



An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha
Department of Foreign Affairs

Our Ref: FOI/Req/21/126

Date: 23 July 2021

Dear Mr. Tierney,

I refer to the request that you have made under the Freedom of Information Act 2014 (the Act) for access to the following records held by this Department:

Any records held by the Department of Foreign Affairs that contain estimates as to the extent of damage the Israeli military and / or police have caused to Irish Aid funded projects in the Occupied Palestinian Territories since 26 February 2021. And relevant correspondence received by the Dept of Foreign Affairs and Minister Simon Coveney regarding this destruction of aid provided by Ireland.

I have identified 59 records that fall within the scope of your request. I have made a decision to grant 9, part-grant 1, and refuse 49 records. Please find attached a schedule, and copies of the records to which access has been granted.

A number of these records are also in the public domain. Records 10, 27 and 43 can be consulted at the following link: <https://www.ochaopt.org/publications/west-bank-demolitions-and-displacement>.

Records 15 and 18 can be found at the following links respectively: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3905926?ln=en> and <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3906577?ln=en>

Where access has been refused, the records are exempt from release under Sections 33 or 37 of the Freedom of Information Act 2014 (the Act).

Exemptions under Section 33 – security, defence and international relations

I have exempted information from 48 records under Section 33(1)(d) of the Act, on the basis that access to said information could reasonably be expected to adversely affect the international relations of the State. The Department of Foreign Affairs is responsible for managing relations between Ireland and 193 countries. Based on the Department's direct knowledge and expertise in international relations, its strongly held position is that the granting of access to this information would adversely affect the State's relations. My decision to refuse access to information contained in these 48 records is informed by my consideration of the likelihood that its release could result in negative consequences, and the likely severity of said consequences.

I have exempted information from 6 records under Section 33(2)(b)(ii) of the Act. These records constitute communications between the Minister and a diplomatic mission of the State and include analysis that could reasonably be expected to adversely affect the international relations of the State if released. On this basis I have therefore decided to refuse these records.

I have exempted 43 records under Section 33(3)(c)(ii) of the Act. These records contain information communicated in confidence from, to, or within an international organisation of states or a subsidiary of such an organisation. The majority of these records pertain to the West Bank Protection Consortium and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in the occupied Palestinian territory.

Exemptions under Section 37 – Personal information

I am part-granting 1 record which falls under Section 37(1) of the Act, relating to personal information. It is a mandatory exemption and protects the privacy (including contact details) of the individuals concerned. While Section 37(1) Personal Information is a mandatory exemption I am still obliged to consider whether the public interest would be best served by releasing the records in full. I have taken into account the benefit to the public to be given access to correspondence in a manner which demonstrates transparency and accountability of the Department. In the main, the information redacted relates to personal contact information and does not affect the substance of the record. I have particularly considered whether releasing the personal information would provide any additional benefit in this regard. I have weighed this against the right of individuals to have their personal information remain private and have found that there is a clear prerogative for this information to remain private.

Right of Appeal

Should you wish to appeal this decision, you may do so in writing to the Freedom of Information Unit, Department of Foreign Affairs, 76-78 Harcourt Street, Dublin 2 or by email to foi@dfa.ie. A fee applies for an appeal for access to non-personal information; the level of this fee has been set at €30. For methods of payment, please contact FOI Unit at foi@dfa.ie, or +353 (0) 1 408 2857.

You should make your appeal within 4 weeks (20 working days) from the date of this notification. However, the making of a late appeal may be permitted in appropriate circumstances. The appeal will involve a complete reconsideration of the matter by a more senior member of staff from this Department.

Yours sincerely,



Sinéad Collins

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