



# Ministry of Defence

## J9 FOI Secretariat

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Reference: FOI 2019/11238 (205)

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

29 October 2019

Dear Mr Cole,

We refer to your request dated 1 October 2019, which asked for the following information on Operation SHADER:

*1) For each month between July 2019 and September 2019, and broken down between i) Reaper, ii) Typhoon and iii) F-35*

- 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 July 2019 and September 2019, the number of sorties with weapons released by a) Reaper b) Typhoon and c) F-35 broken down between Iraq and Syria?*

*3) For each month between July 2019 and September 2019, the number and type of weapons released by a) Reapers, b) Typhoon, c) F-35 broken down between Iraq and Syria?*

*4) The number of UK weapon release events in a) Iraq and b) Syria per month from July 2019 to September 2019, broken down between Reaper, Typhoon and F-35 aircraft?*

*5) Please can you tell me, for each month between July 2019 and September 2019, how many hours have UK a) Reaper, b) Typhoon and d) F-35 flown on Operation Shader?*

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 concerning part of your request is held and releasable. The information requested can be found at Annex A.

Please note that the F-35B only flew on Operation SHADER in June 2019. As such, no information for the F-35B been included in any of the information tables attached.

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.uk](mailto:CIO-FOI-IR@mod.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,

PJHQ J9 FOI Secretariat

Annex:

A. Operation SHADER Data Tables – July to September 2019.

**OPERATION SHADER DATA TABLES – JULY to SEPTEMBER 2019**

1. *Quarterly (Jul-Sep 19) request for information broken by Reaper, Typhoon and F-35 as follows:*

*a) Total number of missions undertaken by these aircraft.*

Sum of mission count (total):		Aircraft type:		Grand total:
Year	Month	Reaper	Typhoon	
2019	July	51	51	102
	August	60	47	107
	September	56	48	104
Grand total:		167	146	313

*b) the no of missions entering Syria.*

Sum of mission count (Syria):		Aircraft type:		Grand total:
Year	Month	Reaper	Typhoon	
2019	July	31	48	79
	August	9	43	52
	September	14	41	55
Grand total:		54	132	186

*c) the no of missions entering Iraq.*

Sum of mission count (Iraq):		Aircraft type:		Grand total:
Year	Month	Reaper	Typhoon	
2019	July	20	3	23
	August	51	4	55
	September	42	7	49
Grand total:		113	14	127

2. *The number of sorties wither weapons released by aircraft type and broken down between Iraq and Syria.*

Number of sorties with weapons released (Syria):		Aircraft type:		Grand total:
Year	Month	Reaper		
2019	July	2		2
Grand total:		2		2

Number of sorties with weapons released (Iraq):		Aircraft type:		Grand total:
Year	Month	Reaper	Typhoon	
2019	July	0	5	5
	August	1	2	3
	September	0	4	4
Grand total:		1	11	12

3. The number and type of weapons released by aircraft type and broken down between Iraq & Syria.

Summary of weapon released (Syria)		Aircraft type:	Reaper	Grand total:
Year	Month	Weapons type:	AGM-114	
2019	July	3		3
Grand total:		3		3

Summary of weapons released (Iraq)		Aircraft:	Reaper	Aircraft:	Typhoon	Grand total:
Year	Month	Weapon:	AGM-114	Weapon:	PWIV	
2019	July	0		6		6
	August	1		3		4
	September	0		12		12
Grand total:		1		21		22

4. The number of UK weapon releases events in Iraq & Syria broken down by aircraft type.

Summary of weapon release events (Syria)		Aircraft type:	Reaper	Grand total:
Year	Month	Weapons type:	AGM-114	
2019	July	3		3
Grand total:		3		3

Summary of weapon release events (Iraq)		Aircraft:	Reaper	Aircraft:	Typhoon	Grand total:
Year	Month	Weapon:	AGM-114	Weapon:	PWIV	
2019	July	0		6		6
	August	1		3		4
	September	0		12		12
Grand total:		1		21		22

5. Hours flown by aircraft type on Op SHADER.

Flying hours by aircraft type:		Aircraft type:		Grand total:
Year	Month	Reaper	Typhoon	
2019	July	772	542	1314
	August	859	465	1324
	September	839	491	1330
Grand total:		2470	1498	3968

Caveat:

The MOD records are focused on sorties flown and weapons released. The AWC does not record all cases of entry into Syrian airspace by RAF Reaper and Typhoon aircraft. For Reaper, all missions recorded as entering Syrian airspace may have transited through (and possibly operated in) Iraq due to the basing location of this platform. For Typhoon, MOD records some Syrian airspace entry cases and these might be for (a) transit to Iraqi airspace or (b) to reach their area of operation in Syria. The MOD records all cases of weapon release in Iraq and Syria so any sortie/mission involving weapon release in Syria will be recorded as having entered Syrian airspace.

The table lists all recorded cases of those two Syrian airspace entry cases (transit through Syria to Iraqi airspace and operating in Syrian airspace) in the 'Syria' columns. The remainder of the missions flown are listed as limited to Iraqi airspace. Some of these might have transited Syrian airspace to reach Iraqi airspace but we have no record of it. 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 the complete total of entry into that nation's airspace. This incompleteness is simply a function of the database design, i.e. focused on weapon expenditure and performance.