



Foreign &  
Commonwealth  
Office

**Middle East and North Africa Directorate**  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
King Charles Street  
London SW1A 2AH

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

29 February 2016

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST REF: 0983-15**

Thank you for your email of 8 October 2015 asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked:

*In a television interview on channel 4 news on 6 October David Cameron stated that the pending execution of Ali Mohammed Al Nimr had ' been raised by the foreign secretary and the embassy', done through the proper channels'.*

*Please provide any documents, notes or correspondence that demonstrate that this was raised as stated above.*

I can confirm that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) does hold information relevant to your request.

We are releasing the information with the exception of redacted items under Section 27 and Section 40 of the Freedom of Information Act.

Section 27(1)(a) recognises the need to protect information that would be likely to prejudice relations between the United Kingdom and other states if it was disclosed. 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 private discussions with Saudi Arabia and 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 United Kingdom interests through international relations will be hampered, which will not be in the public interest. The disclosure of information detailing our discussions with the Saudi Arabian government could potentially damage the bilateral relationship between the United Kingdom and Saudi Arabia. This would reduce the United Kingdom government's ability to protect and promote United Kingdom interests through its relations with Saudi Arabia. For these reasons we consider that the public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing it.

Some of the information you have requested is personal data relating to third parties, the disclosure of which would contravene one of the data protection principles. In such circumstances Sections 40(2) and 40(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, section 40 confers an absolute exemption on disclosure. There is, therefore, no public interest test to apply.

The Foreign Secretary and our Embassy have raised this case in person at senior levels within the Saudi Arabian Government on a number of occasions. The documents represent correspondence which shows that the case of Ali Mohammed Al Nimr has been raised by the Foreign Secretary and the Embassy. We raise other human rights cases, along with the case of Mr Al Nimr, regularly with the Saudi Arabian Government at senior levels.

We apologise for the length of time it has taken to respond to your request and we have carried out a review of our handling of this request in response to your complaint in an email dated 2 February.

The FCO always endeavours to provide a response to FOI requests within 20 working days as required under the FOIA, but we have to ensure that any relevant information we hold is assessed and reviewed by all relevant stakeholders to consider thoroughly whether the public interest test arguments favour releasing or withholding the information. In this case a search result was sent out the day after your original request was received. The delay was as a result of having to assess thoroughly all the results of this search and consult stakeholders for review of the material found.

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

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. To re-use Crown Copyright documents please consult the [Open Government Licence v3](#) on the National Archives 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.

Yours sincerely,

Gulf Team  
Middle East and North Africa Directorate



We keep and use information in line with the Data Protection Act 1998. We may release this personal information to other UK government departments and public authorities.