



Ministry of Defence

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Mr Chris Cole

Reference: 2016/05126

Email: chris@dronewars.net

Date: 14 June 2016

Dear Mr Cole,

Thank you for your email of 13 May 2016 which requested the following information:-

- 1) The number of airstrikes carried out by the RAF in Iraq between September 2014 and March 2015, under the Coalition methodology, broken down between Tornado and Reaper aircraft?*
- 2) In your request 29 April 2016 response to my FOI request of 1 April (FOI 2016/03828) you state the number of missions flown by Typhoon aircraft in Iraq in March 2016 was 148. This seems very high and maybe a typo. Can I ask should this figure be in fact 48?*
- 3) Can I ask for the following information only if it does not exceed cost limits? If it does please ignore and only answer the above questions. According to previous FOI responses the UK launched 413 air strikes in Iraq and Syria in 2015. Please can you tell me how many of these were launched under dynamic targeting procedures?*

Your correspondence has been treated as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). A search of records held by the Ministry of Defence has now been completed and we can confirm that some of the information within the scope of your request is held.

Question 1

In answer to your first question, the number of RAF airstrikes in Iraq conducted by Tornado is 82 and Reaper 59 between September 2014 and March 2015.

Question 2

Regarding your second question, we enclose the corrected table below. The figure of 148 refers to the number of missions flown by Typhoon aircraft in Iraq during the period of January 2016 to March 2016 inclusive. The number of missions flown by Typhoon aircraft in Iraq during March 2016 was 54.

1a Missions Flown		REAPER			TORNADO			TYPHOON		
		Iraq	Syria	Total	Iraq	Syria	Total	Iraq	Syria	Total
2016	JAN	42	32	74	32	40	72	46	2	48
	FEB	13	41	54	42	31	73	48	1	49
	MAR	15	40	55	38	15	53	54	1	55
Total		70	113	183	112	86	198	148	4	152

Question 3

The total number of UK airstrikes in Iraq and Syria during 2015 was 414; of these, 19 strikes were pre-planned (deliberate) and 395 strikes were combat engagement/self-defence (dynamic).

All strikes undertaken by UK assets are subject to the Law of Armed Conflict. The Coalition's prioritisation of providing close air support to partner forces on the ground can result in a high proportion of strikes being dynamic. The UK has some of the most capable air assets, which can result in the allocation of dynamic targets to UK assets, freeing up other nations' aircraft to prosecute pre-planned deliberate targets.

As per the written statement provided to the House by the Secretary of State for Defence on 16 July 2015, we use coalition produced numbers for UK strikes. Further information on the decision to move to coalition methodology can be found in the written statement at:-

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons/2015-07-16/HCWS132/>

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.

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,

PJHQ J9 FOI Secretariat