



Ministry of Defence

Ministry of Defence
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Tess Woolfenden
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14 December 2020

Dear Tess Woolfenden

Thank you for your email of 13 November requesting the following information:

"Can you please confirm if the MOD has any projects/work that tackle drugs overseas, or that tackle the drivers, enablers and consequences associated with the drugs trade overseas as a part of CSSF programmes or other government programmes? Could you also please confirm if any of these projects/work are funded in part, or in whole, using UK ODA? Requesting for 2018-2020."

I am treating your correspondence 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 I can confirm that some information in scope of your request is held. To provide a comprehensive list of activity would be likely to exceed the cost limit. Therefore, we are answering your request as it is worded and providing confirmation that the MOD engages in work that tackles drugs overseas.

Counter narcotics is, generally, a law enforcement lead. They will work with a range of other agencies and organisations in tackling the drivers, enablers and consequences associated with the drugs trade both in the UK and overseas.

Defence plays a supporting role, where appropriate, overseas through activity such as maritime counter narcotics patrolling by the Royal Navy and Royal Fleet Auxiliary. In the Caribbean, those operations are conducted under the UK's Atlantic Patrol Task (North), with US and other international partners. The UK also contributes both personnel in staff positions and Ships in support of the multi-national Combined Maritime Force, and Combined Task Force (CTF) 150 work under the CMF banner. CTF 150 is the Task Force which focuses on counter-narcotics operations, and its area of operation stretches across the Gulf of Oman, the Arabian Sea, the Indian Ocean, the Gulf of Aden, and the Southern Red Sea. None of this activity comes under, or is funded by, CSSF programmes, or uses UK ODA.

There is often media reporting of our successes in maritime counter narcotics operations, most recently on a series of drug seizures achieved in September and October by the Royal Navy and Royal Fleet Auxiliary in the Caribbean. A short summary of counter narcotics operational activity is included in the MOD's Annual Report and Accounts. The most recent edition of that report, published in October 2020, is here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/928741/6.6565_MoD_Annual_Report_and_Accounts_2019-20_211020_WEB_3_.pdf

The Joint Narcotics Analysis Centre (JNAC) is based in MOD's London headquarters. JNAC's mission is to inform 5-Eyes (UK, US, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand) decision makers on the Afghan, regional, and downstream impact of the narcotics trade and transnational crime. The Centre is funded and supported by defence, law enforcement and policy organisations from across the 5-Eyes community to enable strategic output and an holistic view of the Afghan narcotics problem set. UK financial support is not derived from CSSF or ODA funding streams.

If you are not satisfied with this response or you wish to complain about any aspect of the handling of your request, then you should contact us in the first instance at the address above. If informal resolution is not possible and you are still dissatisfied then you may apply for 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). Please note that any request for an internal review must be made within 40 working days of the date on which the attempt to reach informal resolution has come to an end.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may take your complaint 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. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website, <http://www.ico.org.uk>.

Yours sincerely,

International Security Directorate,
Ministry of Defence