

29 June 2022

Mohammed Khan

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OIA 28108

Tēnā koe Mohammed Khan

On 30 May 2020, you were notified by the Wellington City Council that your Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act (LGOIMA) request of 17 May 2022 had been transferred to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (the Ministry) under section 12(b)(ii) of the LGOIMA, as the information you requested is more closely related to the functions of the Ministry.

Consequently, the Ministry is responding under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) to your request for:

Please provide all correspondence, emails, agendas, briefing notes, text messages etc regarding the Mayor of Wellington's decision to oppose the commemoration of Nakba Day, recognizing the ongoing campaign of ethnic cleansing and genocide against the legitimate native population of Palestine/'Israel'.

This should particularly include communications with the 'Israeli' embassy, and its various subject organizations such as the American embassy, the 'Israel Institute of NZ', the so-called 'Indigenous Coalition for Israel'.

The Ministry was approached by the Wellington City Council for its views on the proposal to project the Palestinian flag on to the Michael Fowler Centre, and was asked whether doing so would give offence to the Israeli Embassy. The Ministry responded to a specific question, in a specific set of circumstances. The decision was for the Council to take, which was clear in the advice from the Ministry.

The Ministry has reconsidered the advice it provided, particularly whether the Ministry should have made a recommendation to the Council. Future responses from the Ministry will be limited to providing New Zealand's international policy settings on an issue.

The Ministry's advice to Mayor Foster was in the form of a text message. This message has been transcribed and is attached as Annex One.

The Ministry's internal communications relating to this matter were in the form of text messages. These messages have been transcribed and are attached as Annex Two.

With reference to the second part of your request, there are no communications in scope of this part of your request. The entirety of the information within the scope of your request has been released to you in Annexes One and Two.

We have withheld some information under the following sections of the OIA:

- 6(a): to avoid prejudicing the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the New Zealand Government;
- 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.

Please note that we may publish this letter (with your personal details redacted) on the Ministry's website.

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



Julie-Anne Lee
for Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade