

Summary of the UK Government legal position: The legality of defensive action in respect of Iranian regional attacks

1.3.2026 - | Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs

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The UK condemns in the strongest terms the Iranian regime's reckless and ongoing indiscriminate attacks against countries in the region. Such actions demand a united response to restore peace and security and prevent further escalation of the conflict.

As well as defending itself and its position in the region, the UK is acting in the collective self-defence of regional allies who have requested support. The UK and its allies are permitted under international law to use or support force in such circumstances where acting in self-defence is the only feasible means to deal with an ongoing armed attack and where the force used is necessary and proportionate.

Accordingly, the UK has military assets flying in the region to intercept drones or missiles targeting countries not previously involved in the conflict. In addition, the UK has responded to a US request which will facilitate specific and limited defensive action against missile facilities in Iran which were involved in launching strikes at regional allies.

The UK's actions and related support to its allies is solely focussed on ending the threat of air and missile attacks against regional allies unlawfully attacked by Iran and who have not been involved in hostilities from the outset. It does not signal the UK having any wider involvement in the broader ongoing conflict between the US, Israel and Iran.

The UK remains of the view that a negotiated solution should be supported, and that further escalation into a wider regional conflict should be avoided.

The Government will notify the United Nations Security Council of relevant actions taken under Article 51 of the United Nations Charter.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/summary-of-the-uk-government-legal-position-the-legality-of-defensive-action-in-respect-of-iranian-regional-attacks>