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30 July 2016

## **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 - REQUEST REF: 0573-16**

Thank you for your email of 26 February 2016 asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked:

*"I am looking for diplomatic and/or consular correspondence from the FCO with Egypt and/or Switzerland during the periods November 1997 - July 1998 and January - July 1999 regarding the terrorist attack on Luxor in November 1997."*

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, which is presented in the form of a digest.

Some of the information you have requested has been withheld under Section 27(1)(a) of the FOIA, which 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, the release of information relating to immigration matters could harm our relations with Egypt.

The application of s.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 Egypt. However, s.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 the Egyptian Government could potentially damage the bilateral relationship between the UK and Egypt. This would reduce the UK government's ability to protect and promote UK interests through its relations with Egypt, 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 disclosure.

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Yours sincerely,

North Africa Department



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