



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

Knowledge Management Department
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
King Charles Street
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Website: <https://www.gov.uk>

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27 November 2015

Dear

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST REF: 0569-15

Thank you for your letter of 2 June asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked:

*Please can you supply me with the following information for each of the following years:
2008/9,*

2009/10, 2010/11, 2011/12, 2012/13, 2013/14, 2014/15:

How many times did Mr Blair stay in British embassies or properties?

- Where were these properties?*
- On what dates did he stay there?*
- On each occasion how many people accompanied him?*
- On each occasion what were their names?*
- On each occasion please state whether he was accompanied by Cherie Blair/Booth*

I am also interested in knowing more about any communications between former Prime Minister Tony Blair and the Foreign Office.

Could you therefore supply me copies of any letters between Mr Blair or his office in each of the following years: 2008/9, 2009/10, 2010/11, 2011/12, 2012/13, 2013/14, 2014/15.

Following discussion you agreed to revise your request to:

- How many times has Tony Blair visited?

- What dates?
- How many people was he accompanied by, excluding Security Staff?
- Did he pay for any accommodation?

You also agreed to focus your request on 20 countries. Those countries are USA, Israel, Sierra Leone, Rwanda, China, Kuwait, Singapore, Qatar, Abu Dhabi, Bahrain, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kazakhstan, France, Italy, Belgium, Brazil, Ethiopia, India and Hong Kong.

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. We considered the use of section 38 (Health and Safety) but decided that the public interest test favoured disclosure of the information, which is presented in the table below.

Country	How many times he stayed	Dates	Number of people accompanying him who also stayed, excluding security staff	Any payment received for accommodation for any of the party?
USA	2	16-17 June 2010	>5	No charge
		14-16 December 2010	>5	
Israel	None	N/A	N/A	N/A
Sierra Leone	None	N/A	N/A	N/A
Rwanda	None	N/A	N/A	N/A
China	None	N/A	N/A	N/A
Kuwait	None	N/A	N/A	N/A
Singapore	None	N/A	N/A	N/A
Qatar	None	N/A	N/A	N/A
Abu Dhabi	None	N/A	N/A	N/A
Bahrain	None	N/A	N/A	N/A
Iraq	None	N/A	N/A	N/A
Saudi Arabia	None	N/A	N/A	N/A
Kazakhstan	None	N/A	N/A	N/A
France	7	22-23 January 2008	6	No charge
		30 Jan-1 Feb 2008	5 (>5 the second night)	
		21-22 July 2008	>5	
		6-9 Jan 2009	>5	
		11-12 Oct 2010	>5	
		24-25 Nov 2010 4-5 July 2011	>5 >5	
Italy *	None	N/A	N/A	N/A
Belgium	None	N/A	N/A	N/A
Brazil	None	N/A	N/A	N/A
Ethiopia	None	N/A	N/A	N/A
India	None	N/A	N/A	N/A
Hong Kong	None	N/A	N/A	N/A

* - Information held at the British Embassy in Rome only goes back to 2010.

We have contacted the Office of Tony Blair in relation to this request, as a standard part of our clearance process. They have records which differ to those held by the FCO. There records indicate that the visit to Washington in June 2010 was only for one night, not the two recorded by the Embassy. For Paris, the records held by the Office of Tony Blair indicate that for the visit of 11-12 October accommodation was at a hotel. They have no records of the visits on 30 January – 1 February 2008, 6-9 January 2009 or 24-25 November 2010. However, the FOI Act is clear that recorded information should be considered for release, regardless of accuracy, and the information in the above table is held by the FCO.

Where the total number of cases is between one and five we withhold the exact figure to avoid the risk of identifying the individuals concerned. To release this data 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.

The FCO does not charge former Prime Ministers for staying at Residences. If they do stay, they are usually invited or the security situation dictates that they and their accompanying staff stay at the Residence. Heads of Mission are reminded of the need to be mindful of the burden on the public purse when extending an invitation.

Revised guidance has been issued to overseas posts on assistance provided to former Prime Ministers and former ministers. As a result, posts will no longer facilitate programmes for visits, including the setting up of meetings with Government figures, unless such visits support UK government objectives. This is to avoid the inappropriate use of HMG staff and resources and to avoid the perception that former Ministers and Prime Ministers are representing HMG, rather than a commercial interest.

Former Prime Ministers and former ministers who seek logistical support as representatives of UK business must now submit requests through official UKTI channels to ensure equal support is provided to UK companies.

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 in the [FOI releases](#) section. All personal information in the letter will be removed before publishing.

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Yours sincerely,

Knowledge Management Department



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