



# Ministry of Defence

## Jg FOi Secretariat

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Reference: FOi 2019/07549 (185)

13 August 2019

Dear [REDACTED]

We refer to your request dated 1 July 2019, which asked for the following information on Operation SHADER:

*"1) For each month between April 2019 and June 2019, and broken down between i) Reaper, ii) Tornado, iii) Typhoon and iv) F-35*

- a) the total number of missions undertaken by these aircraft on Operation Shader*
- b) the number of those missions entering Syria*
- c) the number of those missions entering Iraq*

*2) For each month between April 2019 and June 2019, the number of sorties with weapons released by a) Reaper b) Tornado, c) Typhoon and d) F-35 broken down between Iraq and Syria?*

*3) For each month between April 2019 and June 2019, the number and type of weapons released by a) Reapers, b) Tornado, c) Typhoon, d) F-35 broken down between Iraq and Syria?*

*4) The number of UK air strikes in a) Iraq and b) Syria per month from April 2019 to June 2019, broken down between Reaper, Tornado, Typhoon and F-35 aircraft?*

*5) The number of UK weapon release events in a) Iraq and b) Syria per month from April 2019 to June 2019, broken down between Reaper, Tornado, Typhoon and F-35 aircraft?*

*6) Please can you tell me, for each month between April 2019 and June 2019, how many hours have UK a) Reapers, b) Tornado, c) Typhoon and d) F-35 flown on Operation Shader?"*



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 information concerning part of your request is held and releasable. The information requested can be found at Annex A.

Please note that the Tornado conducted its last operational sortie on 31 January 2019 and was removed from the Operation SHADER theatre in February 2019. As such, Tornado has not been included in any of the information tables attached.

The data contained in this statement is believed to be complete and correct at the time of issue. The MOD operational activity databases are frequently reviewed and any errors and omissions are corrected. It is therefore possible that future statements might not match this statement exactly. The MOD regrets any difficulty that this may cause but emphasises that our aim is to ensure that our records are as complete and correct as possible.

If you have any queries regarding the content of this letter, please contact this office in the first instance.

If you wish to complain about the handling of your request, or the content of this response, you can request an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, Ground 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 should be made within 40 working days of the date of this response.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may raise your complaint directly to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not normally investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website at <https://ico.org.uk/>.

Yours sincerely,

PJHQ J9 FOI Secretariat

Annex:

A. Operation SHADER Data Tables – April to June 2019.



**OPERATION SHADER DATA TABLES – APRIL TO JUNE 2019**

1) For each month between April 2019 and June 2019, and broken down between i) Reaper, ii) Tornado<sup>1</sup>, iii) Typhoon and iv) F-35<sup>2</sup>

- a) the total number of missions undertaken by these aircraft on Operation Shader
- b) the number of those missions entering Syria
- c) the number of those missions entering Iraq

Month	Iraq (No Syria Airspace Entry Recorded)			Syria Airspace Entry Recorded			Total		
	F-35	Typhoon	Reaper	F-35	Typhoon	Reaper	F-35	Typhoon	Reaper
April		3	20		43	16		46	36
May		16	48		33	7		49	55
June	3	2	30	6	45	18	9	47	48
<b>Total</b>	3	21	98	6	121	41	9	142	139

Caveat: The MOD records are focused on sorties flown and weapons released. The AWC does not record all cases of entry into Syrian airspace by RAF Reaper, Typhoon and F-35 aircraft. For Reaper, all missions recorded as entering Syrian airspace will have transited through (and possibly operated in) Iraq due to the basing location of this platform. For Typhoon and F-35, MOD records some Syrian airspace entry cases and these might be for (a) transit to Iraqi airspace or (b) to reach their area of operation in Syria. The MOD records all cases of weapon release in Iraq and Syria so any sortie/mission involving weapon release in Syria will be recorded as having entered Syrian airspace.

The table lists all recorded cases of those two Syrian airspace entry cases (transit through Syria to Iraqi airspace and operating in Syrian airspace) in the 'Syria' columns. The remainder of the missions flown are listed as limited to Iraqi airspace. Some of these might have transited Syrian airspace to reach Iraqi airspace but we have no record of it. Weapon release locations are invariably recorded, i.e. all weapons releases in Iraq and Syria are specifically recorded as such.

<sup>1</sup> Tornado was removed from the Operation SHADER theatre in February 2019 prior to its retirement in March.

<sup>2</sup> F-35 deployed to the region in May 2019 for training purposes prior to conducting operational missions on Operation SHADER in June 2019.



Even if the cases of sorties releasing weapons in specific nations are added to the totals of sorties flown in specific nations, that latter total will still not necessarily be the complete total of entry into that nation's airspace. This incompleteness is simply a function of the database design, i.e. focused on weapon expenditure and performance.

2) For each month between April 2019 and June 2019, the number of sorties with weapons released by a) Reaper b) Tornado, c) Typhoon and d) F-35 broken down between Iraq and Syria?

a. Number of sorties with weapons released – Iraq

Month	F-35	Typhoon	Reaper	Total
April		2	0	2
May		1	0	1
June <sup>3</sup>	0	<b>1</b>	0	<b>1</b>

b. Number of sorties with weapons released – Syria

There were no sorties with weapons released conducted over Syria.

3) For each month between April 2019 and June 2019, the number and type of weapons released by a) Reapers, b) Tornado, c) Typhoon, d) F-35 broken down between Iraq and Syria?

a. Number and type of weapons released – Iraq

Month	F-35	Typhoon		Reaper	Total
	PWIV	PWIV	BS2	AGM-114	
April		7	0	0	7
May		2	0	0	2
June	0	1	0	0	1

b. Number and type of weapons released – Syria

There were no weapons released over Syria.

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<sup>3</sup> The figures in bold are corrections from our previous response (FOI 2019/07549(185) dated 30 July 2019 refers).



4) The number of UK air strikes in a) Iraq and b) Syria per month from April 2019 to June 2019, broken down between Reaper, Tornado, Typhoon and F-35 aircraft?

As advised in our response to a previous FOI request<sup>4</sup>, airstrikes information is no longer recorded or held by the MOD with effect from 8 April 2019. The airstrikes data for the period 1-8 April 2019 was included in our previous response. Should you require this information for your records, we suggest you contact the Operation INHERENT RESOLVE coalition ([www.inherentresolve.mil](http://www.inherentresolve.mil)).

5) The number of UK weapon release events in a) Iraq and b) Syria per month from April 2019 to June 2019, broken down between Reaper, Tornado, Typhoon and F-35 aircraft?

a. Number of UK weapons release events – Iraq

Month	F-35	Typhoon		Reaper	Total
	PWIV	PWIV	BS2	AGM-114	
April		7	0	0	7
May		2	0	0	2
June	0	1	0	0	1

b. Number of UK weapons release events – Syria

There were no UK weapons release events over Syria.

6) Please can you tell me, for each month between April 2019 and June 2019, how many hours have UK a) Reapers, b) Tornado, c) Typhoon and d) F-35 flown on Operation Shader?

Month	F-35	Typhoon	Reaper	Total
April		517	437	954
May		561	671	1232
June	99	505	665	1269

Caveat: All numbers are rounded to the nearest hour.

<sup>4</sup> FOI 2019/03974(150) dated 1 May 2019.



