

## Royal Navy warships monitor significant Russian presence close to UK waters

Every move made by the Russians – a surfaced submarine, destroyer, corvette, patrol ship and their supporting tugs and supply ships – was watched closely by eight Royal Navy ships from the English Channel to the Celtic Sea in a concerted operation over the last two weeks.

First Sea Lord, Admiral Tony Radakin, said:

This is why the Royal Navy is at sea every day, protecting the UK and our interests. Even with the pressures of Covid, we remain at short notice to respond to threats both in home waters and around the world. Despite the increase in Russian activity, both on the surface and underwater, we are always ready to respond.

Type 23 frigate HMS Northumberland watched the movements of Udaloy-class destroyer, the Vice-Admiral Kulakov, as she sailed North West of the Outer Hebrides, off the west coast of Scotland.

Patrol ship HMS Severn was on duty in the English Channel and Dover Strait, where she shadowed a surfaced Kilo-class submarine, the Stary Oskol, the corvette Boikiy, patrol ship Vasiliiy Bykov and support ships.

Severn was also on patrol as the Vice-Admiral Kulakov sailed through the English Channel as she headed north.

For some of the operation, the Russian ships sheltered from bad weather within the Baie de Seine, a bay in northern France, where Severn was joined by allied French Navy ships and aircraft.

Commander Philip Harper, Commanding Officer of HMS Severn, said:

In very challenging conditions with rough weather, Severn and several other British and allied ships, have spent 20 days ensuring that Russian transiting warships remain under our watchful eyes.

HMS Lancaster joined Severn in this operation, closely tracking Steregushchiy-class corvette Boikiy in the English Channel and using her Wildcat helicopter to gather intelligence using the aircraft's powerful array of sensors.

Meanwhile, three Royal Navy warships – HMS Tyne, HMS Richmond and HMS Kent – combined to escort the same group of Russian ships as they operated in the

Celtic Sea and approaches to the South West coast of the UK.

This task group were joined by RAF Typhoon and F-35s jets, plus tankers RFA Tideforce and RFA Tiderace, which kept the allied ships replenished throughout the operations and contributed to monitoring duties while in the Irish Sea.