



Ministry  
of Defence

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Thank you for your email of 26 October which requested the following information:

1. *In how many countries does the UK currently conduct air strikes via drones?*
  - (a) *Please list the countries and the date the operation started in each territory.*
  - (b) *Has the UK obtained permission from the governments of these countries to conduct its air strikes via drones?*
  - (c) *How many people have been killed as a result of the air strikes via drones? Of these how many people were civilians and/or non-combatants and how many were under the age of 18?*
2. *In total, how many air strikes via drones have been conducted in each country since operations began?*

Your correspondence has been treated 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 the information in the scope of your request is held.

**Q1(a). Please list the countries and the date the operation started in each territory.**

RAF Reaper MQ9A Remotely Piloted Air Systems (RPAS) are currently only conducting strike operations in Iraq against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). They have been conducting strike operations in support of Op SHADER (the UK's contribution to operations to counter ISIL) since 09 November 2014.

Separately, the RAF conducted a Reaper air strike in Syria on 21 August. This strike was not part of Op SHADER as strike operations against ISIL under Op SHADER are only carried out in Iraq. For further information on this strike, the Prime Minister's statement and House of Commons debate from 7 September 2015 can be found at:

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmhansrd/cm150907/debtext/150907-0001.htm>

**Q1(b) Has the UK obtained permission from the governments of these countries to conduct its air strikes via drones?**

The UK's military action in Iraq (Op SHADER) is at the request of the Government of Iraq and is supporting Iraqi Security Forces to degrade and ultimately defeat ISIL.

For further information on the strike in Syria, the Prime Minister's statement and House of Commons debate from 7 September 2015 can be found at:

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmhansrd/cm150907/debtext/150907-0001.htm>

**Q1(c) How many people have been killed as a result of the air strikes via drones? Of these how many people were civilians and/or non-combatants and how many were under the age of 18?**

With respect to the answer provided above to question 1(a) the UK has estimated<sup>1</sup> that 305 ISIL enemy combatants have been killed by RAF Reaper strikes in Iraq as of 30 Oct 15. To date there have been no known cases of civilian casualties resulting from UK strikes in Iraq. All strikes take place in accordance with UK Rules of Engagement and applicable law.

For further information on the strike in Syria, the Prime Minister's statement and House of Commons debate from 7 September 2015 can be found at:

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmhansrd/cm150907/debtext/150907-0001.htm>

**Q2. In total, how many air strikes via drones have been conducted in each country since operations began?**

As of the 30 October there have been 227 strikes by RAF Reaper in Iraq since Op SHADER began.

For further information on the strike in Syria, the Prime Minister's statement and House of Commons debate from 7 September 2015 can be found at:

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmhansrd/cm150907/debtext/150907-0001.htm>

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 this office 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.org.uk>.

Yours sincerely

PJHQ J9-FOI-Secretariat

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<sup>1</sup> Disclaimer: These are estimated figures only. It is not usually possible to verify enemy combatants killed categorically following an incident due to the risks involved in doing so and these figures are reviewed and updated when more information becomes available. It is therefore possible that future statements might not match this statement exactly