



Ref: EIR2022-023

████████████████████
5th October 2022

Dear ██████████,

Further to our letter of 31st August 2022 regarding your request for the following information:

I am writing to you to ask for your help in locating correspondences between Aldermaston/Harwell and the Nigerian Meteorological Service (in the late 1950s- early 1960s). Together, Britain and Nigeria monitored fall-out from French nuclear tests in the Algerian Sahara.

I am currently in Nigeria, where I hope to find documents relative to the Meteorological Service. Unfortunately, the Service moved from Lagos to Abuja in the mid-1960s and many records seem to have been lost. I have also looked at the British National Archives, but I am only finding allusions to what I am looking for. Your records are therefore the only place left for me to look at.

Your request has been considered under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR). The information requested is 'environmental information' as it meets the definition set out in regulation 2(1)(c) of the EIR.

We can confirm that the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) holds some information in scope of your request. However we are a separate public authority from Harwell, who are owned by the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA). If you require information from Harwell, please contact the NDA at enquiries@nda.gov.uk.

Attached are the documents which we have identified as being in scope. However, these have been redacted under regulations 12(3) and 13(1), relating to third party personal data, and 12(5)(a), relating to international relations, defence, national security and public safety. Regulations 12(3) and 13(1) are not subject to the Public Interest Test (PIT). However, regulation 12(5)(a) is a class-based exception and is subject to the PIT. This regulation provides that information can be withheld where disclosure would adversely affect international relations, defence, national security or public safety. Building numbers are routinely redacted from documents as it is deemed that providing this level of detail could assist our adversaries in building up a picture of the sites' layouts and potentially allowing them to target specific areas of the sites. Any disruption to the activities undertaken at AWE would ultimately impact on the ability to safeguard the defence of the nation.

We are also withholding some documents under regulation 12(5)(a) of the EIR. The Public Interest Test (PIT) for these documents has been conducted and has fallen in favour of applying the exception and withholding the remaining documents in full.



AWE recognises that the Regulations make a presumption towards disclosure wherever possible and include a general obligation to promote openness and transparency. We acknowledge that the documents date from more than 50 years ago.

However, the documents in question are correspondence written by the Nigerian government and sent to AWRE (at the time owned by the UK Ministry of Defence) concerning the French nuclear tests. If we were to release these documents we would be risking prejudicing the relationship between both the UK and Nigeria, and the UK and France. There is an expectation of confidentiality of communications between governments, and we would be betraying that confidentiality if we were to release them. Disclosure would undermine the willingness of Nigeria to collaborate with the UK in the future, and would undermine the trust of other countries in the UK to maintain confidentiality.

On balance, for these reasons, the information is being withheld.

Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications. If you have any queries regarding the content of this letter, please contact this office in the first instance.

If you are unhappy with the way your request has been handled you have a right to request an internal review within 40 days of receiving this letter, by writing to information.requests@awe.co.uk or our postal address: Information Requests Team, AWE Aldermaston, Reading, RG7 4PR. If you are still unhappy after an internal review has been completed, under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Regulation 18 of the EIR you have the right to take your complaint to the Information Commissioner's Office. Please note the Commissioner will generally not consider a complaint until you have exhausted AWE's internal complaints process.

Yours sincerely,

AWE Information Requests Team