



# Ministry of Defence

## J9 FOI Secretariat

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Reference: FOI 2018/04615

Mr C Cole  
[chris@dronewars.net](mailto:chris@dronewars.net)

1 May 2018

*Dear Mr Cole,*

We refer to your email of 3 April 2018 which requested the following information:

- 1) For each month between January and March 2018, and broken down between i) Reaper, ii) Tornado, and ii) Typhoon:
  - a) the total number of missions undertaken by these aircraft on Operation Shader*
  - b) the number of those missions entering Syria*
  - c) the number of those missions entering Iraq**
- 2) For each month between January and March 2018, the number sorties with weapons released by a) Reaper, b) Tornado, c) Typhoon, broken down between Iraq and Syria?*
- 3) For each month between January and March 2018, the number and type of weapons released by a) Reapers, b) Tornado, c) Typhoon, broken down between Iraq and Syria?*
- 4) The number of UK air strikes in a) Iraq and b) Syria per month from 1st January 2017 to 31 March 2017 broken down between Reaper, Tornado and Typhoon aircraft?*
- 5) Please can you tell me, for each month between 1st January 2017 and 31 March 2017, how many hours have UK a) Reapers, b) Tornado and c) Typhoon flown on Operation Shader?*

*You clarified that you had meant to request the number of UK air strikes in a) Iraq and b) Syria per month from 1st January 2018 to 31 March 2018 broken down between Reaper, Tornado and Typhoon aircraft. We have provided the data for 2018 as you requested.*

Your correspondence has been treated 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 information in scope of your request is held. The information requested can be found below.

- 1) In response to your question on the Number of Sorties in Syria and Iraq by Aircraft Type, between January and March 2018, please see the tables below.

Number of Sorties in Syria and Iraq by Aircraft Type							
Syria entry recorded				Iraq (no Syrian entry recorded)			Total
Aircraft Type	Jan 18	Feb 18	Mar 18	Jan 18	Feb 18	Mar 18	
FGR4 Typhoon	74	78	92	12	10	14	280
GR4 Tornado	75	68	78	17	10	20	268
MQ9 Reaper	64	31	65	4	12	8	184
<b>Total</b>	213	177	235	33	32	42	732

Please note you appear to have used the terms 'mission' and 'sortie' as if they are synonymous; your request switches from missions in (1) to sorties in (2).

Previously, we have stated the number of missions by aircraft type entering Syria and Iraq. For Tornado and Typhoon, one mission comprises two sorties as these aircraft operate in pairs whereas Reaper operates singly so that one mission generally involves only one sortie. In this case, we have stated the sortie count for each aircraft type, i.e. where one sortie is one flight by one aircraft.

(2) In response to your question on the Number of Sorties with Weapons Released by Aircraft Type, please see the table below.

Number of Sorties with Weapons Released by Aircraft Type							
Syria				Iraq			Total
Aircraft Type	Jan 18	Feb 18	Mar 18	Jan 18	Feb 18	Mar 18	
FGR4 Typhoon	10	9	3	1		2	25
GR4 Tornado	6	6				1	13
MQ9 Reaper	19	8	7				34
<b>Total</b>	35	23	10	1		3	72

(2) In response to your question on the Number of Weapons Released in Syria and Iraq by Aircraft Type, please see the tables below.

Number of Weapons Released in Syria and Iraq by Aircraft Type							
Syria				Iraq			Total
Aircraft Type	Jan 18	Feb 18	Mar 18	Jan 18	Feb 18	Mar 18	
FGR4 Typhoon	20	16	7	2		2	47
GR4 Tornado	12	11				1	24
MQ9 Reaper	58	15	19				92
<b>Total</b>	90	42	26	2		3	163

(3) In response to your question on the Number of each Weapon Type Released in Syria and Iraq by Aircraft Type, please see the table below.

		Number of each Weapon Type Released in Syria and Iraq by Aircraft Type						
		Syria			Iraq			
Aircraft Type	Weapon Type	Jan 18	Feb 18	Mar 18	Jan 18	Feb 18	Mar 18	Total
FGR4 Typhoon	PWIV Mk2	20	16	7	2		2	47
GR4 Tornado	DMSB+	4	2					6
	PWIV Mk2	8	9				1	18
MQ9 Reaper	AGM-114N4	12	7					19
	AGM-114R2	38	6	19				63
	GBU-12	8	2					10
	<b>Total</b>	90	42	26	2		3	163

(4) In response to your question on the number of UK air strikes in Iraq per month from 1st January 2018 to 31 March 2018 broken down by Aircraft Type, please see the table below.

Iraq				
2018	TORNADO	TYPHOON	REAPER	TOTAL
JAN	0	1	0	1
FEB	0	0	0	0
MAR	1	1	0	2

(4) In response to your question on the number of UK air strikes in Syria per month from 1st January 2018 to 31 March 2018 broken down by Aircraft Type, please see the table below.

Syria				
2018	TORNADO	TYPHOON	REAPER	TOTAL
JAN	3	7	20	30
FEB	4	3	8	15
MAR	0	2	2	4

(5) In response to your question on the Total hours flown by Aircraft Type, please see the table below.

Total hours flown by Aircraft Type				
Aircraft Type	Jan 18	Feb 18	Mar 18	<b>Total</b>
FGR4 Typhoon	515	573.6	624	1712.5
GR4 Tornado	516.7	454.4	529.1	1500.2
MQ9 Reaper	954	535.2	1014.8	2503.9
<b>Total</b>	1985.6	1563.2	2167.9	5716.6

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 have any queries regarding the content of this letter, please contact this office in the first instance.

If you wish to complain about the handling of your request, or the content of this response, you can request an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, Ground Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail [CIO-FOI-IR@mod.gov.uk](mailto:CIO-FOI-IR@mod.gov.uk)). Please note that any request for an internal review should be made within 40 working days of the date of this response.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may raise your complaint directly to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not normally investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website at <https://ico.org.uk/>.

Yours sincerely,

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Mr C Cole  
[chris@dronewars.net](mailto:chris@dronewars.net)

9 May 2018

Dear Mr Cole,

We refer to your email of 1 May 2018 which requested the following clarification to your FOI request dated 3 April 2018 (ref 2018-04615)

*"I appreciate your attempt to be helpful by explaining the difference between missions and sorties. However I would like, as requested in my first question, the number of missions, rather than sortie data you have provided."*

Please see the additional information requested.

- 1) For each month between January and March 2018, and broken down between i) Reaper, ii) Tornado, and ii) Typhoon:
  - a) the total number of missions undertaken by these aircraft on Operation SHADER.
  - b) the number of those missions entering Syria.
  - c) the number of those missions entering Iraq.

	Syrian Entry Recorded			Iraq (No Syrian Entry Recorded)			Total
	Reaper	Tornado	Typhoon	Reaper	Tornado	Typhoon	
<b>Jan</b>	64	43	32	3	9	5	156
<b>Feb</b>	31	35	38	11	5	5	125
<b>Mar</b>	64	39	46	8	10	6	173
<b>Total</b>	159	117	116	22	24	16	454

Please note: The AWC records are focused on sorties flown and weapons released. The AWC does not record all cases of entry into Syrian airspace by RAF Reaper, Tornado and Typhoon aircraft. For Reaper, all missions recorded as entering Syrian airspace will have transited through (and possibly operated in) Iraq due to the basing location of this platform. For

Typhoon and Tornado, AWC records some Syrian airspace entry cases and these might be for transit or to reach their area of operation in Syria; this is not synonymous with weapon release.

The table records those two Syrian airspace cases (transit and operational area) in the Syria columns. The remainder of the missions flown are listed as limited to Iraqi airspace although some of these might have transited Syrian airspace to reach Iraq. Weapon release locations are invariably recorded, i.e. all weapons releases in Iraq and Syria are specifically recorded as such.

Even if the cases of sorties releasing weapons in specific nations are added to the totals of sorties flown in specific nations, that latter total will still not necessarily be complete. This incompleteness is simply a function of the database design, i.e. focused on weapon expenditure and performance. In supplying these figures the MoD has met the terms of the FoI Act in having provided the information held.

If you have any queries regarding the content of this letter, please contact this office in the first instance.

If you wish to complain about the handling of your request, or the content of this response, you can request an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, Ground Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail [CIO-FOI-IR@mod.gov.uk](mailto:CIO-FOI-IR@mod.gov.uk)). Please note that any request for an internal review should be made within 40 working days of the date of this response.

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Mr C Cole  
[chris@dronewars.net](mailto:chris@dronewars.net)

6 August 2018

*Dear Mr Cole,*

We apologise for the length of time it has taken to provide you with an answer to the clarification you sought for the FOI request you submitted on 29 May 2018. The number of AGM 114 weapons released as stated in the response was correct, the strike that you identified from the MOD internet article was not included in the response to your request because it had been omitted from the database in error. The correct number of UK REAPER strikes in Syria for March 2018 should be 3 not 2 as originally stated in the response to your request. We hope this provides the clarification you were seeking; once again please accept our apologies for the delay in providing the clarification you sought.

If you have any queries regarding the content of this letter, please contact this office in the first instance.

If you wish to complain about the handling of your request, or the content of this response, you can request an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, Ground Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail [CIO-FOI-IR@mod.gov.uk](mailto:CIO-FOI-IR@mod.gov.uk)). Please note that any request for an internal review should be made within 40 working days of the date of this response.

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