



By: TA | AP Insight

UK expands military support for Saudi Arabia against Houthis



Britain announced Tuesday that it is expanding military support for Saudi Arabia against the **Houthis** to include “defensive” air patrols by Royal Air Force jets, but stressed there is no military solution to the conflict.

Defense Secretary Wes Streeting said Royal Air Force Typhoon jets will “conduct defensive counter-air operations over Saudi Arabia, helping to protect Saudi cities, civilian populations and critical national infrastructure” from missiles and drones fired by the Iran-backed rebels in Yemen.

That means the British planes would try to shoot down missiles or drones in the air, but Streeting said the British planes won’t strike Houthi targets on the ground.

The U.K. will also send a military transport plane and an unspecified number of military advisers to Saudi Arabia, Streeting said.

The announcement follows **Britain’s decision** last month to offer in-air refueling of Saudi planes operating against the Houthis. That mission is being extended by another 90 days, Streeting said.

The conflict between the Houthis and Yemen’s Saudi-backed government has reignited, with the Houthis aiming missile and drone strikes at Saudi Arabia, against which the oil-rich kingdom has struggled to defend itself.

The country’s main **international airport** in Riyadh was struck several times earlier this month.

There is no long-term military solution to the conflict in Yemen

Streeting called the attacks “despicable” and said targeting the airport showed “the lengths the Houthis are going to to escalate the situation in the region.”

The Associated Press **reported** last month that Saudi Arabia had asked its allies, including

France, Britain, Pakistan and Egypt to deploy air-defense support to the region to help defend against missiles and drones fired by Houthis and other Iran-backed groups.

The U.S., which bombed the Houthis under the Biden and Trump administrations, has declined to do the same this time around.

We continue to support a U.N.-led political process as the best route to a durable peace - Wes Streeting

Streeting said in a written statement to Parliament that “the government remains clear that there is no long-term military solution to the conflict in Yemen.”

“We continue to support a U.N.-led political process as the best route to a durable peace,” he said.

Yemen first plunged into civil war in 2014, when the Houthis seized Sanaa and much of northern Yemen and forced the government into exile.

A Saudi-led coalition intervened the following year in an attempt to restore the government to power. The conflict created one of the world’s worst humanitarian disasters, and killed more than 150,000 people.

Britain was not being dragged in to the conflict

Prime Minister Andy Burnham’s spokesman denied Britain was being dragged in to the conflict.

“Our support for Saudi Arabia is considered, proportionate and focused on helping them defend themselves from relentless Houthi attacks,” spokesperson Tom Wells said.



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Egypt has also announced military assistance, saying it will provide “all possible forms of support” to help Saudi Arabia “defend its security and stability.”

The Egyptian government will deploy air defense systems and aircraft to help intercept missiles and drones fired toward the kingdom, a regional official briefed on the matter said.

The official said Egypt’s support would be defensive and would not include deploying ground troops to Yemen. He spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to reporters.

President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi said Saturday that his government would take “any measure” to defend Saudi Arabia and called for parliament to convene to authorize the deployment of troops and military equipment.

Parliament held two days of deliberations and is scheduled to reconvene for a vote next week.