



Ministry  
of Defence

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17 December 2014

Dear [REDACTED]

Release of Information

Thank you for your correspondence dated 27 November 2014 requesting information on the number of merchant vessels that registered with the UK Maritime Trade Organisation (UKMTO) during October 2014 and the number, or percentage, of the registered vessels that reported that they had an armed security team embarked. Your enquiry has been considered to be a request for information in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

A search for the information has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence, and I can confirm that some information in scope of your request is held.

During the month of October 2014 UKMTO received 6726 notifications from registered merchant vessels and other shipping entering the High Risk Area (HRA).

With respect to information on the number of vessels with ASTs embarked as a percentage this is withheld under the following exemption s41(Information Provided in Confidence). Under s41, information is exempt if its disclosure would be an actionable breach of confidence, an action for breach of confidence can be brought to prevent disclosure of commercial, personal and official information of a confidential nature.

The information requested has been provided to the UKMTO in confidence, with the expectation that it would not be transmitted outside of the coalition partners for any purpose other than what it was provided for. The disclosure of this information to the public by the UKMTO could constitute an actionable breach of confidentiality.

Under Section 16 of the Act (Advice and Assistance) you may find it helpful to note Armed Security Teams (ASTs) are embarked as individual companies see fit and any information of this is declared voluntarily and on the basis that it will be held in confidence for reference only by coalition partners. ASTs can be embarked for several days aboard one ship and

then possibly trans-shipped within the HRA, so the number and distribution of ASTs embarked is a constantly changing picture within the HRA.

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 me 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, 1<sup>st</sup> 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 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.gov.uk>.

Yours sincerely

A thick black horizontal bar used to redact the signature of the sender.