



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

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25 September 2017

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST REF: 0716-17

Thank you for your email of 28 July 2017 asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked for:

“Details of any support – either financial or training - the UK has contributed either (a) unilaterally or (b) via the European Union to the Libyan (i) coastguard (ii) immigration detention system in each of the last 3 years for which figures are available.

Any human rights assessments of the Libyan (a) coastguard (b) immigration detention system made by the Government in the last 3 years - including, specifically, any Overseas Security and Justice Assistance (OSJA) assessments undertaken in the last 3 years relating to either of these bodies.”

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

Since 2015, the UK has provided substantial humanitarian assistance through the Department for International Development (DFID) and direct migration programming through the cross government Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF).

Through the CSSF, the UK has supported training for the Libyan Coastguard and Navy through EUNAVFOR Med Operation Sophia. Details of UK support to the Libyan Coastguard over the last three years are published online. However, for ease I have summarised below:

UK support to the Libyan Coastguard and Navy aims to equip the Libyan Navy and Coastguard with the skills to successfully manage their own maritime border. The training covers basic seamanship skills as well as search and rescue procedures. A particular emphasis has been placed on law enforcement, human rights and related migration issues. The training started in October 2016. All training took place either on board EU vessels or at land-based EU locations. The UK has provided €695,000 in voluntary financial contributions to the task since 2015, as well as an 8-person Royal Marine team since November 2016.

As some of the further information you have requested regarding support to the immigration detention system is already reasonably accessible to you, it is exempt from disclosure under section 21(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

The UK has provided funding to the International Organization for Migration (IOM). This funding supported Libyan authorities in protecting migrants' human rights in detention

centres while providing alternatives to irregular migration from Libya. Details can be found in the CSSF: Annual Report 2016/17:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/630077/conflict-stability-security-fund-annual-report-2016-2017.pdf

Department for International Development support in Libya has been provided as part of two phases of funding, in response to the Mediterranean Migration Response. The business cases for these two large-scale regional programmes can be found on Development Tracker at:

<https://devtracker.dfid.gov.uk/projects/GB-1-205141/documents>

<https://devtracker.dfid.gov.uk/projects/GB-GOV-1-300264/>

UK Official Development Assistance (ODA) is also spent through the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa's (EUTF) North Africa Window via underlying UK contributions to the EU funds utilised by the EUTF. The UK has made no direct contribution to that EUTF Window to date. The UK's underlying contribution amounts to around 15% of the EU's funding for the North Africa Window. A total of €313M has been allocated to the North Africa Window since the EUTF's inception in 2015, the majority of which is EU funding.

Three EUTF projects specifically provide support to either the Libyan coastguard and/or seek to address the immigration detention system. In the latter case, much of the funding is aimed at improving conditions for and the health of detained people, including:

- Strengthening protection and resilience of displaced populations in Libya (€6M);
- Supporting protection and humanitarian repatriation and reintegration of vulnerable migrants in Libya (€20M);
- Managing mixed migration flows in Libya through expanding protection space and supporting local socio-economic development (€90M).

The 'action fiches' containing details of all three projects, as well as further information on the EUTF's North Africa Window, can be found on the Commission's website at:

https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/regions/africa/eu-emergency-trust-fund/north-africa_en

After careful consideration, some of the information you have asked for has been withheld using section 27, including OSJA assessments that have been completed. Section 27(1)(a), (c) and (d) of the FOIA recognises the need to protect information that would be likely to prejudice relations between the United Kingdom and other states, the interests of the UK abroad, or the promotion or protection by the United Kingdom of its interests abroad.

The application of s27(1)(a), (c) and (d) requires us to consider the public interest test arguments in favour of releasing and withholding the information. We acknowledge that disclosure could meet the public interest in transparency and accountability. Indeed, we are transparent about the UK government's support to Libya's coastguard and detention system - it is detailed in the FCO's human rights report, which is updated annually, and through public correspondence and parliamentary questions.

The disclosure of the OSJAs could potentially damage the bilateral relationship between the UK and Libya. For these reasons we consider that the public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing it.

Yours sincerely,

North Africa Joint Unit



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