



Ministry
of Defence

Ministry of Defence
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United Kingdom

Ref: FOI2015/11241

Telephone: [REDACTED]

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8 January 2016

[REDACTED]

Thank you for your letter of 8th December 2015 requesting the following information:

“Regarding the Joint Committee on Human Rights’ (‘JCHR’) inquiry into the UK Government’s policy on the use of drones for targeted killing (‘Inquiry’), since 29 October 2015:

- 1. on how many occasions and on what dates has the Ministry of Defence corresponded with the JCHR on the Inquiry;*
- 2. on how many occasions and on what dates has the Ministry of Defence corresponded with each individual member of the JCHR regarding the Inquiry; and*
- 3. Please provide me with a copy of any and all correspondence referred to in 1 and 2 above. You may redact names of officials (unless they are Ministers) for Data Protection purposes but please provide me with official job titles.”*

I am treating your correspondence 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 I can confirm that some information in scope of your request is held.

I am splitting your request into two categories: Correspondence sent between the Ministry of Defence and individual members of the Joint Committee on Human Rights (“the Committee”), and emails exchanged between the Ministry of Defence and the Committee in relation to the enquiry.

The material in the first category comprises of five separate letters between the Secretary of State for Defence and Committee members, all of which have been published on the Committee’s web site and are therefore reasonably accessible by other means. On that basis they are exempt from disclosure under Section 21(reasonably accessible by other means) of the FOIA. The link to the Committee’s website is set out below:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/joint-select/human-rights-committee/publications/>

In relation to the second part of this request, correspondence between the Ministry of Defence and the Committee in relation to the enquiry, information is held but it is exempt from disclosure under Section 34(1) of the FOIA (exemption required for the purposes of avoiding an infringement of the privileges of either House). The exemption applies in order to avoid an infringement of the privileges of the House of Commons and the House of Lords. This is an absolute exemption and the public interest test does not apply.

If you wish to pursue the matter further, I suggest you contact the Committee directly.

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, 1st Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail 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, <https://ico.org.uk/>.

Yours sincerely,

Top Office Group Business Manager