Department for Business & Trade

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[redacted]

FOI2023/01234

30 March 2023

Dear [redacted]

Thank you for your email of 7 March where you requested the following information (I quote):

"Background to request:

Information previously released into the public domain following FOI requests has shown that then-Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson and the Export Control Joint Unit approved continued UK arms sales to Saudi Arabia in July and August 2016, following air strikes 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://eur02.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%7CFOI%40trade.gov.uk%7C05dce0fdb64a4ba1b81708db1f14ce5c%7C8fa217ec33aa46fbad96dfe68006bb86%7C0%7C0%7C638137946441725402%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=76stAJubzBEfbey45D%2B8vH24eAdNsICiCPvJ2tRG0DA%3D&reserved=0>

https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/jun/11/johnson-allowed-arms-sales-to-saudis-after-strike-on-food-factory<https://eur02.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%7CFOI%40trade.gov.uk%7C05dce0fdb64a4ba1b81708db1f14ce5c%

7C8fa217ec33aa46fbad96dfe68006bb86%7C0%7C0%7C638137946441725402%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=41wLMwxtodOdcyXglkBI5VzO3YLj%2FRP43PgEy4xOoU0%3D&reserved=0>

Request:

Correspondence on the topic of arms exports and/or arms export licence applications to Saudi Arabia between 8 October 2016 and 15 October 2016 held in electronic format on the department's centrally managed IT system.

I seek to obtain correspondence on this topic between the ECJU and ministers and their teams, including the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, the Secretary of State for International Trade, and the Prime Minister; and also correspondence on the same topic between the ECJU and the (then) FCO's Middle East and North Africa Directorate (MENAD), the Legal Directorate and APS/Foreign Secretary and Head of Outer Office.

Specifically, I seek ECJU correspondence about both applied for and completed applications for Open Individual Export Licences, and for correspondence in respect of both individual OIEL applications as well as OIEL applications generally during this time period.

I seek general correspondence between staff and bodies held outside of SPIRE."

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).

A machinery of government change was announced on 7 February 2023 and the Department for Business and Trade (DBT) was established on 21 February 2023. We are currently treating requests as specifically for information held under the previous Department for International Trade (DIT) remit. We are handling requests in this way unless otherwise advised or if we consider the request clearly relates to areas under transition.

I can confirm that the information you have requested is not held by the Department for Business and Trade.

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 request and should be addressed to the Information Rights Unit:

Information Rights Unit
Department for Business and Trade
Old Admiralty Building
London
SW1A 2DY
Email: foi@trade.gov.uk

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

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

Yours sincerely**,**

Department for Business and Trade