



Ministry  
of Defence

**Air Command Secretariat**  
Spitfire Block  
Headquarters Air Command  
Royal Air Force  
High Wycombe  
Buckinghamshire  
HP14 4UE

20160621-FOI 05644 [REDACTED]

23 June 2016

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 31 May, which has been considered to be a request for information under the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2000; I have been asked to reply on behalf of the Ministry of Defence (MOD).

In your email you requested the following:

“I see that, according to written evidence, the UK is set to train RSAF pilots and targeteers in June/July.

I would like to know who pays for this training and how much it costs.

If possible I'd also like to know whether the training includes instruction on what they should do if they believe their airstrikes have resulted in civilian casualties and whether they are told cluster munitions are not to be used?”

A search for the information has now been completed within the MOD, and I can confirm that information in scope of your request is held.

The International Targeting Courses are being paid for by the Royal Saudi Air Force (RSAF) and are being provided to support RSAF compliance with their International Humanitarian Law obligations. However, the remaining information you have requested has been considered for release under Section 27(1) of the FOI Act - information which, if disclosed would prejudice the UK's international relations or the UK's interests abroad.

Section 27(1) is a qualified exemption and is subject to public interest testing, which means that the information requested can only be withheld if the public interest in doing so outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

Having conducted a Public Interest Test, consideration was given to the benefit to the public in furthering the understanding of the UK's wider international co-operation of defence activities, and found that the balance lies in favour of withholding the information as releasing

it could damage the trust and prejudice relations between the United Kingdom and its allies. Therefore, in this instance the MOD is not obliged to comply with your request.

Under Section 16 of the FOI Act (the duty to provide advice and assistance), you will wish to know that the UK has ratified the Convention on Cluster Munitions, which came into force for the UK on 1 November 2011. This prohibits the use, development, acquisition stockpiling, retention and transfer of cluster munitions and obliges State Parties from assisting, encouraging or inducing Non-State Parties to engage in any of those prohibited activities.

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, 2nd 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,

Air Command Secretariat