

Statement on the conflict in the Middle East: 20 March 2026

20.3.2026 - | Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs

Ministers met this afternoon to discuss the latest developments in the Middle East.

Ministers met this afternoon to discuss the latest developments in the Middle East and Iran's targeting of unarmed commercial shipping, civilian infrastructure including oil and gas facilities and its blocking of the Strait of Hormuz.

They underlined that the UK is working closely with international partners to develop a viable plan to safeguard international shipping in the Strait of Hormuz.

Ministers condemned Iran's expansion of its targets to include international shipping. They agreed that Iran's reckless strikes, including on Red Ensign vessels and those of our close allies and Gulf partners, risked pushing the region further into crisis and worsening the economic impact being felt in the UK and around the world.

They confirmed that the agreement for the US to use UK bases in the collective self-defence of the region includes US defensive operations to degrade the missile sites and capabilities being used to attack ships in the Strait of Hormuz.

They reaffirmed that the principles behind the UK's approach to the conflict remain the same: the UK remains committed to defending our people, our interests and our allies, acting in accordance with international law and not getting drawn into the wider conflict.

Ministers underlined the need for urgent de-escalation and a swift resolution to the war.

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