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U.K. to Send Helicopters to Ukraine For 'First' Time

By AFP

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Britain is to send helicopters to Ukraine for the first time since Russia's invasion, the defense ministry in London said on Wednesday.

Ten crews of Ukrainian service personnel and engineers underwent a six-week training program in the U.K., as part of the "first helicopter capability the U.K. has donated to Ukraine," the ministry said.

In addition to the three former British military Sea King helicopters, the first of which has already arrived, the U.K. will also supply an additional 10,000 artillery rounds.

"Our support for Ukraine is unwavering. These additional artillery rounds will help Ukraine to secure the land it has reclaimed from Russia in recent weeks," Defense Secretary Ben Wallace said.

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak used a weekend visit to the Ukrainian capital to set out a new £50 million ($59 million) package of defense aid which included 125 anti-aircraft guns and equipment to counter Iranian-supplied drones.

Britain is also supplying cold-weather winter kits to the Ukrainian armed forces.

Ukrainian troops face plummeting temperatures as they battle through the winter to eject Russian forces from occupied Ukrainian territory.

The announcement came as Wallace visited Norway for a meeting of the Northern Group of defense ministers onboard the U.K.'s aircraft carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth.

The 12-strong Northern Group is a U.K. initiative aimed at promoting defense and security cooperation in northern Europe.

Other members are Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland and Sweden.

Former premier Boris Johnson was a staunch ally of Ukraine, visiting Kyiv three times and funneling military hardware, funding and training resources to the country.

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