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OIA-2023-4792

16 August 2023

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

I refer to your email of 4 August 2023 regarding New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) procurement of Unmanned Ground Vehicles (UGVs) supplied by Roboteam. Your request has been considered in accordance with the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

*What due diligence was undertaken, into the suitability of Roboteam to act as a supplier, in context of NZDF's stated aims (as per the NZDF website), to be:*

*"a Force for good";*

*"a Force for Peace and Security";*

*and "a Force for those in need".*

*What evaluations were undertaken to consider Roboteam's history of supplying equipment that may have directly, or indirectly facilitated possible war crimes, prior to purchasing Roboteam's unmanned ground vehicles?*

There has been one New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) procurement with Roboteam for UGVs, with the 2019 purchase through Trakka Tech. This process began in January 2018 with the Request for Tender by the Ministry of Defence. Roboteam is an entrepreneurial business run from Israel which is built upon the company's core expertise in design of mobility systems and controls. Much of its business is involved in personal mobility solutions for disabled persons and medical applications.

Since the Government Procurement Rules (Edition 4)<sup>1</sup> came into effect on 1 October 2019, the NZDF ensures all new suppliers are aligned to the New Zealand Government Supplier Code of Conduct. This includes compliance where issues concerning human rights violations are concerned.

Prior to 1 October 2019, due diligence was carried out under a previous New Zealand Government directed procurement process (under the Controller and Auditor-General Good Practice Guide, Procurement Guidance for Public Entities). This required agencies to carry out due diligence on the preferred supplier of high value, high risk, and/or complex procurements. The purpose was to ensure that the supplier had the capacity and stability to fulfil all of the requirements of the contract. There was no specific reference to human rights issues. Due diligence was considered unnecessary for simple, routine procurements.

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<sup>1</sup>[www.procurement.govt.nz/procurement/principles-charter-and-rules/government-procurement-rules/](http://www.procurement.govt.nz/procurement/principles-charter-and-rules/government-procurement-rules/)

Purchases made with Trakka Tech prior to 1 October 2019 were multiple and of a minor capital nature. Due diligence was conducted by the NZDF in accordance with the OAG guidance at that time.

For your information, the types of due diligence activities and/or research can include, but are not limited to:

- a. reference checks
- b. Companies Office checks
- c. analysis of financial and audited accounts
- d. credit checks
- e. validated insurances
- f. compliance certificate/s checks
- g. accreditation checks
- h. police checks
- i. security clearances
- j. capacity, capability and demonstrated experience/expertise (physical and documented)
- k. health and safety
- l. quality control
- m. subcontractors' capacity and capability (physical and documented)
- n. Code of Conduct compliance
- o. physical premises checks
- p. IT infrastructure/security

Your request for evaluations related to possible war crimes prior to purchasing the UGVs is declined in accordance with section 18(g) of the OIA. There was no requirement to consider war crimes at the time, therefore there is no information held by the NZDF, nor are there grounds for believing that such information would be held by another agency.

You have the right, under section 28(3) of the OIA, to ask an Ombudsman to review this response to your request. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that responses to official information requests are proactively released where possible. This response to your request will be published shortly on the NZDF website, with your personal information removed.

Yours sincerely

**AJ WOODS**

Air Commodore

Chief of Staff HQNZDF