



## Foreign & Commonwealth Office

### Iraq Team

Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
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Mr David Lindsey  
[request-497309-315f0d90@whatdotheyknow.com](mailto:request-497309-315f0d90@whatdotheyknow.com)

20 November 2018

Dear Mr Lindsey,

### **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST REF: 0949-18**

Thank you for your email of 24 August 2018 asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000 about the 2003 Arab League summit at Sharm al-Sheikh. You asked for information about:

*Proposals for the exile of Saddam Hussein and responses to these proposals*

I am writing to confirm that we have now completed the search for the information which you requested.

I can confirm that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) does hold information relevant to your request. Please see attached a digest of the information we can release. Some of this information is being withheld under Sections 27 and 40 of the FOIA.

Section 27(1)(a) of the FOIA recognises the need to protect information that would be likely to prejudice relations between the United Kingdom and other states if it was disclosed. In this case, the release of information about the 2003 Arab League Summit could harm our relations with a number of states who attended the Summit.

The application of s.27(1)(a) requires us to consider the public interest test arguments in favour of releasing and withholding the information. We acknowledge that releasing information on this issue would increase public knowledge about our relations with the states who attended the Summit. However, s.27 (1) (a) recognises that the effective conduct of international relations depends upon maintaining trust and confidence between governments. If the United Kingdom does not maintain this trust and confidence, its ability to protect and promote UK interests through international relations will be hampered, which will not be in the public interest. The disclosure of information detailing our relationship with the governments of these states could potentially damage our bilateral relationships. This would reduce the UK government's ability to protect and promote UK interests through its bilateral relations, which would not be in the public interest. For these reasons we consider that, the public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing it.

In addition, some of the information you have requested, is personal data relating to third parties, the disclosure of which would contravene one of the data protection principles. In such circumstances sections 40(2) and (3) of the Freedom of Information Act apply. In this case, our view is that disclosure would breach the first data protection principle. This states that personal data should be processed fairly and lawfully. It is the fairness aspect of this principle, which, in our view, would be breached by disclosure. In such circumstances, s.40 confers an absolute exemption on disclosure. There is, therefore, no public interest test to apply.

Once an FOI request is answered, it is considered to be in the public domain. To promote transparency, we may now publish the response and any material released on [gov.uk](http://gov.uk) in the [FOI releases](#) section. All personal information in the letter will be removed before publishing.

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If you would like a review of our decision, or if you wish to make a complaint, please write to the Central FOI Unit, 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 of this letter.

You can apply directly to the Information Commissioner. However, the Information Commissioner will not normally make a decision unless you have first exhausted the complaints procedure provided by the FCO. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF.

Yours sincerely,

Iraq Team



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