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MINISTER OF STATE FOR  
THE ARMED FORCES

ref: *FG EUR 45/2007*  
*OSG OPO*  
 23 JUL 2007  
 to: *UK team*  
 cc: *P.D. Jodit*

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D/MSU/4/5/2/is

*18<sup>th</sup>* July 2007

*Des Browne*

Thank you for your letter of 29 May 2007 to Des Browne in which you raise concerns over the alleged killing of Ali Salam 'Abdul Hassan alRukabi, Mahmoud Ahmad Wahib and Mahir Jasim Ghodhban. I am responding in view of my responsibilities as Minister of State for the Armed Forces. I have asked officials to look into the details you provided. Whilst I am unable to confirm the identities you suggest, I can confirm there was a significant incident in Basra on the date and time you mention and we believe that some of those involved may have been killed. In accordance with UK policy a review was conducted immediately after the incident and I can give you the following details.

UK troops came under fire on 10 April 2007 whilst on a routine patrol in Basra. The ensuing firefight lasted around two hours and was described by UK forces involved as a "fluid and fast moving series of contacts". The review conducted after the event confirmed that whilst a substantial amount of ammunition had been fired, it had all been aimed at clearly identified targets in self defence and in line with current UK Rules of Engagement (RoE). It seems unlikely that there would have been any 'passers by' in such circumstances. Prior to receipt of your letter, we were not aware of the existence of a police report. We have now requested that the police provides us with it, to determine whether there are grounds for further investigation.

All civilian deaths in Iraq are a tragedy and concern us all. British Forces seek to avoid causing civilian casualties. It is, however, important that troops are able to defend themselves, Iraqi Security Forces and civilians against terrorist groups operating in Iraq who often deliberately target civilians.

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



What is clear is that any civilian death is regrettable, in whatever circumstances, and we are doing all we can, along with the rest of the international community, to support the Iraqi Security Forces in their efforts to improve their capacity and effectiveness in tackling the security situation.

You may wish to be aware that the father of Ali Salam 'Abdul Hassan al Rukabi presented to the Area Claims Officer at Basra Air Station on 13 June 2007 a claim for compensation for the death of his son. This claim is being investigated in line with our normal procedures and he will be informed of the outcome when complete.

I hope that this addresses your concerns.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Bob Ainsworth', written in black ink.



The Rt Hon Bob Ainsworth MP