



Information Policy & Compliance  
[bbc.co.uk/foi](http://bbc.co.uk/foi)      [bbc.co.uk/privacy](http://bbc.co.uk/privacy)

Sean Moran  
By email to: [request-204370-1f9e4806@whatdotheyknow.com](mailto:request-204370-1f9e4806@whatdotheyknow.com)

29 April 2014

Dear Mr Moran,

**Freedom of information request – RFI20140510**

Thank you for your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (“the Act”) of 30 March, requesting the following information:

*In the second half of 2013 the BBC was caught out fabricating evidence of chemical weapons to justify war crimes in Syria in a report involving a "Dr Rola".*

*Please answer the following questions:*

- 1. Who ordered the BBC to fabricate these claims about chemical weapons?*
- 2. Were the BBC paid directly to fabricate these reports on chemical weapons in Syria? If so how much and by who?*
- 3. Please provide a list of all reporters and executives involved in faking chemical weapons attacks in Syria.*
- 4. How much has the BBC spent in total covering the Syrian conflict?*
- 5. How many BBC staff have been disciplined for being involved in fabricating chemical attacks in Syria? What were the disciplinary procedures?*
- 6. Do the BBC recognise that under International Law the BBC are guilty of War Crimes if they fabricate incidents to justify War Crimes?*

Please be advised that the Freedom of Information Act gives a general right of access to all types of recorded information held by public authorities. As this is not a request for recorded information; and we are not required to create new information to respond to a request, or give a judgement or opinion that is not already recorded - we will not be providing a response to your question(s) above.

You may find the following link of assistance, which details how to make a valid request under the Act:  
[http://www.ico.gov.uk/for\\_the\\_public/official\\_information/how\\_access.aspx](http://www.ico.gov.uk/for_the_public/official_information/how_access.aspx)

In particular, I draw your attention to the following two points that the ICO makes:

- Where possible, ask for specific information rather than using open-ended questions. 'What or 'how much' are more likely to get a useful response than 'why'.
- Use straightforward, polite language; avoid basing your request or question on assumptions or opinions, or mixing requests with complaints or comments.

I should also add that were this to be considered a valid request under the Act, information of the type that you have requested, i.e. relating to BBC News coverage, is excluded from the Act because it would be held for the purposes of 'journalism, art or literature.' Part VI of Schedule 1 to FOIA provides that information held by the BBC and the other public service broadcasters is only covered by the Act if it is held for 'purposes other than those of journalism, art or literature'. The BBC is not required to supply information held for the purposes of creating the BBC's output or information that supports and is closely associated with these activities.

### **Appeal Rights**

If you are not satisfied that we have complied with the Act in responding to your request, you have the right to an internal review by a BBC senior manager or legal adviser. Please contact us at the address above, explaining what you would like us to review and including your reference number. If you are not satisfied with the internal review, you can appeal to the Information Commissioner. The contact details are: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF, telephone 01625 545700 or see [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk)

Yours sincerely,

The Information Policy and Compliance Team  
BBC Information Policy and Compliance

## **Freedom of Information**

From January 2005 the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2000 gives a general right of access to all types of recorded information held by public authorities. The Act also sets out exemptions from that right and places a number of obligations on public authorities. The term “public authority” is defined in the Act; it includes all public bodies and government departments in the UK. The BBC, Channel 4, Gaelic Media Service (GMS) and S4C are the only broadcasters covered by the Act.

## **Application to the BBC**

The BBC has a long tradition of making information available and accessible. It seeks to be open and accountable and already provides the public with a great deal of information about its activities. BBC Audience Services operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week handling telephone and written comments and queries, and the BBC’s website [bbc.co.uk](http://bbc.co.uk) provides an extensive online information resource.

It is important to bear this in mind when considering the Freedom of Information Act and how it applies to the BBC. The Act does not apply to the BBC in the way it does to most public authorities in one significant respect. It recognises the different position of the BBC (as well as Channel 4 and S4C) by saying that it covers information “held for purposes other than those of journalism, art or literature”. This means the Act does not apply to information held for the purposes of creating the BBC’s output (TV, radio, online etc), or information that supports and is closely associated with these creative activities.

A great deal of information within this category is currently available from the BBC and will continue to be so. If this is the type of information you are looking for, you can check whether it is available on the BBC’s website [bbc.co.uk](http://bbc.co.uk) or contact BBC Audience Services.

The Act does apply to all of the other information we hold about the management and running of the BBC.

## **The BBC**

The BBC’s aim is to enrich people’s lives with great programmes and services that inform, educate and entertain. It broadcasts radio and television programmes on analogue and digital services in the UK. It delivers interactive services across the web, television and mobile devices. The BBC’s online service is one of Europe’s most widely visited content sites. Around the world, international multimedia broadcaster BBC World Service delivers a wide range of language and regional services on radio, TV, online and via wireless handheld devices, together with BBC World News, the commercially-funded international news and information television channel.

The BBC’s remit as a public service broadcaster is defined in the BBC Charter and Agreement. It is the responsibility of the BBC Trust (the sovereign body within the BBC) to ensure that the organisation delivers against this remit by setting key objectives, approving strategy and policy, and monitoring and assessing performance. The Trustees also safeguard the BBC’s independence and ensure the Corporation is accountable to its audiences and to Parliament.

Day-to-day operations are run by the Director-General and his senior management team, the Executive Board. All BBC output in the UK is funded by an annual Licence Fee. This is determined and regularly reviewed by Parliament. Each year, the BBC publishes an Annual Report & Accounts, and reports to Parliament on how it has delivered against its public service remit.