



Foreign &  
Commonwealth  
Office

Protocol Directorate  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
King Charles Street  
London SW1A 2AH

Website: <https://www.gov.uk>

14 July 2014

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 - REQUEST REF: 0218-14**

Thank you for your email of 23 February asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked:

*'In general, I would like to know details of expenditure by the FCO on security for Guests of the Government from foreign sovereign states (UN member states) between January 1<sup>st</sup> 2013 and up to the date at which you can respond.*

*I would like to receive this information in the public interest, for the sake of transparency. Please send this information electronically in .xls format.*

*Specifically, I would like the data to be broken down into the following categories:*

- 1) *The relevant party (Number of Guests of the Government)*
- 2) *Country of origin of the party*
- 3) *Length of stay*
- 4) *Cost of security provided by the UK Government*
- 5) *Security companies to which these costs were paid.*

*If the FCO does not hold this information, I would be grateful if you could inform me as to which government department/agency does'*

We have undertaken a search and I can confirm that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) does hold some information relevant to your request and can provide you with the following information on the dates of the visits and the length of stay:

Date	Length of Stay (Days)
22 – 24 January 2013	2
31 January - 5 February 2013	3
3 Feb 2013	1
2-5 February 2013	2
22-27 February 2013	3
12-13 March 2013	1
21-24 May 2013	3
12-16 June 2013	4
14-16 July 2013	2
19-22 September 2013	4
28 October - 1 November 2013	4
30 October - 1 November 2013	2
14 -16 January 2014	3

However, we do not hold details of the costs of security provided by the UK Government for Guest of Government visits. These details are held by the Metropolitan Police Service.

We have withheld the release of guest and country names under section 27(1)(a) (International relations) of the FOIA, as this may impact on the bilateral relations with those countries. Section 27(1)(a) of the FOIA recognises the need to protect information that would be likely to prejudice relations between the United Kingdom and other states if it was disclosed. In this case, to protect the release of information relating to the names of guests and the countries who have visited the UK as guests of Government and for whom security has been provided.

The application of section 27(1)(a) requires us to consider the public interest test arguments in favour of releasing and withholding the information. We acknowledge that releasing information on this issue would increase public knowledge about our relations with these countries. But section 27(1)(a) recognises that the effective conduct of international relations depends upon maintaining trust and confidence between governments. If the United Kingdom does not maintain this trust and confidence, its ability to protect and promote UK interests through international relations will be hampered, which will not be in the public interest. The disclosure of information detailing our relationship with these governments could potentially damage the bilateral relationship between the UK and them. This would reduce the UK government's ability to protect and promote UK interests through its relations with these countries, which would not be in the public interest. For these reasons we consider that the public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing it.

In keeping with the spirit and effect of the FOIA, 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 with any related information that will provide a key to its wider context.

The information supplied to you continues to be protected by the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. You are free to use it for your own purposes, including any non-commercial research you are doing and for the purposes of news reporting. Any other re-use, for example commercial publication, would require the permission of the copyright holder. Most documents supplied by the FCO will have been produced by Government officials and will be protected by Crown Copyright. You can find details on the arrangement for re-using Crown Copyright information on the [TNA](#) website.

Information you receive which is not subject to Crown Copyright continues to be protected by the copyright of the person, or organisation, from which the information originated. You must ensure that you gain their permission before reproducing any third party (non-Crown Copyright) information.

I hope you are satisfied with this reply. However, if you wish to make a complaint or if you would like a review of our decision, please write to the FOI and DPA Team at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Room K4.10-13, King Charles Street, London, SW1A 2AH. E-mail: [foi-dpa.imd@fco.gov.uk](mailto:foi-dpa.imd@fco.gov.uk). You have 40 working days to do so from the date this letter. Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are not content with the outcome of your complaint, you may then apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the Information Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the complaints procedure provided by the FCO. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF.

You can also find out more about previous FOI replies published on our website at [Publications - Inside Government - GOV.UK](#).

Yours sincerely,

