



Matthew Hooton
fyi-request-16540-3bcc43fd@requests.fyi.org.nz

File No: DOIA 2122-0477

Dear Matthew

I refer to your email of 28 August 2021 to the Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment (the Ministry) requesting under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

- “1) How many Afghani citizens worked for the NZDF in Afghanistan since the 2001 invasion?*
- 2) How many immediate family members are they estimated to have?*
- 3) Of these people and their families, how many were known or believed to be in (i) New Zealand (ii) Afghanistan or (iii) somewhere else, as at or around 1 January 2021?*
- 4) Of these people and their families still in Afghanistan on or around 1 January 2021, how many applied to become New Zealand citizens or residents in the 2021 calendar year?*
- 5) How many of these applications were accepted, and how many of those people are now safely in New Zealand*
- 6) How many were accepted but the people are not now safely in New Zealand? Is it known where they are?*
- 7) How many were rejected, when, why and by whom? For those who were rejected, please provide all information held by the New Zealand Government, with identifying information redacted so as to protect them from the new Afghani Government and also to comply with the Privacy Act.”*

We consulted with the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) who have advised that there were approximately 184 personnel that worked for the New Zealand Provincial Reconstruction Team since 2003 until its departure in 2013.

The NZDF also confirmed that they do not hold information about the number of immediate family members each individual has, or their location as at 1 January 2021.

Immigration New Zealand does not hold information about how many of these people were in Afghanistan, or somewhere other than Afghanistan or New Zealand at or around 1 January 2021.

In order for us to determine how many of the 184 personnel identified by the NZDF in response to part one of your request were in New Zealand on or around 1 January 2021, we would need to manually search their details in our Application Management System (AMS). We are therefore refusing parts 2 and 3 of your request under section 18(g) of the Act, and under section 18(f) of

the Act, as the information requested is either not held or cannot be made available without substantial collation.

We have considered whether consulting with you would enable you to make the request in a form that would result in the release of information; however we do not consider that it would. Providing this information would remove Ministry staff from their core duties and therefore the greater public interest in the effective and efficient administration of the public service would not be served. I have considered whether the Ministry would be able to respond to your request given extra time or the ability to charge for the information requested. I have concluded that, in both cases, the Ministry's ability to undertake its work would still be prejudiced.

As we were aware through our consultation with NZDF that they do not hold the information, to answer parts 2 and 3 of your request, we did not transfer these parts of the request to the NZDF.

Information in response to part 4 of your request is refused under section 18(g) of the Act, as the information requested is not held by INZ. Please note that while the NZDF have identified the 184 Afghan personnel who worked for the New Zealand Reconstruction Team, the cohort of those that were in Afghanistan on or around 1 January 2021 is not known. As a result, parts 5 to 7 of your request are also refused under section 18(g) of the Act.

You have the right, under section 28 of the Act, to ask the Ombudsman to review any decisions made under this request.

If you wish to discuss any aspect of your request or this response, please contact INZOIAs@mbie.govt.nz.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'N Hogg', is positioned above the typed name and title.

Nicola Hogg
General Manager – Border and Visa Operations
Immigration New Zealand
Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment