



Ministry of Defence

J9 FOI Secretariat
Permanent Joint Headquarters
Northwood Headquarters
Sandy Lane
Middlesex
HA6 3HP
United Kingdom

E-mail: PJHQ-J9-FOI-Group@mod.uk

Mr Chris Cole

Reference: FOI2016/06702

Email: Chris@dronewars.net

Date: 2 August 2016

Dear Mr Cole,

Thank you for your email of 1 July 2016 which requested the following information:-

For each month between April and June 2016, and broken down between Iraq and Syria:

- a) The number of a) Reaper b) Tornado, c) Typhoon missions flown;*
- b) The number of a) Reaper b) Tornado, c) Typhoon sorties with weapons released;*
- c) The number and type of weapons released by a) Reapers, b) Tornado, c) Typhoon*

2) Please can you let me have the number of UK air strikes in a) Iraq and b) Syria per month from 1st April 2016 to 30 June 2016 broken down between Reaper, Tornado and Typhoon aircraft?

3) Please can you confirm if UK armed forces have utilised US unmanned aircraft since 1st April 2016 and if so, can you let me have monthly number of sorties/weapons releases?

Finally, can I ask for the following information only if it does not exceed cost limits? If it does ignore the following request and only answer the above request as you have done previously.

4) Please can you tell me the number of airstrikes carried out each month by the RAF in Iraq between September 2014 and March 2015, under the Coalition methodology, broken down between Tornado and Reaper aircraft?

5) Please can you confirm whether UK Reapers have operated outside of Iraqi, Syrian and Kuwaiti airspace since 1st Jan 2016, and if so, in which countries?

Your correspondence has been treated as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

A search for the information has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence, and we can confirm that some information in scope of your request is held.

The information requested, covering from 1 April to 30 June 2016, can be found below:

1a. For this question alone, missions that have flown in Syrian airspace have also flown in Iraq, therefore the missions have been included in both columns making the Syrian missions a subset of the Iraq missions.

Month	Aircraft	Mission Location	
		Iraq	Syria
April	Reaper	56	30
	Tornado	46	15
	Typhoon	48	6
May	Reaper	66	24
	Tornado	52	11
	Typhoon	51	2
June	Reaper	71	32
	Tornado	46	4
	Typhoon	46	6

1b. The number of sorties with weapons released.

Month	Aircraft	Mission Location	
		Iraq	Syria
April	Reaper	2	2
	Tornado	33	1
	Typhoon	41	0
May	Reaper	8	1
	Tornado	26	4
	Typhoon	42	0
June	Reaper	25	2
	Tornado	37	0
	Typhoon	39	3

1c. The number and type of weapons released split by aircraft type.

Month	Aircraft	Weapon type	Mission Location	
			Iraq	Syria
April	Reaper	Hellfire	2	3
	Tornado	Paveway IV	55	1
		EPW3	2	0
		Brimstone	11	0
Typhoon	Paveway IV	75	0	
May	Reaper	Hellfire	13	1
		GBU12	1	0
	Tornado	Paveway IV	39	2
		EPW2	0	5
		Brimstone	11	0
Typhoon	Paveway IV	79	0	
June	Reaper	Hellfire	49	4
		GBU12	11	0
	Tornado	Paveway IV	37	0
		EPW2	15	0
		Brimstone	10	0
		StormShadow	4	0
	Typhoon	Paveway IV	73	6

2. The number of UK air strikes in Iraq and Syria each month from 1 April 2016 to 30 June 2016 broken down between Reaper, Tornado and Typhoon aircraft.

Month	Aircraft	Mission Location	
		Iraq	Syria
April	Reaper	2	2
	Tornado	29	1
	Typhoon	36	0
May	Reaper	7	1
	Tornado	29	3
	Typhoon	34	0
June	Reaper	27	1
	Tornado	23	2
	Typhoon	32	2

3. The RAF has not flown any US Air Force Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems in support of operations in Iraq and Syria for the period in question.

4. The information requested on the number of UK air strikes in Iraq each month, covering the period from September 2014 to March 2015, can be found below broken down between Reaper and Tornado aircraft:

Month	Aircraft	No of UK Airstrikes¹
September 14	Reaper	0
	Tornado	2
October 14	Reaper	0
	Tornado	8
November 14	Reaper	15
	Tornado	13
December 14	Reaper	10
	Tornado	17
January 15	Reaper	14
	Tornado	13
February 15	Reaper	7
	Tornado	12
March 15	Reaper	13
	Tornado	17

The data contained in this statement is believed to be complete and correct at the time of issue. The MOD operational activity databases are frequently reviewed and any errors and omissions are corrected. It is therefore possible that future statements might not match this statement exactly. The MOD regrets any difficulty that this may cause but emphasises that our aim is to ensure that our records are as complete and correct as possible.

5. With regards to question 5, we can confirm that all of the information in scope of your request is held, however it falls entirely within the scope of the qualified exemptions under sections 26 & 27 of the FOIA and has been withheld.

Section 26 (Defence) and Section 27 (International Relations) are qualified exemptions and are subject to a public interest test, which means that the information requested can only be withheld if the public interest in doing so outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

Section 26(1)(b) has been applied to some of the information because it contains details which are operationally sensitive which contribute to the effectiveness of air operations and would prejudice the capability and effectiveness of our armed forces. The balance of public interest was found to be in favour of withholding the information given that, the public interest is best served in not releasing any details of Reaper flight paths as it would provide tactical advantage to our enemies.

Section 27(1)(a) has been applied because some of the information has the potential to adversely affect relations with our allies. The balance of the public interest test concluded that whilst release would increase public understanding of, and confidence in the relationships the United Kingdom has with other states on international operations, the balance of the public interest lay in withholding this information. We have considered it necessary to apply the higher level of prejudice against release of the exempted information.

¹ Under the Coalition methodology

Under Section 16 of the Act (Advice and Assistance) you may find it helpful to note that the MOD regularly publishes information about RAF activity in Iraq and Syria at:-

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/update-air-strikes-against-daesh>.

If you are not satisfied with this response or you wish to complain about any aspect of the handling of your request, then you should contact this office in the first instance. If informal resolution is not possible and you are still dissatisfied then you may apply for an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, 1st Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk). Please note that any request for an internal review must be made within 40 working days of the date on which the attempt to reach informal resolution has come to an end.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may take your complaint to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website, <http://www.ico.org.uk>.

Yours sincerely,
PJHQ J9 FOI Secretariat