



Ministry
of Defence

J8 FOI Secretariat
Permanent Joint Headquarters
Northwood Headquarters
Sandy Lane
Northwood, Middlesex
HA6 3HP
United Kingdom

E-mail: PJHQ-J8-FOI-Group@mod.uk

Ref: FOI2014/07109

Date: 15 December 2014

Dear

Thank you for your email of 17 November 2014 which requested the following information:

"The number of weapons released, insurgent (or targeted) fatalities, and civilian fatalities for each reported RAF drone strike or US drone strike flown by British pilots for 2013 and 2014. If the results for weapons or fatalities are only estimations, please make this clear. Please list the reported strike number if there is one and the country where the strike took place."

My preference is for this information to be provided digitally and in a spreadsheet rather than a pdf or by post."

We are treating your correspondence 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 of the information in the scope of your request is held. However, as the information is not held in a spreadsheet format, we are unable to provide it as per your preference.

Your request was received by the responding branch on 17 November 2014. Therefore a search has been conducted for data up to and including 16 November 2014.

UK Reaper Remotely Piloted Air Systems (RPAS) have been operated in an armed capacity, as well as for unarmed surveillance missions, over both Afghanistan and Iraq during the time period specified. Reaper is the UK's only armed RPAS.

Taking the elements of your question in turn:

'insurgent (or targeted) fatalities and civilian fatalities'

There have been no known incidents of non-combatant casualties resulting from UK Reaper RPAS strikes in Afghanistan or Iraq during 2013 or 2014, nor have there been any reports for any incidents involving either confirmed or suspected non-combatant casualties, for which there are established investigation procedures. No investigations are

ongoing. The Ministry of Defence does not hold a comprehensive record of figures for combatant casualties in Afghanistan, or more recently in Iraq, because of the immense difficulty and risks involved in collecting robust data. The UK meets the requirements to seek to protect civilians under International Humanitarian Law. UK policy includes robust criteria on establishing positive identification and requires commanders to do everything feasible to verify that the target is a military objective.

'number of weapons released....for each reported RAF drone strike....flown by British pilots in 2013 and 2014'

Afghanistan: From 1 Jan 2013 to 16 November 2014 inclusive the UK Reaper weapon release total for Afghanistan was 149. In the majority of cases only one weapon was released per strike. Data is recorded in complete months and data up to 31 October 2014 was provided, broken down by weapon type, in the Department's response to you dated 13 November 2014, reference FOI2014/06194.

Iraq: For the period 22 Oct to 16 Nov 2014 inclusive, a total of eight weapons were released from UK Reaper RPAS. All eight weapons were released singly, i.e. each strike involved only one weapon.

[Strike data relating to] 'US drone strikes flown by British pilots'

Afghanistan: Data for US RPAS strikes is not held. The number of missions flown by UK pilots using borrowed US RPAS over Afghanistan during 2013 and up to 31 October 2014 was provided in the Department's response to you dated 13 November 2014, reference FOI2014/06194.

Iraq: Data for US RPAS strikes is not held. However up to and including 16 November 2014, UK pilots had not operated US RPAS platforms over Iraq.

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.gov.uk>.

Yours sincerely,

PJHQ J8 FOI Secretariat