



Home Office

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Kevin McEvoy
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4 March 2022

Dear Mr. McEvoy

Freedom of Information request reference: 68315

Thank you for your e-mail of 07 February 2022.

Your most recent communication is being handled as a follow-up to your original Freedom of Information (FOI) request (Ref. 65001) dated 07 July 2021.

You have requested further information about Operation Pelican.

Specifically, you have requested the Home Office to:

“Please provide [you] with the following information, for 1 June 2018 - 1 May 2019:

- 1) Which governmental department was paying for Operation Pelican?*
- 2) Send all communication between the Home Office and/or the FCDO and/or the Cabinet Office relating to Operation Pelican. This may include minuted meetings; emails; texts; WhatsApp; signal etc etc.”*

Your request has been handled as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000.

- 1. Operation Pelican was funded by the Metropolitan Police. The Home Office does not hold any further information on this matter for the period mentioned.*
- 2. Any relevant information (i.e. records of communications between the Home Office and/or FCDO and /or the Cabinet Office) relating to Operation Pelican is considered to be exempt from disclosure under s27(4) of the FOIA 2000.*

Please find further details of this exemption in Annex A to this letter. Section 27 (International relations) is a qualified exemption and the public interest test (PIT) consideration is listed in Annex A.

In relation to your request, we neither confirm nor deny whether we hold the information that you have requested. Section 27(4) of the FOIA absolve us from the requirement to say whether or not we hold information, if this would be likely to prejudice international relations and the public interest falls in favour of neither confirming nor denying. Explanations of the public interest tests are set out in the attached Annex A.

Neither confirm nor deny should not be taken as an acknowledgement that the information is held or not held.

If you are dissatisfied with this response you may request an independent internal review of our handling of your request by submitting a complaint within two months to foirequests@homeoffice.gov.uk, quoting reference **68315**. If you ask for an internal review, it would be helpful if you could say why you are dissatisfied with the response.

As part of any internal review the Department's handling of your information request would be reassessed by staff who were not involved in providing you with this response. If you were to remain dissatisfied after an internal review, you would have a right of complaint to the Information Commissioner as established by section 50 of the FOIA.

A link to the Home Office Information Rights Privacy Notice can be found in the following link. This explains how we process your personal information:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/information-rights-privacy-notice>

Yours sincerely

International Agreements and Judicial Co-operation Unit

Annex A

Public Interest Test

Some of the exemptions in the FOI Act, referred to as 'qualified exemptions', are subject to a public interest test (PIT). This includes section 27 (international relations). This test is used to balance the public interest in disclosure against the public interest in favour of withholding the information, or the considerations for and against the requirement to say whether the information requested is held or not. We must carry out a PIT where we are considering using any of the qualified exemptions in response to a request for information.

The 'public interest' is not the same as what interests the public. In carrying out a PIT we consider the greater good or benefit to the community as a whole if the information is released or not. The 'right to know' must be balanced against the need to enable effective government and to serve the best interests of the public.

The FOI Act is 'applicant blind'. This means that we cannot, and do not, ask about the motives of anyone who asks for information. In providing a response to one person, we are expressing a willingness to provide the same response to anyone, including those who might represent a threat to the UK.

Exemption Applied for withholding information

27 International relations.

(4) The duty to confirm or deny does not arise if, or to the extent that, compliance with section 1(1)(a)— (a) would, or would be likely to, prejudice any of the matters mentioned in subsection (1), or (b) would involve the disclosure of any information (whether or not already recorded) which is confidential information obtained from a State other than the United Kingdom or from an international organisation or international court.

Refusal of request.

(4) A public authority is not obliged to make a statement under subsection (1)(c) or (3) if, or to the extent that, the statement would involve the disclosure of information which would itself be exempt information.

Public Interest Test arguments

Pursuant to section 17(4), we are not obliged to provide public interest test arguments as providing justification in itself would reveal the information that is being withheld under relevant exemptions.

Balance of the public interest test

As reasoned above, we do not consider it would be in the public interest to confirm or deny whether or not the information that you have requested is held by the Home Office.