Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office

Information Rights Unit
WG.75
King Charles Street
London
SW1A 2AH

Email: information.rights@fcdo.gov.uk

[redacted]

[redacted]

30th September 2022

Dear [redacted]

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 - REQUEST REF: FOI2022/24692

Thank you for your email of 20th September asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You wrote:

Background to request:

Information previously released into the public domain following FOI requests has shown that then-Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson and the Foreign Office Arms Export Policy Team approved continued UK arms sales to Saudi Arabia in July and August 2016, following airstrikes by the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen. See:

https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/boris-johnson-arms-sales-saudi-arabia-yemen-war-weapons-exports-a8955091.html<https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.independent.co.uk%2Fnews%2Fuk%2Fpolitics%2Fboris-johnson-arms-sales-saudi-arabia-yemen-war-weapons-exports-a8955091.html&data=05%7C01%7Cinformation.rights%40fco.gov.uk%7Cbb9e11e7ea9c48b1169e08da9b144f8b%7Cd3a2d0d37cc84f52bbf985bd43d94279%7C0%7C0%7C637992808778332158%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=mbJrZ4TjXjhXe5v%2BjXtjdG9lJzzqOWSpMLrAVbhzLHU%3D&reserved=0>

https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/jun/11/johnson-allowed-arms-sales-to-saudis-after-strike-on-food-factory<https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.theguardian.com%2Fpolitics%2F2019%2Fjun%2F11%2Fjohnson-allowed-arms-sales-to-saudis-after-strike-on-food-factory&data=05%7C01%7Cinformation.rights%40fco.gov.uk%7Cbb9e11e7ea9c48b1169e08da9b144f8b%7Cd3a2d0d37cc84f52bbf985bd43d94279%7C0%7C0%7C637992808778488392%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=flrwYmEDRTY06zJLhguBniOPoesd8CH5ZatgFyKFJhY%3D&reserved=0>

Request:

Under the FOIA 2000, please disclose any FCO correspondence on the topic of arms exports and/or arms export licence applications to Saudi Arabia between 8 October 2016 and 14 October 2016 between the FCO and Department for International Trade, and ministers and their teams, including Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, the Secretary of State for International Trade and the Prime Minister.

I do not believe that any exemptions will apply to the information within the scope of the request, but in the event that it is asserted that they apply, then please set out full written reasons. If my request is refused based on Section 12 of FOIA 2000, could you please suggest more appropriate dates to bring it within the cost limit?

In line with our previous reply (reference FOI 18968), I can confirm that the FCDO does hold information relevant to your request.

Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act makes provision for public authorities to refuse requests for information where the cost of dealing with them would exceed the appropriate limit. The limit has been specified in the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004. For central government the appropriate limit is set at £600. This represents the estimated cost of one or more persons spending 3 ½ working days in determining whether the Department holds the information, and locating, retrieving and extracting it. We believe that information relevant to your request is located across a significant volume of physical folders and loose papers which would also contain information that is not relevant to your request. Consequently, I estimate that it will take more than 3 ½ working days to locate, retrieve and extract this information. In these circumstances we are not obliged under the Act to comply with your request.

I would like to reiterate information provided in our previous response, that although you have altered the timeframe in your latest request, as we have no way of easily identifying the information requested due to the reasons provided above, we are unable to offer any viable suggestions on how your request could be narrowed in a way that would enable us to comply with it within the FOI cost limit.

If you would like a review of our decision, please write to Information Rights Unit, Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, Room WG.75, King Charles Street, London, SW1A 2AH. Email:information.rights@fcdo.gov.uk Please note you have 40 working days to do so from the date of this letter.

You can apply directly to the Information Commissioner. However, the Information Commissioner will not normally make a decision unless you have first exhausted the complaints procedure provided by the FCDO. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF, or online at https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/

Yours sincerely,

Information Rights Unit