

5 February 2025

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John Wilson

OIA 29851

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Tēnā koe John Wilson

I refer to your email of 20 November 2024, to the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC), in which you requested information under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA). On 3 December 2024, the following part of your request was transferred from DPMC to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (the Ministry) under section 14(b) of the OIA for response:

Any communications with foreign governments or non-governmental organisations regarding the designation of Hezbollah and the Houthis as terrorist organisations.

On 9 December 2024, we contacted you seeking to refine the scope of your request. On 10 December 2024 you agreed to refine the scope of your request to be for:

Any formal communications with foreign governments or non-governmental organisations regarding the designation of Hezbollah and the Houthis as terrorist organisations, in the 2024 calendar year, involving the key people in the Ministry working on matters related to terrorist designations.

On 29 January 2025, the timeframes for responding to your request were extended by an additional 15 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(1) of the OIA refers).

Please note, that New Zealand makes independent foreign policy decisions. As part of formulating our position, the Ministry regularly engages with partners and other countries to ensure we understand diverse viewpoints and are well informed before we make a decision.

The Ministry communicated with eight foreign countries regarding the designation of Hezbollah and the Houthi as terrorist entities.

The topics of these communications included:

- An outline of New Zealand's consideration to designate Hizbollah and Ansar Allah (the Houthi) as terrorist organisations;
- A request for information about the approaches of likeminded partners;
- Responses to questions about information regarding either of these entities continued involvement in terrorist activity;

- Views on the impact of continued conflict in the Middle East on these designations.

All other information relating to these communications is withheld 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;
- 6(b)(i): to protect the passing of information from another government on a confidential basis;
- 6(d): to endanger the safety of any person;
- 9(2)(a): to protect individuals' privacy; 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, no public interest in releasing the information has been identified that would override the reasons for withholding it.

For your information, the statements of case that informed the decisions to designate Hezbollah (Hizbollah) and the Houthis (Ansar Allah) as terrorist organisations under New Zealand legislation can be found on the New Zealand Police website at: <https://www.police.govt.nz/advice/personal-community/counterterrorism/designated-entities/lists-associated-with-resolution-1373>

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



Sarah Corbett
for Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade