



Foreign & Commonwealth Office

Consular Directorate
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Our reference: FOI 0347-11/ Cons 36-11

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Mr Robert Kaye

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Dear Mr Kaye

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000: REF 0347-11

Thank you for your e-mail of 29 March to the Information Rights Team in which you requested the following information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA or Act). Your request stated:

"I would like to know how many loans to cover repatriation costs the FCO has made to victims of forced marriage in each of the last five years, and the amount and country in each case."

I can confirm that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) holds information relevant to your request.

I attach a spreadsheet which contains data on all loans the FCO made on an Undertaking to Repay (UTR) basis at our overseas Posts in Dhaka and Islamabad.

We do not hold centrally data on the number and total costs of loans made to victims of forced marriage in the last five years. This is because the UTR loan data we are able to extract only gives the amount loaned on a UTR basis at each of our overseas missions and not the purpose for which the loan was made. The information provided therefore includes loans made for purposes other than to assist those in forced marriage situations. However, it is likely that a large proportion of loans granted by these particular Posts will be for victims of forced marriage.

The only way to extract the detail you have requested would be to carry out of manual search of our files on forced marriage cases to identify those in which a UTR loan was made and cross reference the details with our resource data. Given the number of loans for the five year period, we believe that the time taken to do this would exceed the cost limit under Section 12 of the FOIA.

As you may be aware, the FCO is not obliged to comply with requests for information where the cost of dealing with them would be likely to exceed 'an appropriate limit'. Section 12 of the FOIA allows public authorities to refuse requests for information where the cost of

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dealing with them would exceed the appropriate limit. The limit has been specified in the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004. For central government, the appropriate limit is set at £600. This figure represents the estimated cost of one or more persons spending 3½ working days in determining whether the government department concerned holds the information, and to find, retrieve and extract the relevant material.

You may consider narrowing the scope of your request to bring it within the appropriate limit. For example, you may request the information for a shorter period and/or a specific country. We would like to be as helpful as possible and would be happy to undertake a more narrowly focussed search. However, we are unable to guarantee disclosure in advance as any new request must be considered under the Act.

I hope you are satisfied with this reply. If you have any queries about this letter, or are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request and you wish to make a complaint or if you would like a review of our decision, please write to the Information Rights Team at The Old Admiralty Building, Room SG 120, London, SW1A 2PA. E-mail: dp-foi.img@fco.gov.uk. Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications. You have 40 working days to do so from the date this letter.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) for a decision. Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the complaint procedure provided by the FCO. The ICO can be contacted at The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF.

We continually strive to improve our service, so we would welcome your feedback and comments. If you would like to provide feedback, please email our Information Rights Team at: dp-foi.img@fco.gov.uk.

You can also find out more about the FCO and freedom of information issues at our Access to Information website: <http://foi.fco.gov.uk/en>

Yours sincerely,

Louise Edwards

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Strategy, Communications and Training Group