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**JOINT EXPEDITIONARY FORCE (JEF) – DEFENCE MINISTERS MEETING 09-10 Nov 22,
EDINBURGH**

STATEMENT

Defence Ministers and senior representatives from the ten participating nations of the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF) met in Edinburgh, Scotland, today to discuss shared challenges and commitments as a group of like-minded nations. The UK convened the meeting as the framework nation, and it comes eight months after the group last met in the UK – at Belvoir Castle on the eve of Russia’s illegal invasion of Ukraine.

The meeting today took place in the Cabinet Room of Queen Elizabeth House, the headquarters of the UK Government in Scotland. The group agreed to deepen cooperation on hybrid threats and to protect Critical National Infrastructure, including underwater cables and pipelines. The Joint Expeditionary Force partners also discussed Russia’s persistent aggression which seeks to weaken western societies and poses a challenge to the security of Northern Europe.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said: Our nations remain steadfast in our support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. The Joint Expeditionary Force has been at the forefront of providing diplomatic, financial, humanitarian and military support, something we will continue to do to until Russia has withdrawn their forces.

Over the past eight months, our contribution through the JEF has been steady and committed, seeing vital military provision achieved through the International Fund for Ukraine - and our work will continue as we remain determined to bolster the security of Northern Europe and Ukraine.

The meeting was held as the Netherlands and Norway announced further commitments to the International Fund for Ukraine (IFU). The fund was initiated by the UK and the money pledged to the fund is used to purchase equipment directly from manufacturers meaning it will Ukraine at pace. Participants in the fund are drafting a framework with Ukraine which sets out who has responsibility for what. The UK has contributed £250 million to date and the fund totals over half a billion pounds.

The Joint Expeditionary Force comprises of Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom. The nations share the same purpose, values and a common focus on security and stability in the JEF core regions of the High North, North Atlantic and Baltic Sea region.

The group provides a responsive, capable, and ready military force that undertakes integrated activities at sea, on land and in the air, across northern Europe. These activities are preventative and proportionate and demonstrate solidarity, capability, and resolve to stand together for security and stability in the JEF core regions.

The meeting followed a visit by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg yesterday to see some of the 10,000 Ukrainian recruits being trained by the UK this year. The UK has led training of over 7,400 Ukrainian personnel so far, with 1,900 currently going through training. Representatives from the JEF nations also visited the training yesterday. The UK-led programme is being supported by Canada, Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Norway, New Zealand the Netherlands, and Lithuania. Australia will support from 2023.

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