

## Member of Parliamentary Call for Royal Navy to Step Up Patrols in the Baltic Sea to Counter Russian Threats

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The House of Commons Defence Committee has urged the UK to increase Royal Navy patrols in the Baltic Sea, citing escalating Russian maritime activity and the growing risk to undersea infrastructure. The report calls for greater investment in naval readiness and an enhanced leadership role within the UK-led Joint Expeditionary Force.

A new report from the House of Commons Defence Committee has raised concerns over the UK's current naval posture in the Baltic region, warning that inconsistent patrols are leaving vital undersea infrastructure vulnerable to sabotage and interference from hostile powers, particularly Russia. In light of rising tensions and repeated incidents in Northern European waters, MPs are now calling for a more consistent Royal Navy presence, better surveillance capabilities, and deeper regional cooperation.

Royal Navy vessels, including offshore and inshore patrol boats under the Coastal Forces Squadron, have previously participated in Baltic exercises such as mine detection and maritime surveillance. However, these deployments have been sporadic. The committee argues that more frequent and visible patrols are required to deter Russia's increasingly aggressive posture, which has included submarine incursions and suspected tampering with energy pipelines and data cables.

The report recommends strengthening the UK's role within the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF), a British-led defence coalition composed of Nordic and Baltic countries. The committee views the JEF as a critical platform for regional maritime security and wants to see it leveraged more effectively. This includes expanding joint patrols and enhancing the deployment of maritime drones and surveillance systems capable of monitoring undersea activity.

Defence experts believe that a more consistent presence in the region is necessary to maintain deterrence. Committee chair Tan Dhesi MP noted that Russian activity poses a "clear and persistent threat" to regional stability and that the UK must play a leading role in protecting vital infrastructure in the North and Baltic Seas. His comments reflect broader

concerns about the Royal Navy's capacity to respond to grey zone threats without additional investment in suitable patrol and countermeasure vessels.

While the Ministry of Defence has supported initiatives such as Operation Nordic Warden and NATO's Baltic Sentry, the committee argues these efforts must be expanded and made permanent. However, concerns remain that under the current Labour government, defence priorities risk being deprioritised in favour of politically safer domestic agendas. There has been little indication from ministers that Baltic security is a funding priority, despite clear signs of increased Russian provocation.

The report concludes that long-term investment in maritime patrol capabilities and forward deployment strategies is essential if the UK is to maintain credibility as a security guarantor in Europe's northern waters. Without decisive action, Britain risks ceding critical ground to adversaries at a time when unity and deterrence are more important than ever.