

UK to supply \$286 million in military equipment to Kyiv

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Online Desk : Britain on Thursday unveiled a package of £225 million (\$286 million) in new military aid to Ukraine for next year, including drones, boats and air defense systems. The move came after the UK's Defense Secretary John Healey visited Kyiv on Wednesday, holding talks with his Ukrainian counterpart Rustem Umerov and vowing to step up British support to Ukraine in 2025. Three years since Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered the invasion of Ukraine "the depths of his miscalculation are clearer than ever, as the brave people of Ukraine continue to defy all expectations with their unbreakable spirit," Healey said.

"But they cannot go it alone," Healey added, vowing the UK's support for Kyiv was "ironclad" and Britain would always stand "shoulder to shoulder to ensure Putin cannot win." In July, the new Labour government vowed to commit £3 billion a year in military aid to Ukraine until 2030-2031. The new package will include £92 million for equipment to bolster Ukraine's navy, including small boats, reconnaissance drones and uncrewed surface vessels, the defense ministry said in a statement.

A further £68 million will be used for air defense equipment including radars, and 1,000 counter-drone electronic warfare systems at a cost of £39 million would be supplied to the Ukrainian army. Healey said the UK would also boost a training program for Ukrainian soldiers run with key allies on British soil known as Operation Interflex, under which 51,000 recruits have been trained since mid-2022. "With Putin resorting to sending as many as 2,000 Russian soldiers to their deaths on the battlefield each day, it is critical that Ukraine is supported with a supply of properly trained and equipped soldiers," the ministry statement said.

Umerov thanked the UK for its support and said in a statement that the "stable delivery of ammunition, especially for artillery, is critically important for our defense efforts." He added the two men had reviewed the results of the use of Storm Shadow missiles, without providing details. London gave Kyiv the green light to launch the UK-supplied, long-range missiles into Russia for the first time in November. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky was due to meet NATO chief Mark Rutte and key European leaders in Brussels late Wednesday to strategise over Russia's war ahead of Donald Trump's return to power in the United States. Western backers are seeking to shore up Ukraine's forces as Kyiv's fatigued troops are losing ground across the frontline and Moscow has deployed North Koreans to the battlefield.

Source : Arab News