



Foreign &  
Commonwealth  
Office

Arabian Peninsula and Iran Department  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
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Website: <https://www.gov.uk>

01 September 2016

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST REF: 0728-16**

Thank you for your email of 29 July asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked:

*Following the corrections made on 21 July 2016 to five oral and written statements made by ministers regarding arms sales to Saudi Arabia, please explain:*

- a) Who drafted the original written responses on 12 February to Question 24770; 15 February to Questions 24769; and 4 January to Question 15523, and who signed them off.*
- b) Whether the then-Foreign Secretary, Philip Hammond, approved those responses.*

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.

As stated in the Written Ministerial Statement HCWS125 it became clear that the drafting of answers to four written questions and two responses given in debates relating to allegations of breaches of International Humanitarian Law did not accurately reflect the position as set out in numerous other written questions and debates on this topic.

For the parliamentary questions you highlight (24770, 24769 and 15523), the Arabian Peninsula and Iran Department (APID) led on drafting and the responses were signed off by the Acting Head of APID. The former Foreign Secretary approved the responses.

Some information has been withheld using the following exemption Section 40.

Some of the information you have requested, is personal data including 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.

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Yours sincerely,

Arabian Peninsula and Iran Department



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