



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

Near East Department
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
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Website: <https://www.gov.uk>

01 November 2017

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST REF: 0926-17

Thank you for your email of 4 October 2017 asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked for:

*Details and documentation of all meetings held between ministers and civil servants in the Near East Department of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and representatives of **B'Tselem** and the **Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)** between August 2014 to present.*

Specifically, I am requesting:

- 1) The number of meetings held, and dates of these; and*
- 2) Minutes of these meetings*

- 3) Correspondences between FCO Near East Department officials and members of **B'Tselem** and the **Norwegian Refugee Council**.*

I am writing to confirm that we have now completed the search for the information which you requested, and can confirm that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) does hold information relevant to your request.

Please find attached the information that the FCO can release to you. In addition, there were two meetings for which there are no notes. These meetings were between Baroness Anelay and Jan Egeland, Secretary General of NRC in Oslo on 24 November 2014; and a meeting between Mr Egeland, and Mr Ellwood at the FCO on the 20 March 2017. However, some of the information has been withheld under Section 40 – personal information, and Section 41 – information received in confidence.

Section 40

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, Section 40 confers an absolute exemption on disclosure. There is, therefore, no public interest test to apply.

Section 41

Some of the information that we considered for your request has been withheld under Section 41 of the Freedom of Information Act – information provided in confidence. This relates to information provided by NGO bodies at meetings with FCO staff. We recognise when information has been passed to the FCO in good faith, and when the disclosure of it would be likely to be considered an actionable breach of confidence. This is an absolute exemption and so the public interest test does not apply.

Yours sincerely,

Near East Department



We keep and use information in line with the Data Protection Act 1998. We may release this personal information to other UK government departments and public authorities.