



Ministry
of Defence

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Dear

Thank you for your email of 20 January 2015 requesting the following information:

We seek to make an FOI request regarding the British Governments activities in relation to the Chibok girls that were kidnapped in Nigeria, our FOI dates from January 2013 to date.

We seek to have the results and reports of the British Armed Forces, the details of where they searched and the results of their findings.

We also seek to have the details of the technology, technique or methodology used in the search and the consequential results.

We would like confirmation of the following:

- 1. Confirmation of the actual number of girls kidnapped*
- 2. Confirmation of interview of the parents of the girls*
- 3. Confirmation of whether or not the girls are in the Chibok area*
- 4. Confirmation of the girls being married off. .*

We are 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 we can confirm that some of the information in scope of your request is held.

The information you have requested can be found below but some of the information falls entirely within the scope of the qualified exemption provided for at section 27 (International Relations) of the FOIA and has been withheld.

Section 27 is a qualified exemption and is subject to public interest testing which means that the information requested can only be withheld if the public interest in doing so outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

Section 27(1)(a), (1)(c) and (2) have been applied because some of the information has the potential to adversely affect relations with our allies. The Public Interest Test concluded that whilst release would increase public understanding and confidence in the relation the United Kingdom has with other international states in its assistance with operations, the balance of the public interest lay in withholding the information you desire. We have considered it necessary to apply the higher level of prejudice against release of the exempted information at the higher level of “would” rather than “would be likely to” adversely affect relations with our allies.

Some of the information you request is available in the public domain and where this is the case we have provided a weblink or, in cases where the information is available from several sources, an example weblink. Please note that the Ministry of Defence is not responsible for the content of external websites. Where information is not held by the UK government, we have noted this against the relevant question. Taking each part of your question in turn:

We seek to have the results and reports of British Armed Forces, the details of where they searched and the results of their findings.

Withheld under Section 27(1)(a), 27(1)(c) and 27(2)

We also seek to have the details of the technology, technique or methodology used in the search and consequential results.

RAF Sentinel R1 and Tornado aircraft have been used to provide imagery and other data as part of a combined effort with Nigeria and other nations.

Additional information on these aircraft and the surveillance equipment fitted thereon is available on the RAF website:

<http://www.raf.mod.uk/equipment/sentinelr1.cfm>

<http://www.raf.mod.uk/equipment/tornado.cfm>

The results of the searches conducted by UK surveillance aircraft is withheld under Section 27(1)(a), 27(1)(c) and 27(2)

Confirmation of the actual number of girls kidnapped.

Not held by the UK Government but available in the public domain, for example at the following link:

<http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2014/11/14/chibok-boko-haram.html>

Confirmation of interview of the parents of the girls

Not held by the UK Government

Confirmation of whether or not the girls are held in the Chibok area

Not held by the UK Government

Confirmation of the girls being married off

Not held by the UK Government. A statement made by the Commander of Boko Haram on 1 Nov 14 is available in the public domain and was widely reported at the time, for example at the following link:

<http://news.sky.com/story/1364832/boko-haram-schoolgirls-married-off>

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, <http://www.ico.org.uk>.

Yours sincerely,

PJHQ-J8-FOI-Secretariat