

British jets 'played their part' in defending Israel: UK

AFP – UK armed forces “played their part in attempts to prevent further escalation” after Iran fired a barrage of missiles at Israel, the British government said Wednesday.

Two Royal Air Force Typhoon jets and a Voyager air-to-air refuelling tanker were involved in the operation to support Israel late Tuesday, the Ministry of Defence said in a statement.

“Due to the nature of this attack, they did not engage any targets, but they played an important part in wider deterrence and efforts to prevent further escalation,” it said.

The UK performed a similar role in April, when Iran last attacked Israel with missiles and drones, with reports then that Royal Air Force (RAF) jets helped to shoot down some of the drones.

In a statement late Tuesday, Defence Secretary John Healey condemned Iran’s latest actions.

“British forces have this evening played their part in attempts to prevent further escalation in the Middle East,” he said.

“The UK stands fully behind Israel’s right to defend its country and its people against threats.”

On Wednesday, Healey visited Cyprus, where Britain has a major military base, to meet UK troops who are also preparing for the possibility of evacuating British citizens from Lebanon.

Hundreds of British military personnel have been deployed to the island in preparation for a potential evacuation after the launch of Israel’s ground offensive against its neighbour.

The UK is planning for a possible evacuation in case the fighting leads to the closure of Beirut's airport.

Foreign Secretary David Lammy confirmed Wednesday that the first charter flight taking British nationals out of Lebanon "has now departed".

"We have arranged another flight for tomorrow (Thursday), and further flights over the coming days for as long as there is demand and it is safe to do so," he wrote on X.

Lammy urged all British nationals still in Lebanon to register with the UK foreign ministry and "leave the country immediately".

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