

Royal Navy ships to be fitted with advanced new missile system

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Royal Navy frigates and destroyers will get a significant boost to their long-range precision strike capabilities following a new partnership between the UK and key NATO and Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF) ally, Norway.

Strengthening defence ties between the UK and Norway, the Royal Navy will receive the Naval Strike Missile (NSM), outfitted on a total of eleven Type 23 frigates and Type 45 destroyers, in a collaboration with the Norwegian government.

Measuring nearly 4 metres long, the NSMs are a fifth-generation missile using integrated sensors and autonomous target recognition to precisely strike enemy ships and targets on land at distances of more than 100 nautical miles (115 miles) at high subsonic speeds. It can elude enemy radar and defence systems by flying at sea-skimming altitude and using evasive manoeuvres.

Announcing the maritime capability upgrade, the Defence Secretary also met with Northern Group Defence Ministers on board the Royal Navy's flagship, HMS Queen Elizabeth, alongside in Oslo.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:

We have a long history of defence cooperation with Norway. This new agreement cements our partnership with one of our closest allies, whilst strengthening our Royal Navy with a new surface to surface strike capability.

Replacing the Harpoon surface-to-surface weapon, due to go out of service in 2023, the world-class anti-ship missile will be fitted to three vessels at pace and will be ready for operations onboard the first Royal Navy vessel in a little over 12 months. The collaboration will result in more ships equipped with the highly sophisticated naval strike missiles which in turn will contribute in enhancing the security in our common areas of interest.

The missile system will be integrated in UK Dockyards through Babcock and BAE with Norwegian support, the missile system is manufactured by Kongsberg Defence Aerospace.

NSM will enhance collaboration and interoperability with several of our key strategic partners. In the North Atlantic and Baltic Sea Region users, and soon to be users, include Norway, the US, Poland, Germany, and Canada. Both the US and Australia will operate NSM in the Pacific region.

Norwegian Minister of Defence Bjørn Arild Gram, said:

This is a significant task with an ambitious timeline. Both nations have established a designated team with a strong mandate to ensure the success of this common effort. The Norwegian company Kongsberg Defence & Aerospace is supporting the joint team with their expertise and the planned integration on the UK vessels.

The meeting of Northern Group Defence Ministers on HMS Queen Elizabeth, will see discussions on the implications of Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine, security developments in Northern Europe, and Sweden and Finland's NATO membership applications.

The Northern Group is a UK initiative which aims to promote more coherent, efficient and effective defence and security co-operation in northern Europe. It comprises 12 nations; Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Sweden and the UK.

[TRA launches review of cast iron articles \(street gratings and drain access covers\)](#)

News story

On Wed 23 November, the Trade Remedies Authority launched a transition review into anti-dumping measures on imports of certain cast iron articles from China.



These [measures](#) are among those inherited from the EU system and the TRA is reviewing them to establish whether they are still suitable for the UK's needs. The [review](#) will establish whether the measures are needed to protect the UK industry for these products).

These products are the cast-iron covers and gratings commonly seen on road surfaces and pavements to cover access to ground or sub-surface systems. These access covers have been around since 3500BC, with the Ancient Romans as early adopters. Modern drainage system access covers were developed during the 19th century and along with their vital functional role, act as historic markers for streets and can reveal a lot about the history of an area.

The TRA's review

The TRA's investigation begins on Wed 23 November and will review the UK production of these products and levels of imports. The TRA will look at a period of investigation from 1 October 2021 until 30 September 2022, while the injury period will be 1 October 2018 until 30 September 2022. You can find out more about the product types in scope of the TRA's review on the [TRA's public file](#).

Imports to the UK market from China were valued at around £3.3 million in 2021. China is however only the third-largest importer of this product to the UK over recent years, with Turkey as the largest. Businesses that may be affected by this review (such as importers or exporters of the products or UK producers of similar products) can contribute to the review process by registering their interest in the case on the [TRA's online case platform](#) by 8 December 2022. All new developments in the case will be posted on the TRA's public file. [View further information on the TRA's current investigations](#), including transition reviews like this one.

Background information

- The Trade Remedies Authority is the UK body that investigates whether new trade remedy measures are needed to counter unfair import practices and unforeseen surges of imports.
- Dumping occurs when goods are imported into a country and sold at a price that is below their normal value in their country of export.
- [Transition reviews into former EU measures](#) determine if a transitioned measure should be varied or revoked according to whether the continuing application of an anti-dumping or countervailing duty is necessary

or sufficient to offset the dumping of imports of subsidised goods into the UK; and whether there would be injury to the UK producers of those goods if an anti-dumping duty or countervailing duty were no longer to apply to those goods.

- Trade remedy investigations were carried out by the EU Commission on the UK's behalf until the UK left the EU. 44 EU trade remedy measures of interest to UK producers were carried across into UK law when the UK left the EU and the TRA is currently reviewing each one to establish whether it is suitable for UK needs.
- Period of Investigation – when we are investigating dumping and subsidy cases, we will use a period of investigation of around a year. We will aim for the end point to be as close as possible to the date of initiation. However, we will decide this on a case-by-case basis.
- Period of injury – the injury period will usually cover the period of investigation and normally the 36 months immediately before this (i.e., 48 months in total). TRA investigators look at evidence of injury over a longer period than the general period of investigation so that they can assess trends and other factors in more detail than if they looked at a single year.

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COP15 – UK nature agencies set out vision to restore nature to avoid ‘profound threat to humanity’s future’

The UK's leading nature agencies have today set out their plan to boost nature recovery at home and abroad ahead of the key international biodiversity summit in Montreal taking place next month.

In a joint statement the UK's six official nature conservation bodies said that there has never been a more critical time to invest in restoring and enhancing nature across the UK and stressed how the economy cannot thrive without progressing environmental protections.

At an event at the Royal Society in London, nature conservation agencies from England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland stressed that we must expand our ambition to achieve the UK's commitment to halt species decline, go further and faster on nature recovery and do much more to align action to halt and reverse biodiversity loss, and tackle climate change.

The statement was made at an event hosted by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) at the Royal Society in London in the run up to the 15th Convention on Biological Diversity which is due to take place in Montreal, Canada next month, after two years of delay.

At the event, the UK's six nature conservation agencies pledge to support governments, businesses and society to work together to:

- Commit to ambitious global targets at COP15 to enhance biodiversity
- Support governments around the world on nature recovery with the UK's world-leading knowledge and skills in the nature sector
- Drive public and private investment in nature-based solutions
- Embed environmental security and nature recovery into all decision making
- Deliver on the UK government's policies to protect and enhance nature

Many of these commitments have been driven by the ground-breaking [Nature Positive 2030 research](#) which was published at the COP26 Climate Summit in Glasgow last year and shows through a series of case studies how nature recovery is not just necessary, but also achievable and affordable.

Tony Juniper, Natural England Chair said:

Next month's meeting of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity represents the best and last chance we have to halt and reverse the decline of Nature around the world. This isn't just about saving rare species, it's about sustaining the web of life upon which humankind ultimately depends, for food, water, health and climate regulation. Safeguarding all of that means that as the world charts a route to low carbon it must at the same time go high Nature.

We will support the UK Governments to bring countries together and agree an ambitious plan for the recovery of the natural world backed by strong targets for 2030, making this a 'Paris moment' for Nature. The meeting has the chance to significantly increase the mobilisation of resources to implement such a plan. We know from numerous examples of nature recovery that we have helped deliver that this will be money well spent, and certainly cheaper than dealing with the consequences of not taking action".

Minister for International Nature, Lord Benyon said:

A healthy natural environment is the cornerstone of a healthy climate, secure and clean water supplies and a resilient food supply.

Only by working collaboratively together, sharing knowledge and arguing for high ambition we will achieve a set of robust commitments in Montreal which restore the natural world and tackle

the twin challenges of nature loss and climate change

At the Royal Society event the leaders of the UK's nature conservation agencies said that they stand ready to support the four UK Governments both as advisers and as delivery partners.

At the COP27 UN Climate Change Conference which concluded last week in Egypt, the UK government set out its ambitious commitments to recover the UK's nature and provide a secure, sustainable future for all.

Further information:

- The Convention on Biological Diversity is a summit which usually takes place every two years and is attended by the countries which signed up to the Convention on Biological Diversity at an Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. At the summit countries will agree actions to tackle biodiversity loss, set global targets and monitor progress towards them.
- Leading figures from all of the UK's nature conservation bodies were in attendance at the Royal Society event in London hosted by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) including Natural England, Natural Resources Wales, NatureScot, Council for Nature and the Countryside (Northern Ireland) and DAERA (NI).

[UK concerned about Russian violations of international humanitarian law: UK statement to the OSCE](#)

Thank you to both co-chairs for hosting this joint Permanent Council-Forum for Security Cooperation (PC-FSC) meeting on this important issue. I wish to thank the two speakers for their interventions. The UK continues to fully support the crucial work of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and its unique role in upholding International Humanitarian Law (IHL). It is vital that we all uphold our commitments on IHL.

Since the start of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, we have been seriously concerned about Russian violations of International Humanitarian Law. The [two Moscow Mechanism reports](#) show we were right to be concerned. The reports noted "clear patterns of serious violations of IHL attributable mostly to the Russian armed forces". Including the magnitude and frequency of the indiscriminate attacks. Carried out against civilians and civilian objects. Reports of torture. The execution of civilians. Unlawful detention. Enforced disappearances. Targeting civilians on their streets, in their cars, on their bicycles, on their balconies and in their homes. Victim-activated booby traps. The rape of women. The rape of children. Violence towards men. The

killing of journalists. Targeting of hospitals, of schools. The use of cluster munitions. Shallow graves. The threat of cholera. The use of filtration centres. These constitute an affront to humanity.

Furthermore, [ODIHR's Interim Report](#) expressed "clear concern" for Russia's "general disregard" for the "basic principles of distinction, proportionality and precautions set out by IHL, which may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity".

Mr Chair, the targeting of critical civilian infrastructure has continued since these reports were published. Russia is trying to maximise civilian hardship over winter. Last week up to 10 million households were left without electricity. Water supplies have been hit. And we know that vulnerable groups suffer disproportionately – be it the elderly, those with medical conditions or disabilities. As President Putin will be aware, attacks which disproportionately kill civilians, and destroy objects indispensable to the survival of civilians, are prohibited under international humanitarian law. Evidence of war crimes has been mounting including in Bucha, Irpin Borodianka and Izyum with more and more allegations coming to light in Kherson. These actions are morally bankrupt.

Both Moscow Mechanism reports document acts of sexual violence carried out by members of the Russian Armed Forces. This evidence exists because of the bravery of survivors, who, by telling their stories, break down stigma and enable justice. Their courage is striking when juxtaposed with the cowardice of their attackers, who hide behind propaganda spread by Russian government officials. Denying crimes of sexual violence is tantamount to defending them. Colleagues, I repeat the message that the UK has delivered many times: the use of sexual violence as a weapon is a war crime. We, the international community, will end impunity for sexual violence and hold those responsible to account.

And it is not only civilians suffering. There is mounting evidence that Russia has failed to abide by its obligations under the [third Geneva Convention](#) – that all prisoners of war should be treated humanely, afforded appropriate medical treatment and basic necessities, and be protected from humiliating and degrading treatment. The UN Officer of the High Commissioner of Human Rights has documented the use by Russian forces in Ukraine of prolonged beatings, dog attacks and putting people in stress positions. Mr Chair – Wars have rules and these prohibit a detaining power from prosecuting prisoners of war for having participated in hostilities, or for lawful acts of war committed in the course of armed conflict.

We need accountability. Those members of the Russian Government and individual members of the Russian military who have breached international humanitarian law and committed war crimes must be held to account. We are working through the OSCE, with Ukraine's Prosecutor General and with international bodies like the International Criminal Court to pursue accountability for these crimes. The countless victims of Russia's illegal invasion deserve justice.

In closing, every day since the 24 February, we have seen the tragic

consequences in Ukraine of Russia's aggression, but every day we have also been reminded of the courage and resilience of the Ukrainian people. The United Kingdom will continue to do everything we can to support Ukraine, including through diplomacy, humanitarian aid and supporting accountability. The single biggest step to preventing further breaches of international humanitarian law in the OSCE area would be for Russia to withdraw fully and unconditionally from the whole territory of Ukraine. Let us ensure that becomes a reality.