



Ministry
of Defence

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20 May 2021

Mr Iain Overton
request-748036-504791eb@whatdotheyknow.com

Dear Mr Overton,

Thank you for your email of 16th April 2021, requesting the information as follows:

“Dear Ministry of Defence, You published a list of mailboxes where the UK military is on operations.

<https://gbr01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.gov.uk%2Fgovernment%2Fpublications%2Fbpos-included-in-the-mod-enduring-families-free-mail-service%2Fbpos-included-in-the-mod-enduring-families-free-mail-service-updated-17-june-2019&data=04%7C01%7Ccio-foi%40mod.gov.uk%7C386bd894b4764d04edb808d900dda39b%7Cbe7760ed5953484bae95d0a16dfa09e5%7C0%7C1%7C637541774190469948%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWljojMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBTiI6Iik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=dllyn%2Bo3%2BSz63F7DWWdWRzaWUcReUYtDxFu8b9VBAgU%3D&reserved=0>

However, I was unable to find out where Op. Cattalo Op. Corded Op. Tramal or Op. Recompose were based. Can you please let me know where (country / region etc.) these operations are or were?”

We are treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000.

A search for the information has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence, and we can confirm that all the information in scope of your request is held.

The information you have requested falls within the scope of the qualified exemptions provided for at sections 26 (Defence) and 27 (International Relations) of the FOIA and has been withheld. This relates to the locations and descriptions of the military activity.

Section 26 and 27 are qualified exemptions and are subject to a public interest test which means that the information requested can only be withheld if the public interest in doing so outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

Sections 26(1)(a), 26(1)(b) and 27(1) have been applied to this information because it could reveal the locations of individual service personnel, information about the numbers of service personnel deployed to each location and information on the activities they are carrying out. The balance of public interest was found to be in favour of withholding the information given that, overall, the public interest is best served in not releasing any details on the exact geographical locations or activities being undertaken on Op CATTALO. This could prejudice the security of UK personnel serving abroad and could provide a tactical advantage to our enemies. In addition, this could undermine diplomatic relationships between the UK and other states, putting UK interests abroad at risk. The level of prejudice against release of this information has been set at the lower level of 'would be likely' to cause harm if released.

The Ministry of Defence are content to release the locations of CORDED, TRAMAL and RECOMPOSE as the details of these operations are already in the public domain.

Op CORDED - early deployments were to Malawi and the next iteration will be to Zambia.

Op TRAMAL is based in Tunisia.

Op RECOMPOSE was based in Colombia.

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.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 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