



Foreign &  
Commonwealth  
Office

**Counter Proliferation & Arms Control Centre  
(CPACC)**

Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
King Charles Street  
London SW1A 2AH

Mr Smith  
[request-639000-950a2335@whatdotheyknow.com](mailto:request-639000-950a2335@whatdotheyknow.com)

Website: <https://www.gov.uk>

12 March 2020

Dear Mr Smith,

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 - REQUEST REF: 2020/00126**

Thank you for your email of 24 January 2019 asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked:

*I wish to see all recorded documents that refer to FCO Research Analysts and Syria and make reference to the so-called investigative journalism and open source intelligence (OSINT) website Bellingcat.*

*Ideally I would like to see FCO Research Analyst reports/assessment/papers, etc that analyse/assess the use of chemical weapons in Syria and any reference to Bellingcat in these documents.*

*Also, any documents that refer to the reliability of Bellingcat as a source when drafting research assessments.*

The FCO can neither confirm nor deny that it holds information relevant to your request, as the duty in Section 1(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, does not apply by virtue of Section 24(2) of the Act. To the extent that Section 24(2) of the Act applies, we have determined that in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exclusion of the duty to confirm or deny outweighs the public interest in confirming whether the FCO holds the information, and that to give a statement of the reasons for this would involve the disclosure of information which would itself be exempt information. Therefore, under Section 17(4) of the Act, the FCO is not obliged to give such a statement. However, this should not be taken as evidence that any information that would meet your request exists or does not exist.

If you wish to make a complaint or if you would like a review of our response, please write to the Central FOI Unit at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Room WH2.177, King Charles Street, London, SW1A 2AH. E-mail: [foi-dpa.pmcs@fco.gov.uk](mailto:foi-dpa.pmcs@fco.gov.uk). You have 40 working days to do so from the date this letter. Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are not content with the outcome of the above, you may then apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a review of our response. Generally, the Information

Commissioner will only carry out a review once you have exhausted the internal FCO complaints procedure. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF.

You can find responses to other FOI requests on the FCO's [website](#).

Yours sincerely,

Counter Proliferation & Arms Control Centre



We keep and use information in line with the Data Protection Act 2018. We may release this personal information to other UK government departments and public authorities.