

20 August 2024

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OIA 29525

Tēnā koe Andrew Riddell

We refer to your email of 11 July 2024 in which you request the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA):

'... a schedule of the dates on which officials at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade have engaged with the staff at the Embassy of the State of Israel, including the Ambassador, both in person and in correspondence since 7 October 2023. The schedule should include the job titles of the Ministry staff and whether the particular engagement was at the ambassador level or not.'

On 8 August 2024, the timeframes for responding to your request were extended by an additional 10 working days because responding to your request necessitated the review of a large quantity of information, and due to the consultations necessary to make a decision on your request. (section 15A of the OIA refers).

Officials at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (the Ministry) have engaged regularly with Israeli officials from the Israeli Embassy, including at Ambassador level here in New Zealand, since 7 October 2023. We are unable to compile a schedule of correspondence of all our interactions as this happens as part of our business-as-usual operations between the Ministry and the diplomatic mission in Wellington. Accordingly, this part of your request is refused under s18(f) of the OIA due to substantial collation and research.

Information regarding the number of engagements the Ministry has had with the Israeli Embassy, through formal meetings and phone calls, is also withheld under section 6(a) of the OIA, to avoid prejudice to the international relations of the Government of New Zealand.

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 Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade