



Department  
for Business  
Innovation & Skills

Europe, Trade, and  
International Directorate.  
Export Control Organisation  
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Mr Stone  
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[www.bis.gov.uk](http://www.bis.gov.uk)

BIS reference: **13/1198**  
Date: 30 September 2013

Dear Mr Stone

Thank you for your email of 2 September 2013 in which you requested the following information relating to export licences (I quote):

**1) Please disclose all military or paramilitary goods, dual use technology, and chemicals export licences granted to businesses for export to the following countries since 2010:**

- Egypt
- Sudan/South Sudan
- Saudi Arabia
- Iran
- Turkey
- Ivory Coast
- Senegal
- Uganda
- Angola
- Israel
- Kazakhstan
- Zimbabwe

**I am most interested in the dates of approval and the specific goods exported – there is no need to provide commercially confidential information.**

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ('the Act'), you have the right to:

- know whether we hold the information you require
- be provided with that information (subject to any exemptions under the Act which may apply).

I am writing to advise you that, following a search of our paper and electronic records, I have considered your request (in bold above) under the Freedom of Information Act (FoIA) and I am writing to advise you that this Department holds information falling within scope of your request.

The information you have requested is attached.

In order to view all the information relating to a licence entry, you will need to either a) expand some of the column widths or b) set 'wrap text' applicable to the entire spreadsheet or particular entries that you are viewing individually.

Please note that although you have asked for information about "the specific goods exported", BIS holds records of export licences applied for and does, in general, not hold records of actual exports. Consequently, the information provided relates to export licences granted only and should note, therefore, that this does not constitute actual exports. The fact that a licence is issued does not necessarily indicate that the equipment was actually shipped in full or in part.

Additionally, please note that we have only been able to provide the Annual Report Summaries of the goods included on the licences. The specific (actual) goods descriptions are exempt from disclosure by virtue of section 41 (1) (information provided in confidence) and section 43 (2) (commercial interests) of the Act. An explanation of how this applies to this information follows:

Section 41(1) applies to information provided to the Department in confidence and, as a duty of confidence exists, there is a strong public interest in protecting that confidence and there are no public interest considerations in relation to this information requiring us to set the duty of confidentiality aside.

Section 43(2) applies because disclosure of the information requested (e.g. specific goods descriptions) would be likely to prejudice the commercial interests of the company or companies who have applied for export licences. Export licence applications and the documents associated with them contain commercially sensitive information about proposed exports (including, in particular, sensitive information about the applicant, the exporter's customers, the actual goods descriptions and the value of goods to be exported) that could be of use to competitors. Disclosure of this information would reveal details of the actual goods descriptions that appear on the licences and, as these were provided by the UK exporters who applied for them, they can be linked (in some cases) directly back to the UK exporter. For example, some goods descriptions include specific reference to the UK exporter who applied for the licence and others include reference to the end-users (the exporter's overseas customers) that could be of use to competitors. Disclosure of this information would reveal details of the markets that companies are operating in and possibly details of commercial opportunities that are still available (to non-UK exporters in the case of UK refusals and in respect of those applications that are yet to be completed).

We have considered the public interest arguments for and against disclosure. Whilst we recognise that there is a general public interest in the disclosure of this information to enable public scrutiny of UK activity, particularly in respect of destinations where regional tensions have arisen or increased, as greater transparency makes Government more accountable, we do consider that against this there is a public interest in ensuring that the commercial interests of external businesses are not damaged or undermined by disclosure of information which is not public knowledge and which could adversely impact on future business.

In addition, by releasing such information, the confidence our customers have in us may be damaged, making them reluctant to provide us with commercially sensitive information in the future. In this case, we consider that the public interest in favour of disclosing such information is outweighed by the necessity to protect the commercial interests of third parties.

Furthermore, we consider that general public interest arguments about the disclosure of what we licence and what we do not are answered by the general disclosure made by the Departments in the publication of the Annual and Quarterly Reports on Strategic Export Controls. These reports contain detailed information on export licences issued, refused or revoked, by destination, including the overall value, type (e.g. Military, Other) and a summary of the items covered by these licences. They are available to view on the Strategic Export Controls: Reports and Statistics website at <https://www.exportcontroldb.bis.gov.uk>

Finally, the work of the Department in this area is scrutinised by the Committees on Arms Export Controls (the members are drawn from four different Select Committees) and we are able to provide them, in confidence, with additional details in particular cases of concern. We think that any additional public interest in disclosing to the public at large which companies have sought to supply what items to what overseas destinations is slight. The risk of prejudice to the companies involved outweighs such public interest because the damage that could be caused to exporters' business is potentially grave.

Should you wish to pursue any matters concerning this letter, please contact me.

#### Appeals procedure

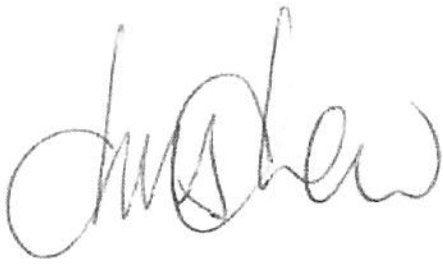
If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review. Internal review requests should be submitted within two months of the date of receipt of the response to your original letter and should be addressed to the Information Rights Unit ([FOI.Requests@bis.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:FOI.Requests@bis.gsi.gov.uk)).

Information Rights Unit  
Department for Business, Innovation & Skills  
1 Victoria Street  
London  
SW1H 0ET

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF

Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

**Yours Sincerely**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Chew', written in a cursive style.

**Chris Chew**  
**Head of Policy Unit - Export Control Organisation**