

24 April 2024

195 Lambton Quay
Private Bag 18-901
Wellington 6160
New Zealand

Andrew Riddell

T +64 4 439 8000
F +64 4 472 9596

fyi-request-26241-93808409@requests.fyi.org.nz

OIA 29261

Tēnā koe Andrew Riddell

I refer to your email of 26 March 2024 in which you request the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA):

'I now request all communications relating to the processing of this request, including the assessment of the request and the preparation of the Ministry's responses to this information request. For the purposes of this request 'communications' includes emails, letters, internal correspondence, briefings, file notes, records of phone calls and/or conversations, personal recollections and so on.'

The information relevant to your request is attached. Information about other people's OIA requests has been marked as out of scope, and we have withheld some information under the following sections of the OIA:

- 6(a): to avoid prejudice to the security or defence of New Zealand and the international relations of the Government of New Zealand;
- 9(2)(a): to protect individuals' privacy;
- 9(2)(g)(i): to protect the free and frank expression of opinions by departments; and
- 9(2)(g)(ii): to protect officers and employees from improper pressure or harassment.


Where the information has been withheld under section 9 of the OIA, we have identified no public interest in releasing the information that would override the reasons for withholding it.

With regards to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade's (the Ministry) decision to seek a refinement of your request, in discussions between the Ministry's Executive Services Division (ESD) and Middle East and Africa Division (MEA) it was agreed that requests for "any and all" information were administratively challenging to deal with, even when the volume of information involved was potentially low, given the amount of other requests being processed at the same time. When the Ministry received your request, there was already three and a half months of information on an active and evolving situation, that would need to search through. Therefore, it was agreed that the threshold for section 18(f) of the OIA would likely be met, and that a refinement of your request was needed in order to avoid a refusal.

Please note that it is our policy to proactively release our responses to official information requests where possible. Therefore, our response to your request (with your personal information removed) may be published on the Ministry website: www.mfat.govt.nz/en/about-us/contact-us/official-information-act-responses/

If you have any questions about this decision, you can contact us by email at: DM-ESD@mfat.govt.nz. You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision by contacting www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'SC', written in a cursive style.

Sarah Corbett
for Acting Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade