

EXHIBIT C



UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND
7115 SOUTH BOUNDARY BOULEVARD
MACDILL AIR FORCE BASE, FLORIDA 33621-5101

16 July 2021

Mr. Hansi Lo Wang
NPR

Emailed to: hwang@npr.org

Dear Mr. Wang,

We received two Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests on 14 July 2021 seeking records regarding allegations of civilian harm resulting from the 26-27 October 2019 USCENTCOM operation in northwestern Syria to capture or kill ISIS founder and leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. Specifically, your requests sought: (1) Email communications including attachments and (2) a copy of the credibility assessment (CIVCAS CCAR) or Commander-Directed Investigation (CDI/AR15-6). In accordance with the DoD Manual 5400.07, DoD FOIA Program, U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM) aggregated your two requests into one since these requests clearly involve related matters. Your request is being processed in accordance with Title 5 U.S.C. § 552 Freedom of Information Act and Privacy Act, and Executive Order 13526. The actual processing time for these documents will depend upon consultation with other DoD components, stateside, overseas, or other agencies.

In your request, you asked for expedited processing. In order to qualify for expedited processing, the requester must demonstrate a compelling need for that information. Under the FOIA, compelling need means that: (1) failure to obtain records on an expedited basis could reasonably be expected to pose an imminent threat to the life or physical safety of an individual; or, (2) the information is currently newsworthy, such as information urgently needed by an individual primarily engaged in disseminating information in order to inform the public concerning federal government involvement; (3) failure to obtain records on an expedited basis would create an imminent loss of due process rights; or (4) failure to obtain records could reasonably be expected to harm substantial humanitarian interests. Your request does not satisfy the requirement for compelling need. Therefore, I cannot approve your request for expedited processing. Additionally, your request for a fee waiver is granted.

For any further assistance and to discuss any aspect of your request, you have the right to contact the Directorate for Oversight and Compliance, Defense Privacy, Civil Liberties, and Transparency Division, FOIA Public Liaison (Ms. Tonya Fuentes) at OSD.FOIALiaison@mail.mil; telephone (571) 372-0462. Additionally, you have the right to contact the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS) to inquire about the FOIA mediation services they offer. The contact information for OGIS is: Office of Government Information Services, National Archives and Records Administration, 8601 Adelphi Road-OGIS, College Park, MD 20740-6001, e-mail at ogis@nara.gov; telephone at (202) 741-5770; toll free at (877) 684-6448; or facsimile at (202) 741-5769.

If you are not satisfied with this response, you have the right to appeal to the appellate authority, Ms. Joo Chung, Director of Oversight and Compliance, Office of the Secretary of Defense. The appellate address is Directorate for Oversight and Compliance, 4800 Mark Center Drive, ATTN: DPCLTD, FOIA Appeals, Mailbox# 24, Alexandria, VA 22350-1700. As an alternative, you may use the Office of the Secretary of Defense FOIA request portal at <https://pal.whs.mil/> to submit your appeal electronically, or you can email your appeal to OSD.FOIA-APPEAL@mail.mil, and state "FOIA Appeal" in the subject of the email. Your appeal must be postmarked or submitted electronically within 90 calendar days from the date of this letter, cite USCENCOM's case #21-0469, and clearly mark "Freedom of Information Act Appeal" in your correspondence.

The USCENCOM FOIA Requester Service Center receives numerous FOIA requests and has a substantial number of pending FOIA cases. Therefore, we process requests in a multi-track processing system based on the date of receipt and complexity of the request. The FOIA does not require agencies to respond to questions, to do research, compile or analyze data, summarize, or conduct surveys for members of the public. You should be aware that the FOIA only provides the means by which the public can request specific documents from USCENCOM. The requested documents should be described to the extent that they may be located with a reasonable amount of effort. Your FOIA is currently #3048 in our queue. You can view your status on our website at www.centcom.mil/Home/FOIA.

If you have any questions regarding your inquiry, please contact the FOIA Requester Service Center at (813) 529-6285, centcom.macdill.centcom-hq.mbx.freedom-of-information-act@mail.mil, and refer to USCENCOM case #21-0469.

Sincerely,

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Kurt Y. Kaneshiro
Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Army
Deputy, Resources and Analysis Division