

## UK Defence Industry Eyes New Typhoon Jet Orders to Safeguard Jobs and Capability

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BAE Systems has expressed confidence in securing further export orders for its Eurofighter Typhoon jets, which could lead to the production of up to 150 additional aircraft. The move would help protect hundreds of skilled jobs at the company's Warton facility in Lancashire and strengthen the UK's defence manufacturing base.

The aerospace firm stated that two-thirds of these potential new orders could be fulfilled through domestic production, providing a much-needed boost for the British defence sector. The timing is crucial, as concerns have been raised over a temporary halt in final assembly at Warton due to a gap in confirmed contracts.

Unite, the UK's leading aerospace and defence trade union, has criticised the lack of government action to place new orders, warning that jobs could be lost if the Ministry of Defence does not act. The union has urged ministers to commission a fresh batch of Typhoon jets to maintain industrial continuity ahead of the introduction of the next-generation Global Combat Air Programme (GCAP).

Richard Hamilton, Managing Director for Europe and International at BAE Systems, noted that talks are ongoing with several international partners, including Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Qatar. He highlighted that the Typhoon remains a highly capable and competitive aircraft, particularly with recent upgrades to its radar, avionics, and weapons systems.

The Typhoon, which continues to serve as a core element of both UK and allied air forces, is undergoing enhancements that are expected to keep it operational into the 2040s. A recent £135 million contract to upgrade weapons and sensor systems further strengthens the jet's position in global markets.

While the UK government has prioritised F-35 procurement in recent years, BAE Systems remains hopeful that both export contracts and domestic orders will be secured. The company has stated that it will redeploy staff where possible to avoid redundancies but emphasised the need for long-term planning.

Trade union leaders have warned that allowing production lines to run cold would not only put jobs at risk but also weaken the UK's sovereign defence capability. Sharon Graham, General Secretary of Unite, described the government's failure to act as "an act of national self-harm."

The Typhoon programme is not just an industrial concern; it remains central to maintaining the UK's strategic independence, aerospace skills base, and global defence partnerships. Securing new orders is now essential for preserving both capability and credibility.