

25 May 2026

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OIA 30795

Tēnā koe RC

Thank you for your email of 13 March 2026, in which you request the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA):

- 1. What level of communication, that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade was involved in, the Prime Minister of New Zealand has had with the President of the United States, the Vice President of the United States and the Secretary of State of the United States during the period 20 January 2021 to 25 January 2023. Please detail all levels of communication whether it be email, video conference calls, phone calls, texts, written letters or face to face meetings.*
- 2. How long each level of communication lasted.*
- 3. Copies of the key agendas prepared by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade for the aforementioned communications.*
- 4. Copies of meeting minutes, transcripts of the interaction or copies of letters or communications held by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.*

On 13 April 2026, the timeframes for responding to your request were extended by an additional 30 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)(a) and (b) of the OIA refers). Your request has been interpreted as being for bilateral communications only. Meetings where former Prime Minister Ardern met with any of the listed representatives from the United States in the presence of other world leaders have been deemed to be out of scope.

Response to your request

The following table outlines meetings between then New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern and President of the United States Joe Biden, Vice President of the United States Kamala Harris, and/or Secretary of State of the United States Antony Blinken during the period 20 January 2021 to 25 January 2023, for which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (the Ministry) holds the relevant documentation and/or information within scope of your request.

No formal agendas were prepared for the meetings or calls between Prime Minister Ardern and former President Biden, Vice President Harris and/or Secretary Blinken. However, a list of briefing topics provided to Prime Minister Ardern has been included, which serves as a summary of the matters discussed.

Meetings involving Prime Minister Ardern and President Biden, Vice President Harris, and/or Secretary Blinken				
Date	Duration	Meeting	Topics	Decision
16 Jul 2021	15 minutes	Phone call with President Biden	APEC; COVID-19; Climate Change; Defence and Security; Trade; The Pacific Islands; Summit for Democracy; Visit	1 topic withheld under s6(a)
31 May 2022	90 minutes	Meeting with President Biden and Secretary Blinken (during Prime Minister's visit to the United States)	Ukraine; Defence and Security; Pacific Engagement; Trade and Economic Engagement in the Indo-Pacific; Christchurch Call to Action; Climate Change	1 topic withheld under s6(a)
31 May 2022	20 minutes	Meeting with Vice President Harris (during Prime Minister's visit to the United States)	Space; Christchurch Call; Mis and Dis-Information	

The documents that act as minutes and/or transcripts for the meetings in the table above are attached and listed in the table below.

Reports of meetings involving Prime Minister Ardern and President Biden, Vice President Harris, and/or Secretary Blinken			
Date	Meeting	Document title	Decision
26 Jul 2021	Phone call with President Biden	FORMAL MESSAGE - PRIME MINISTER ARDERN CALL WITH US PRESIDENT BIDEN	s6(a); s6(b)(i)
31 May 2022	Meeting with President Biden and Secretary Blinken	File Note: Bilateral Meeting between Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern and President Joe Biden, 31 May 2022, Washington DC	s6(a); s6(b)(i)

31 May 2022	Meeting with Vice President Harris	File Note: Meeting between Prime Minister Ardern and Vice President Harris: 31 May 2022	s6(a); s6(b)(i)
16 Jun 2022	Meetings with President Biden and Vice President Harris (PM's visit to the United States)	FORMAL MESSAGE: VISIT OF PRIME MINISTER TO THE UNITED STATES: POLITICAL CALLS IN WASHINGTON DC	Out of scope; s6(a); s6(b)(i)

Some information 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; and
- 6(b)(i): to protect the passing of information from another government on a confidential basis.

The website of the United States Embassy and Consulate in New Zealand contains information relating to Prime Minister Ardern's May 2022 visit to the White House, which may be of interest to you. It can be found at: <https://nz.usembassy.gov/prime-minister-ardern-at-the-white-house/>.

The following table shows formal correspondence involving Prime Minister Ardern and President Biden or Vice President Harris. Please note that the Ministry does not hold final copies of some of Prime Minister Ardern's correspondence. In these cases, draft copies of the correspondence are withheld in full 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; and
- 9(2)(g)(i): to protect the free and frank expression of opinions by departments.

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.

Formal correspondence involving Prime Minister Ardern and President Biden or Vice President Harris			
Date	From	To	Decision
No date	Prime Minister Ardern	President Biden	Release in full
5 Feb 2021	President Biden	Prime Minister Ardern	Release in full
12 Feb 2021	Vice President Harris	Prime Minister Ardern	Release in full
9 Mar 2021	President Biden	Prime Minister Ardern	Release in full
25 Mar 2021	President Biden	Prime Minister Ardern	Release in full
No date	Prime Minister Ardern	President Biden	6(a); 9(2)(g)(i)
24 May 2021	Prime Minister Ardern	President Biden	Release in full
27 May 2021	President Biden	Prime Minister Ardern	Release in full
No date	Prime Minister Ardern	President Biden	6(a); 9(2)(g)(i)
27 Aug 2021	Prime Minister Ardern	President Biden	Release in full
9 Nov 2021	President Biden	Prime Minister Ardern	Release in full

No date	Prime Minister Ardern	President Biden	Release in full
9 Jun 2022	Prime Minister Ardern	President Biden	Release in full
9 Jun 2022	Prime Minister Ardern	Vice President Harris	Release in full

The Ministry does not hold any correspondence in scope of your request involving Secretary Blinken. Therefore, this part of your request is refused under section 18(e) of the OIA, as the information does not exist.

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