approaching Estonian airspace from the south. We identified and monitored it as it transited close to NATO airspace. This is standard protocol for aircraft that might not be communicating with Air Traffic Control or on a recognised flight plan.

We continued to escort the transport aircraft as it transited in a north direction, away from Estonian airspace.

The Royal Air Force is deployed on Operation AZOTIZE in Estonia in support of Baltic Air Policing. This is the 14th QRA scramble and intercept since the RAF took over enhanced Air Policing (eAP) from the German Air Force on 3 May 2019 as part of Baltic Air Policing. The UK operates in support of NATO to reassure our allies and is a further demonstration of the UK's commitment to the security of the region.