



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

Arms Export Policy Department
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
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12 May 2015

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST REF: 0374-15

Thank you for your email of 14 April 2015 asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked:

I am requesting a list of meeting that meet the following criteria:

meetings where any representative from private organisations were present - ie any non-government organisations or businesses

- AND where the stated purpose of the meeting was to discuss Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS)*
- OR where the agenda for the meeting contains an item relating to Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS)*
- OR where minutes from the meeting (if there are any) indicate that Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS) were discussed*

For each of the meetings I would like to know

- the date*
- location of the meeting*
- persons present, and their organisations*

I am not requesting the minutes of the meeting or any documents relating to the the meeting.

I am not requesting details of meetings where only government employees were present.

I am not requesting details of meetings where only government employees / representatives were meeting employees / representatives of foreign governments.

I am writing to confirm that we have now completed the search for the information which you requested.

I can confirm that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) does hold information relevant to your request. Please find attached in Annex A below the information that the FCO can release to you.

Some of this information has been withheld under section 27 – international relations. Section 27 is a qualified exemption and is subject to a public interest test. This applies to two of the meetings listed in the information released. We acknowledge that releasing information on which other states attended those meetings would increase public knowledge about the international discussions on LAWS. However, s.27 (1) (a) recognises that the

effective conduct of international relations depends upon maintaining trust and confidence between governments. If the United Kingdom does not maintain this trust and confidence, its ability to protect and promote UK interests through international relations will be hampered, which will not be in the public interest. In this instance, the meetings in question were not public, and disclosing a list of which states attended could potentially damage the bilateral relationship between the UK and those states. However, a number of the other meetings listed were in public fora, and in those cases the details of which states attended has been provided. For these reasons we consider that the public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing it.

Additionally, some of the information you have requested is personal data relating to third parties, the disclosure of which would contravene one of the data protection principles. In such circumstances sections 40(2) and (3) of the Freedom of Information Act apply. In this case, our view is that disclosure would breach the first data protection principle. This states that personal data should be processed fairly and lawfully. It is the fairness aspect of this principle, which, in our view, would be breached by disclosure. In such circumstances, s.40 confers an absolute exemption on disclosure. There is, therefore, no public interest test to apply.

Once an FOI request is answered, it is considered to be in the public domain. To promote transparency, we may now publish the response and any material released on gov.uk in the [FOI releases](#) section. All personal information in the letter will be removed before publishing.

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Yours sincerely,

Arms Export Policy Department, Foreign & Commonwealth Office



We keep and use information in line with the Data Protection Act 1998. We may release this personal information to other UK government departments and public authorities.

Annex A: Information Released

Date	Location	Attendees	Affiliation
3-5 December 2013: 'Experts Meeting on Armed Drones and Robots under International Law'	Divonne, France	Information not held	United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR)
		Information not held	Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights
		[Name withheld – personal data]	FCO (UKMIS Geneva)
		Information not held on other attendees	
14 January 2014: NGO - FCO Meeting	FCO, London	[Name withheld – personal data]	Saferworld
		[Names withheld – personal data]	FCO – Arms Export Policy Department (AEPD)
		Information on other attendees not held	
24-25 February 2014: Autonomous Military Technologies, Chatham House Conference	Chatham House, London	[Name withheld – personal data]	FCO - AEPD
		<p>FCO records indicate that there were approx. sixty people in attendance, representing states, NGOs, industry, and academia. A list of speakers is available here:</p> <p>http://www.chathamhouse.org/Autonomous</p>	
26 – 28 March 2014: 'Autonomous weapon systems technical, military, legal and humanitarian aspects', hosted by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)	Geneva, Switzerland	[State attendees withheld – Section 27 International Relations]	
		[Names withheld – personal data]	FCO - UKMIS Geneva, FCO - AEPD; MOD
		[Name withheld – personal data]	University of Central Lancashire

		[Name withheld – personal data]	Georgia Institute of Technology
		[Name withheld – personal data]	The New School
		[Name withheld – personal data]	Geneva Centre for Security Policy
		[Name withheld – personal data]	Duke University
		[Name withheld – personal data]	Human Rights Watch
		[Name withheld – personal data]	University of Pretoria
		[Name withheld – personal data]	Portsmouth University
		[Name withheld – personal data]	CCW Implementation Support Unit
		[Name withheld – personal data]	Max-Planck Institute for Intelligent Systems
		[Name withheld – personal data]	University of Geneva
		[Name withheld – personal data]	University of Sheffield
		[Name withheld – personal data]	UNIDIR
		[Names withheld – personal data]	ICRC
13-16 May 2014, UN Convention on Certain Convention Weapons (CCW) Informal Meeting of Experts	Geneva, Switzerland	Please see here for open-source list of state, NGOs and other non-state actors:	
		[Names withheld – personal data]	FCO – AEPD / MOD
17 October 2014, UNIDIR discussion on 'Meaningful	New York, USA	[Name withheld – personal data]	FCO (UKMIS Geneva)

Human Control'		Information not held	ICRC
		[Name withheld – personal data]	Human Rights Watch
		[Name withheld – personal data]	Article 36
		[State attendees withheld – Section 27 International Relations]	
27 October 2014, Ministerial Meeting with UK Working Group on Arms	FCO, London	Tobias Ellwood MP	FCO Under Secretary of State for Defence & International Security
		[Names withheld – personal data]	FCO – AEPD
		[Names withheld – personal data]	Amnesty UK
		[Names withheld – personal data]	Article 36
		[Names withheld – personal data]	Saferworld
		[Names withheld – personal data]	UNA - UK
4 November 2014, 'Drones and the increasing autonomy of weapons systems', hosted by the APPG on Drones and the APPG on Weapons and Protection of Civilians respectively.	Houses of Parliament, London	[Names withheld – personal data]	FCO, MOD
		[Name withheld – personal data]	House of Lords
		[Name withheld – personal data]	Information not held
		[Name withheld – personal data]	Chatham House
		[Name withheld – personal data]	Article 36/Geneva Academy
		Information on other participants not held.	

5 November 2014	MOD, London	[Names withheld – personal data]	FCO, MOD
		[Name withheld – personal data]	University of Birmingham
		[Name withheld – personal data]	King's College London
10-14 November 2014, UN CCW Meeting of High Contracting Parties	Geneva, Switzerland	A full list of state and non-state delegations who participated in the meeting is available here .	
		[Names withheld – personal data]	FCO – AEPD, MOD
25 March 2015	Portcullis House, London	[Names withheld – personal data]	FCO – AEPD, MOD
		[Name withheld – personal data]	House of Lords
		[Name withheld – personal data]	House of Commons
		[Name withheld – personal data]	House of Commons
		[Name withheld – personal data]	Article 36
		[Name withheld – personal data]	Article 36
		[Name withheld – personal data]	UNA – UK
		[Name withheld – personal data]	APPG on Drones and Protection of Civilians
13-17 April 2015, UN CCW Informal Meeting of Experts	Geneva, Switzerland	Please see here for list of state, NGOs and other non-state actors who participated in the meeting.	
		[Names withheld – personal data]	FCO (Arms Export Policy Department) / MOD