

04 April 2012

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 - REQUEST REF: 0293-12

Thank you for your request of 8 March 2012 asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

In your request you asked for the following specific information:

- 1. The amount the FCO has spent on hiring Private Military and Security Companies separately in (a) Colombia (b) Afghanistan (c) Yemen (d) Libya (e) Iraq since November 2010 to March 2012*
- 2. Each security contract that was issued during these times*
- 3. The names of the individual companies and the amount paid to each*
- 4. The services rendered in each case (e.g. 'Manned security guarding/monitoring and response/cash services' etc)*
- 5. All current FCO contracts with private military and security companies in (a) Colombia (b) Afghanistan (c) Yemen (d) Libya (e) Iraq in their entirety.*

I confirm that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) does hold information relevant to your request as follows:

Country	Contract value	Purpose	Company	Dates
Colombia	£14,054	Static Guarding	Honor & Laurel	Nov 10 – Mar 12
Colombia	£16,738	Sniffer Dog Services	K9 Security	Nov 10 – Mar 12
Afghanistan	£69,000,000	Mobile and Static Guarding	G4S	Mar 10 – Feb 13
Afghanistan	£886,000	Overseas Security Managers and Intelligence Analysts	Minimal Risks	Oct 10 – Oct 13
Iraq	£56,000,000	Mobile and Static Guarding	GardaWorld	Dec 09-Jan 13
Iraq	£926,000	Overseas Security Managers and Intelligence Analysts	Minimal Risks	Oct 10 –Oct 13
Libya	£5,500,000	Static and Mobile Security Guarding	Control Risks Group	Apr 11 – Jan 12
Libya	£1,740,000	Static and Mobile Security Guarding	GardaWorld	Feb 11 – July 11
Libya	£77,000	Overseas Security Manager	Minimal Risks	May 11 – Oct 11
Yemen	£290,000	Static security supervision	Aegis	Oct 11 – Apr 12
Yemen	£46,000	Overseas Security Managers	Minimal Risks	Oct 10 – Dec 10

Private Security Companies (PSCs) carry out a variety of important duties, including the close protection of personnel and static protection of premises such as Embassies. They provide a vital and necessary role in hostile environments, and enable the Government to fulfil its policy objectives in countries such as Afghanistan by providing essential security services, as well as ensuring operational NGOs are able to carry out important humanitarian work.

Your request also asks for copies of contracts with these companies, asking for *'whole documents, with exempt portions being blacked out, rather than in digest form'*.

This information is, however, exempted from release under Section 43 (2) of the FOI Act as its release would harm the FCO's commercial interests.

There is a public interest in the disclosure of commercial information to ensure effective, open and honest use of public money and the scrutiny of public licensing in accordance with published policy and to provide an environment where business can better respond to government opportunities. However, we consider that this transparency also poses risks in that companies and individuals would, if this information were disclosed, be much less likely to provide the FCO with commercially sensitive information. This would limit the sources of information and interlocutors available to the FCO. In doing so, it would seriously impair our ability to work for UK interests in a safe, just and prosperous world. We therefore consider that the public interest lies in maintaining the exception in relation to this information.