

## [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.

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## [News story: Ten independent chairs](#)

# announced to scrutinise modern slavery cases

Potential victims of modern slavery will receive more transparent and joined-up support thanks to plans introduced by the Home Office.

Changes to the national referral mechanism (NRM), that have now come into force, will allow an independent group of professionals to review certain cases and assess whether the right decision has been made.

People who receive a negative “conclusive grounds” decision after being referred to the NRM – the government system to identify and support victims of modern slavery – will automatically have their decision reviewed by a Multi-Agency Assurance Panel to be scrutinised.

These panels can then require the Home Office to reconsider any case where they consider an incorrect decision to have been made.

This comes as, following a pilot scheme, a new Single Competent Authority was introduced at the end of April to handle all cases referred from front line staff and to make decisions about whether somebody is a victim of modern slavery.

The expert unit within the Home Office has replaced the previous model of separate case management units in the National Crime Agency and UK Visas and Immigration.

Minister for Crime, Safeguarding and Vulnerability Victoria Atkins said:

Sadly, slavery and exploitation are not crimes of the past. They are very real and with us today.

The government is committed to stamping out this horrific crime and ensuring that victims get the support they need.

By introducing truly independent and transparent scrutiny of decisions, we can ensure that people can have confidence in the decisions taken by the national referral mechanism, and in the level of support they will receive.

Those appointed as chairs are:

- Allan Doherty
- Mike Taylor
- Joy Shakespeare
- Mary Cunneen
- Vincent Dean
- Sharon Squires

- Andrew Leonard
- Russ Middleton
- John Clements
- Alison Towns

Last year, 6,993 people were referred to the NRM.

The government is committed to ensuring victims have access to the support they need to begin re-building their lives.

In February 2019 the minimum period of support for confirmed victims was increased to 90 days, and we are in the process of implementing a range of other reforms to the NRM.

The reforms aim to improve decision-making and the support available to victims before, during and after the NRM process.

Improvements to support include introduction of places of safety for those rescued by law enforcement bodies prior to entering the NRM and implementation of post-NRM support to help victims transition to the next phase of their lives.

The improvements in support for victims sit alongside a range of measures to tackle modern slavery in the UK and overseas. These include:

- the introduction of the Modern Slavery Act in 2015, which gave law enforcement agencies better tools to tackle modern slavery and enhanced protection for victims
- requiring companies to publish transparency statements and recently announced
- a package of support to help child victims of modern slavery including a new Child Trafficking Protection Fund and the national rollout of Independent Child Trafficking Advocates (ICTAs), who provide specialised support for trafficked children
- £4 million in funding for initiatives to tackle modern slavery and labour exploitation overseas through the Modern Slavery Innovation Fund

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## **Press release: Prime Minister appoints new Independent Members to the House of Lords Appointments Commission**

The Prime Minister has confirmed the appointments of Lord Chartres (Richard), Fionnuala Jay-O'Boyle and Charles Moore as Independent Members of the House of Lords Appointments Commission (HOLAC) from 1 June 2019.

The appointments follow an open recruitment exercise.

**Rt Rev and Rt Hon Lord Richard Chartres KCVO**

Lord Chartres is a Crossbench Peer and Dean of Her Majesty's Chapels Royal. He is the former Bishop of London and held a number of wider roles during that time, including as Chair of the Board of Governors of the Church Commissioners.

**The Lord-Lieutenant of Belfast, Mrs Fionnuala Jay-O'Boyle CBE DL**

Mrs Jay-O'Boyle is the current Lord Lieutenant of the County Borough of Belfast, a member of the Advisory Board to Hillsborough Castle, and the Vice-Chair of Northern Ireland Opera. She has been involved in public and voluntary service for many years.

**Charles Moore**

Mr Moore is the Group Consulting Editor for the Telegraph Group, and a weekly columnist for The Daily Telegraph and The Spectator. He was previously editor of the Spectator, the Sunday Telegraph and the Daily Telegraph; and is the authorised biographer of Margaret Thatcher.

The Minister for the Constitution, Kevin Foster, welcomed the new Members' appointments, and thanked their predecessors:

Lord Chartres, Mrs Jay-O'Boyle and Mr Moore have demonstrated their commitment to ensuring that the House of Lords reflects the people it represents, and to acting in accordance with the seven principles of public life. I am also grateful to Lord Low of Dalston, Professor Gillian Peele and Sir Malcolm Ross for their service to the Commission.

HOLAC has two main functions:

- to recommend individuals for appointment as non-party political life peers; and to vet nominations for life peers, including those nominated by the UK political parties, to ensure the highest standards of propriety.
  - Independent Members are appointed for five year non-renewable terms. More information about HOLAC can be found on [their website](#).
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## **Press release: Residents invited to view Perry Barr and Witton flood scheme**

People living near a flood scheme being built in Sandwell Valley Country Park, to reduce flood risk in Perry Barr and Witton, are being invited to visit the site.

The £42.3m scheme is being built by the [Environment Agency](#) in partnership with Birmingham City Council and local levy funds, and is expected to be completed in September 2020. Part of the scheme involves creating a flood storage area and, when finished, it will reduce the flood risk to 1,400 properties.

Local residents are being invited to visit the scheme on 11 June to look at what is being done and to learn more about the scheme.

Josh Harris, project manager for the Environment Agency, said:

This is a major flood risk management scheme for the West Midlands and we want to keep residents updated on our progress. We hope to see plenty of people coming along to see what we're doing.

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## **News story: Minister for the Armed Forces visits Washington ahead of Presidential State Visit**

During the visit Mr Lancaster met with his counterparts the secretaries of each of the US Services, Secretary for the Air Force Dr Heather Wilson, Secretary for the Navy Mr Richard Spencer, Secretary for the Army Dr Mark Esper as well as Acting Under Secretary for Personnel and Readiness, James N.Stewart.

Discussions covered all aspects of the transatlantic defence partnership, including current operations in Europe, the Middle East and Asia, intelligence sharing, nuclear co-operation, defence procurement, and flagship joint programmes like the F-35 programme.

Minister for the Armed Forces Mark Lancaster said:

With the anniversary of D-Day just around the corner there is no better time to reflect on our historic and enduring relationship with the US. Our shared values and commitment to global security are as strong now as they were 75 years ago.

More recently we have seen joint action to defeat Daesh, degrade and deter the Syrian regime's use of chemical weapons, and provide reassurance to allies in Eastern Europe as leaders in NATO. The ability of our two militaries to work hand in glove continues to keep our citizens safe on both sides of the pond.

The US and the UK have the largest defence budgets in the world and in Europe respectively, allowing troops from both countries to train and deploy together every day with cutting-edge technology.

Today we are together combating terrorism and violent extremism in the Middle East and Africa, maintaining freedom of navigation in the Persian Gulf, providing reassurance to Allies in Europe, delivering training and support to the Ukrainian Armed Forces, undertaking counter-piracy operations off the Horn of Africa, countering the narcotic trade in South America and the Caribbean, and providing nuclear deterrence for NATO.

Next week the US President will visit the UK for a State Visit to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the D-Day landings with events taking place in both Portsmouth and Normandy. The event will pay tribute to the sacrifice of those who fought on D-Day, recognising the unparalleled international cooperation during the Normandy landings.

Nations that took part in Operation Overlord and the D-Day landings alongside the UK have been invited to attend. This includes the US, Canada, France, Australia, New Zealand, Belgium, Poland, Norway, Denmark, Netherlands, Luxembourg, Greece, and Slovakia and the Czech Republic.