



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

Pacific Department
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
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23 April 2014

Dear

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST REF: 0385-14

Thank you for your email of 1 April asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked:

In a 2013 LA Times op-ed, current British Ambassador in Pyongyang, Mike Gifford, commented that "outside organizations working to end North Korea's human rights abuses, in which freedom of expression, movement, religion and thought are severely curtailed" deserve FCO support.

Could you please provide me with the names of the organisations Mr Gifford was referring to, and the rationale and form of support that the FCO has offered/provided to these "outside organisations" from 2011-present that focus on the aforementioned human rights issues: freedom of expression; movement; religion and thought.

I am writing to advise you that following a search of our paper and electronic records, I have established that the information you requested with regards to "*the names of the organisations Mr Gifford was referring to*" is not held by this Department. However, we have spoken to Mr Gifford, who has clarified that the point he was making was that international human rights organisations such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and Christian Solidarity Worldwide deserve the support of the international community.

None of these organisations have a presence in the DPRK and their DPRK related work is primarily focused on maintaining international awareness and pressure with respect to the human rights situation in the DPRK. This is similar to one of the ways in which the UK government aims to address human rights in the DPRK, by ensuring the issue remains high on the international agenda. (The others are by using our policy of critical engagement to

raise our concerns directly with the DPRK authorities and by supporting small-scale projects aimed at improving the lives of vulnerable groups in the DPRK).

Since 2011 we have also provided programme funding to human rights NGOs based in the Republic of Korea for DPRK focused work. Information about this was provided in response your previous FOI request, ref. 0073-14, and is reattached for ease of reference. This table also includes details of our support for people-to-people exchanges between the UK and DPRK, e.g. through visits by officials in both directions, including training of DPRK officials in the UK. Given the lack of human rights organisations and human rights defenders present within the DPRK these exchanges help to improve freedom of thought by exposing DPRK officials to the outside world.

In keeping with the spirit and effect of the Freedom of Information Act, all information is assumed to be releasable to the public unless it is exempt. The information we have supplied to you may now be published on our website together with any related information that will provide a key to its wider context.

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