

UK conducts UN sanctions enforcement to counter North Korea's weapons programmes

Press release

HMS Richmond captured evidence of ships apparently breaching UN sanctions targeting North Korea's Weapons of Mass Destruction and ballistic missile programmes.



HMS Richmond deployed to the East China Sea

HMS Richmond recently conducted operations in the East China Sea to support United Nations sanctions efforts targeted against the Democratic Republic of Korea's (DPRK) Weapons of Mass Destruction and ballistic missile programmes. The sanctions, adopted in 2017, ban the supply of fuel or refined petroleum products to DPRK.

Detaching from the UK Carrier Strike Group, currently deployed to the Indo-Pacific, the Type 23 Royal Navy frigate captured evidence of ships apparently breaching UN sanctions and collected updated intelligence on other ships of interest, providing video and photographic evidence to the UN Enforcement Coordination Cell (ECC). The operations, which were conducted and completed earlier this month, are the first occasion since 2019 that a Royal Navy ship has supported United Nations sanctions monitoring and enforcement activity.

Defence Secretary, Ben Wallace said:

HMS Richmond's deployment in the East China Sea identified ships acting in suspected breach of UN sanctions and tracked vessels which had previously not been flagged to the Enforcement Coordination Cell.

North Korea's ambitions to acquire Weapons of Mass Destruction destabilises the region and poses a threat to the world. This vital

activity, part of the Carrier Strike Group deployment to the region, has frustrated those ambitions.

The Commanding Officer, Commander Hugh Botterill MBE said:

Participating in UNSCR enforcement activity has been a critical moment of our CSG 21 deployment. HMS Richmond is proud to have participated in the effort to curtail DPRK's WMD programmes, reporting on vessels of interest and providing valuable imagery and contact data.

My team located multiple ships of various nationalities apparently acting in contravention of United Nations Security Council sanctions, and located, tracked and approached a number of ships that hadn't previously been identified to the Enforcement Coordination Cell.

Over the last month the UK Carrier Strike Group has been conducting a series of exercises with the Japanese, United States and the Republic of Korea, separate to sanctions enforcement. Signalling the UK's enduring commitment to the Indo-Pacific, the Royal Navy has also recently despatched two warships – HMS Spey and HMS Tamar – to the region to deliver a permanent force presence.

HMS Richmond is currently alongside in Japan undertaking a planned routine maintenance programme before resuming operations and defence engagement with the UK Carrier Strike Group, headed by the Royal Navy aircraft carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth.

Published 26 September 2021