



**An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha**  
**Department of Foreign Affairs**

Our Ref: FOI/Req/21/147

Date: 13 August 2021

Dear Mr Cronin,

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

*1. All correspondence received by the Department of Foreign Affairs in relation to an article written by Kyle O'Sullivan, then Ireland's ambassador to Israel, and published in The Jerusalem Post (web edition) on 23 June 2021. The article was titled "Ireland pushes Israel to resolve the Palestinian conflict" and can be found at this link: <https://www.jpost.com/opinion/ireland-pushes-israel-to-resolve-the-palestinian-conflict-opinion-671859>*

*This should include any correspondence addressed to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Secretary-General of the Department and to other officials working for the Department. If the correspondence has been sent by email, then I request access to any attachments that may have been included with the email messages in question. It would seem reasonable that the timeframe of my request should range from the date of publication (23 June 2021) to today's date (21 July 2021).*

*2. A list of any meetings held in or involving the Department of Foreign Affairs relating to Mr O'Sullivan's aforementioned article and the issues raised by it, as well as any minutes, transcripts or internal reports drawn up following such meetings. This should include meetings of the Department's own officials (including the Minister for Foreign Affairs, if relevant) and meetings between the Department and external parties. It would seem reasonable that the timeframe of my request should range from the date when Mr O'Sullivan's article was published (23 June 2021) to today's date (21 July 2021).*

*3. All correspondence sent to Ireland's embassies or representations in Tel Aviv and Ramallah in relation to the aforementioned article by Mr O'Sullivan. It would seem reasonable that the timeframe of my request should range from the date when Mr O'Sullivan's article was published (23 June 2021) to today's date (21 July 2021).*

*4. Minutes, transcripts and internal reports of any meetings held by staff working with Ireland's embassies or representations in Tel Aviv and Ramallah in relation to the aforementioned article by Mr O'Sullivan. It would seem reasonable that the timeframe of my request should range from the date when Mr O'Sullivan's article was published (23 June 2021) to today's date (21 July 2021).*

I have identified 4 records that fall within the scope of your request. I have made a decision to part-grant 2, and refuse 2 records. Please find attached a schedule, and copies of the records to which access has been granted. Where access has been refused or part-granted, the records are exempt from release, or have been partially released under Sections 33 or 37 of the Act, in relation to international relations and personal information, respectively. Under paragraph 2 of your request, I have not identified any meetings to be listed.

#### Exemptions under Section 33 – security, defence and international relations

I have exempted 2 records under Section 33(1)(d) of the Act, for which this is the sole exemption used. This exemption is related to records the release of which could reasonably be expected to adversely affect the international relations of the State. The Department of Foreign Affairs is responsible for managing relations between Ireland and 193 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. In arriving at the decision to refuse access to the records exempted under Section 33, I have considered both the likelihood that the release of these records could result in negative consequences, and the likely severity of those consequences.

#### Exemptions under Section 37 – Personal information

I am part-granting 2 records which fall under Section 37(1) of the Act, relating to personal information. It is a mandatory exemption and protects the privacy (including contact details) of the individuals concerned. While Section 37(1) Personal Information is a mandatory exemption I am still obliged to consider whether the public interest would be best served by releasing the records in full. I have taken into account the benefit to the public to be given access to correspondence in a manner which demonstrates transparency and accountability of the Department. In the main, the information redacted relates to personal contact information and does not affect the substance of the record. I have particularly considered whether releasing the personal information would provide any additional benefit in this regard. I have weighed this against the right of individuals to have their personal information remain private and have found that there is a clear prerogative for this information to remain private.

#### 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, 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 staff from this Department.

Yours sincerely,

**Paul Shannon**

North Africa and MEPP Unit

Department of Foreign Affairs

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