



Foreign & Commonwealth Office

Arabian Peninsula and Iran Department
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
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12 December 2016

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST REF: FOI 0975-16

Thank you for your email of 14 October asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked:

- How many times have meetings taken place since 1st January 2015, between Foreign Office officials and/or ministers, and the Joint Incidents Assessment Team (JIAT) currently operated by the Saudi-led coalition, with regards their Yemeni operations,
- Please include dates of each of these meetings and who attended from the British side and JIAT, and broadly what was discussed.
- "Meetings" might for example include in person, teleconference or video conference.
- If any formal or informal either training or advice, or both, have ever been given to the JIAT by UK FCO or FCO-contracted personnel or associated organisations (for example law firms or private consultants with expertise in international humanitarian law), since 1st January 2015.
- if so then what was the nature of this training and advice, and when did it take place.

I am writing to confirm that we have now completed the search for the information which you requested.

I can confirm that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) does hold some information relevant to your request.

On 29 February 2016 Saudi Arabia announced that an Independent Committee with foreign advisors would be established to assess Saudi Arabian military activity in Yemen in order to minimise possible civilian casualties and improve internal procedures. The Joint Incident Assessment Team (JIAT) was set up in May 2016. The UK has supported the development of the Coalition JIAT and through the Ministry of Defence (MoD) has delivered two training sessions in Saudi Arabia on the process of investigating alleged violations of International

Humanitarian Law (IHL). The UK has not been directly involved in investigations undertaken by the JIAT; has not provided any specific operational advice to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for operations in Yemen; and has not provided training on political authorisation of military operations.

However, the UK has provided support, advice and training in order to assist in the establishment of a process to undertake investigations into alleged civilian casualty incidents. The first training session for the JIAT took place from 22-24 May 2016, and delivered training to a delegation of Saudi military personnel at the Officers Club, King Abdul Aziz Road, Riyadh. A subsequent training session, JIAT Workshop Targeting and Investigations, took place 18-22 September 2016 to provide guidance to the JIAT on continuing and improving the investigative process, seeking specifically to understand how JIAT has conducted its investigations to date; to assess learning cycles and behaviour since the first workshop and ongoing remedial action within the Coalition; and to offer as much advice as possible on investigations to date and JIAT process going forward.

Officials from British Embassy Riyadh have had regular contact with members of the JIAT in the course of normal diplomatic activity. Officials attended a press conference on 4 August held by the JIAT, in which outcomes of eight investigations were announced. There were also discussions about these investigations in the margins of the press conference.

Officials from the Defence Section in the British Embassy in Riyadh also have informal meetings with members from the JIAT, including brush by meetings at events and preparing for workshops. Dates and frequencies of these types of meetings have not been recorded.

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