



Policy Legacy FOI Team
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Reference: FOI: 2020/12518

Date: 7 December 2020

Dear [REDACTED]

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION – VARIOUS QUESTIONS REGARDING ATO PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO THE PSNI

Thank you for your e-mail dated 13 November, I can confirm that your request has been considered under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI(A)), and the process is now complete.

You asked the following:

- “How many times has ATO been request to assist the PSNI in Northern Ireland in 2020***
- *How many requests were made in 2019, 2018, 2017, 2016***
- *What is the detail of each incident in 2020***
- *How many of the incidents in 2020 resulted in the finding of a viable device.”***

I can confirm that the MOD does hold some of the information that you have requested however under Section 21 of the Act, we are not required to provide information in response to a request if it is already reasonably accessible to the applicant. Please note that Section 21 is an absolute exemption therefore it is not subject to the public interest test.

Information relating to the statistics relating to how many times Army Technical Officers called out to assist the Police Service of Northern Ireland to cover the period 2016 to 2020 can be viewed at the following links:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/9th-annual-report-of-independent-reviewer-of-justice-security>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/10th-annual-report-of-independent-reviewer-of-justice-security>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/11th-annual-report-of-independent-reviewer-of-justice-security>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/12th-annual-report-of-independent-reviewer-of-justice-security>

The information can be found in Annex E Statistic: Explosive Ordnance Disposal (E.O.D) Activity in Support of the Police.

Explosive Ordnance Disposal activity is not broken down geographically and is produced on a yearly basis. Previous Reports can be found via www.gov.uk website.

I can confirm that information regarding the figures for August 2020 to July 2021 is exempt under Section 22 of the Act as it is information intended for future publication.

Section 22 provides that:

- (1) Information is exempt information if-
 - (a) The information is held by the public authority with a view to publication, by the authority or any other person, at some future date (whether determined or not).
 - (b) It is reasonable in all circumstances that the information should be withheld from disclosure until the date referred to in paragraph a.

Section 22 is a qualified exemption subject to the public interest test. We have considered the public interest in releasing the information against the interest in withholding it. The Independent Reviewer of Justice and Security NI Act 2017 has not yet published his report to Parliament however once he does the report will be available through www.gov.uk. Therefore, we have concluded that the public interest in withholding this information outweighs the public interest in releasing it.

Please note MOD publishes any request that releases, or partially releases (including Section 21 (Information accessible to applicant by other means)) responses into the public domain via our website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/foi-responses-released-by-the-ministry-of-defence-2020>. All personal details in respect of your request have been removed to protect confidentiality.

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 (email CIO-FOI-IR@mod.gov.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 FOI(A). 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 of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website at <https://ico.org.uk/>.

Yours sincerely

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