

Supplementary response dated 29 April 2024 provided by the Ministry of Defence, regarding the UK-Republic of Senegal Defence Cooperation Agreement

Could you possibly provide more detail about the nature and importance of the cooperation envisaged under the agreement?

In recent history, Senegal has been a vital enabler of UK military activity, with Dakar acting to provide part of our airbridge to the Falkland Islands while runway repair work was carried out on Ascension Island, and facilitating logistical activity to enable the UK's deployment of troops under the UN peace support mission in Mali, MINUSMA. This treaty sets conditions for greater UK access, basing and overflight permissions for the UK in Senegal and therefore West Africa.

In the maritime domain, the flow of narcotics from South America into West Africa (with Senegal being a key transit point) and then on to the UK is an area of joint concern. The UK MOD regularly deploys a Royal Navy vessel to the region, which facilitates training and partnership with West African navies to build their capacity to counter this illicit flow. Senegal is one of our most capable partners in the region in this respect. Similarly, the issue of illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing (IUUF) is a prominent one for the Senegalese and undermines the rules based international order. The framework established by this treaty will facilitate greater cooperation between the UK and Senegal on these issues.

To help oversee and plan activity covered within the scope of this Treaty, the UK and Senegal have agreed to hold a Joint Military Commission (JMC) once every two years. This will facilitate military-military discussions between our respective ministries of defence and armed forces to coordinate UK-Senegal military cooperation and monitor progress and effectiveness of planned defence activity.

A12 envisages a further agreement on exchange of classified info. Do you have an indication of when this will be concluded as the operation of the agreement hinges on this?

There are no further indications of timescales as yet. Whilst the treaty makes provision for such an agreement between the UK and Senegal, this will be subject to a number of dependencies before work on it can meaningfully progress. A workplan towards exchange of intelligence will be discussed at the first Joint Military Commission being arranged for later in 2024/5 and deconflicted from electoral cycles. No intelligence will be exchanged before an agreement on controls and management is reached.

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