

David Cameron to order air strikes on ISIS leadership in Syria

30/11/2015 14:21 by admin

London: Prime Minister David Cameron is set to order Britain's Royal Air Force to target Islamic State militant group leadership in Syria which masterminded the Paris massacre and is now targeting the UK, if his MPs back his plans of air strikes in the strife-torn country.

ISIS chief Sheikh Abu Muhammad al-Adnani, a Syrian preacher, will be at the top of Britain's so-called "kill list" when the strikes are launched, The Sunday Times reported.

Al-Adnani is reportedly in charge of the terror group's "international attacks" unit, which is believed to have orchestrated the Paris massacre and has repeatedly targeted the UK for a mass-casualty atrocity.

Adnani's external operations unit in the ISIS stronghold of Raqqa is believed to be running a network of jihadists who have returned to Britain after being trained in Syria.

The first RAF missions, expected this week, will feature high-profile strikes against suspected ISIS command and control hideouts in Raqqa to cut off the "snake's head" of the terrorist group.

US officials have asked the UK to deploy the RAF's Brimstone missile, which minimises civilian casualties, because it raises the prospect of targeting the ISIS leadership in Syria if intelligence locates them in built-up areas.

MPs are expected to vote in the House of Commons on extending air strikes to Syria on Wednesday.

The motion will explicitly limit attacks to ISIS targets and rule out committing ground troops.

It will stress that any decision has UN backing and that it will protect people in Britain from terrorism as well as degrading the ability of Isis to hold ground in Syria.

Speaking at the Commonwealth heads of government meeting in Malta, Cameron said: "There is a compelling case that taking military action alongside our allies can help to address the threat from ISIL."

"It has been working in Iraq, where we have shrunk the territory of ISIL, and it will work too in Syria, he added.

He added: "My argument is we can't wait for that political solution. We have to start acting now to keep our country, our people and indeed others in Europe safe."

Reinforcements of two Tornado bombers and six Typhoon jets are expected to be sent to Cyprus this week, allowing the RAF to fly at least three missions a day rather than two.

The first planned air strikes are expected to follow within 36 hours of a "yes" vote, but defence sources say a "dynamic targeting attack" against a target of opportunity, such as an Isis leader, could take place within a few hours.

Opposition Labour and ruling Tory party whips both report that at least 80 Labour MPs are set to back the bombing.

The number could rise to 115 as an internal Labour revolt sees a number of party MPs go against its leader, Jeremy Corbyn's decision to not back the strikes.

- PTI