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Royal Navy Helicopter Conducts Live-Fire Drill Off Indian Coast

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A Royal Navy helicopter from HMS *Prince of Wales* has carried out a live-fire training exercise off the coast of India, as part of the UK's ongoing Operation HIGHMAST deployment. The exercise involved a Wildcat helicopter from 815 Naval Air Squadron and formed part of a series of operational drills designed to enhance readiness and cooperation with regional partners.

The training took place in international waters and was confirmed by defense sources as a controlled and routine exercise. The helicopter engaged in live-fire drills against sea-based targets, demonstrating its ability to respond to potential threats during maritime patrols. These exercises are a regular feature of carrier group deployments, aimed at maintaining sharp operational standards among crews and flight teams.

The activity forms part of the UK-led Operation HIGHMAST, an eight-month deployment that spans the Mediterranean, the Middle East, and the Indo-Pacific. The carrier strike group, which includes multiple allied vessels and aircraft, is engaging in a range of joint training missions intended to deepen defense ties with countries across the region. The visit to Indian waters reflects an ongoing effort to strengthen UK-India military cooperation through exercises and port calls.

The Wildcat helicopter used in the exercise is equipped for a range of roles, including surveillance, reconnaissance, and armed response. It can carry Martlet and Sea Venom missiles, as well as a general-purpose machine gun, making it a flexible asset in both defensive and deterrent roles.

No incidents or safety concerns were reported during the training, and the Royal Navy stressed that the exercise was conducted according to international protocols. The live-fire drill serves as part of the UK's broader commitment to regional stability and maritime security in the Indo-Pacific, especially at a time when strategic interest in the region continues to grow.

While such exercises are not uncommon, they underline the UK's intention to remain engaged with global partners and maintain a visible

presence in key maritime areas through regular, transparent military cooperation.