



Ministry
of Defence

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Mr Chris Cole
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Ref: 2014/05205

14 October 2014

Dear Mr Cole,

Thank you for your email of 16 September requesting the following information:

Please can you tell me the number of weapons released each month by UK Reaper UAVs in Afghanistan from 1st May 2014 to 31 August 2014 inclusive. I would be grateful if you would break the figures down by type of weapon released as you have previously done. Please could you confirm whether these figures include any weapons released by RAF pilots utilizing USAF RPAS, and if so how many weapons were released.

I am 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 I can confirm that the information in scope of your request is held.

The information you have requested can be found below.

Reaper is the UK's only armed Remotely Piloted Aircraft System (RPAS) and is only operated in support of UK and International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) ground forces in Afghanistan. It is predominantly used for intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance tasks, providing vital intelligence in support of our ground commanders, enabling them to stay one step ahead of the enemy. Reaper is far from unmanned, it is operated by highly trained, qualified and professional military pilots.

Reaper has been armed with precision-guided weapons since May 2008, providing an offensive capability if needed. It does not have the capability to fire weapons autonomously and can only fire its weapons when commanded to do so by the aircrew. Targets are always positively identified as legitimate military objectives, and strikes are prosecuted in accordance with the Law of Armed Conflict and UK Rules of Engagement. The same strict Rules of Engagement that govern the use of conventional military aircraft also apply to RPAS.

ISAF Reaper RPAS missions are tasked from a combined pool of available assets from both the UK and US Reaper RPAS Squadrons. In the event that no UK Reaper aircraft is

available to the UK, the UK can use a USAF Reaper for a UK-tasked mission and it will be flown by UK crews adhering to UK Rules of Engagement.

Details of the number and type of weapons released by UK aircrew operating Reaper RPAS between 1 May and 31 August 2014 can be found below;

Month (2014)	Number of Weapons Released	Released From:	
		UK Platform	US Platform
May	4	3	1
June	6	4	2
July	3	2	1
August	16	16	0

All weapons released by UK aircrew operating Reaper RPAS during this period were AGM Hellfire.

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 me 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 Secretariat