



An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha agus Trádála  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Our Ref: FOI/Req/2020/094

Date: 13 July 2020

Dear Mr. Torarit,

I refer to the request that you have made under the Freedom of Information Act 2014 for access to the following records held by this Department:

- 1. Documents held by Middle East North Africa Unit and the Embassy of Ireland in Riyadh, containing information about meetings between the Irish Ambassador accredited to Bahrain and the Bahraini Foreign and Interior Minister in 2018, 2019 and 2020, excluding records relating to logistical arrangements.*
- 2. Documents held by Middle East North Africa Unit, the Embassy of Ireland in Riyadh, and Permanent Mission of Ireland to the UN in Geneva, containing information about meetings between Irish officials and NGOs discussing Human Rights in Bahrain in 2018, 2019 and 2020, excluding records relating to logistical arrangements.*
- 3. Documents held by Middle East North Africa Unit, the Embassy of Ireland in Riyadh, and Permanent Mission of Ireland to the UN in Geneva, containing information about meetings between the Irish Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bahrain in 2018, 2019 and 2020, excluding records relating to logistical arrangements.*
- 4. Documents held by Middle East North Africa Unit, and Permanent Mission of Ireland to the UN in Geneva, containing information about meetings between Irish officials and officials of the Embassy of Bahrain in London which is accredited to Ireland discussing Human Rights in Bahrain in 2018, 2019 and 2020, excluding records relating to logistical arrangements.*

I have identified 25 records that fall within the scope of your request. The records are listed in the schedule attached. I have made a decision to refuse access to each of these records under sections 15, 29, 33, or 35 of the Freedom of Information Act 2014 (the Act).

Exemptions under Section 33 relate to the security, defence and international relations of the State. I have refused access to information in 25 records under Sections 33(1)(d) and 33(2)(b) of the Act, on the basis that access to said information could reasonably be expected to adversely affect the international relations of the State. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade is responsible for managing relations between Ireland and 190 countries. Based on the Department's direct knowledge and expertise in international relations, its strongly held

position is that the granting of access to this information would adversely affect the State's relations. My decision to refuse access to information contained in these records is informed by my consideration of the likelihood that its release could result in negative consequences, and the likely severity of said consequences.

Under Section 35(1)(a), I have refused access to information in 16 records. The information refused under Section 35 was given in confidence, on the understanding that it would be treated as confidential. I have taken into consideration your right to access information, however I am satisfied that releasing the information in these records would probably impair the workings of this Department without any countervailing benefit to the broader public interest.

I have refused access to information in 3 records under Section 29(1). I have considered whether the public interest would be better served by releasing the records in question in terms of the right of the public to have access to information, and the need for accountability and transparency in the decision-making processes of public bodies. However, given the nature of the record I am satisfied that its release would negatively impact the deliberative, decision-making, and information sharing processes of this Department.

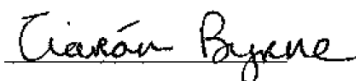
Finally, I have refused access to information in 3 records under Section 15(1)(d) which concerns records which are already in the public domain. In connection with this request, these records are copies of reports that were received from your organisation.

#### Right of Appeal

Should you wish to appeal this decision, you may do so in writing to the Freedom of Information Unit, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 76-78 Harcourt Street, Dublin 2 or by email to [foi@dfa.ie](mailto:foi@dfa.ie). A fee applies for an appeal for access to non-personal information; the level of this fee has been set at €30. For methods of payment, please contact FOI Unit at [foi@dfa.ie](mailto:foi@dfa.ie), or +353 (0) 1 408 2857.

You should make your appeal within 4 weeks (20 working days) from the date of this notification. However, the making of a late appeal may be permitted in appropriate circumstances. The appeal will involve a complete reconsideration of the matter by a more senior member of the staff of this Department.

Yours sincerely,



**Ciarán Byrne**

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