



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

**Bangladesh, Sri Lanka & the Maldives
Team**

Foreign and Commonwealth Office
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Website: <https://www.gov.uk>

20 October 2015

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST REF: 0941-15

Thank you for your request for information which we received on 23 September 2015. In your request you asked for:

'information which relates to the period 1 January 2015 to the present day.

Please note that I am only interested in information which relates to The Maldives and or its Government and or the continuing controversy surrounding the imprisonment of Mohamed Nasheed and the campaign for his release.

1..During the aforementioned period has the Foreign Secretary and or the relevant minister (s) with responsibility for The Maldives met with Cherie Blair QC and or any representative and or employee of the organisation known as Omnia Strategy. If the answer is yes can you please provide the following details. In the case of each meeting can you state the date, the time and the venue. In the case of each meeting can you please provide a full list of those present. In the case of each meeting can you please provide an explanation of the meeting and a description of the topics under discussion.

2...During the aforementioned period has the Foreign Secretary and or the relevant minister (s) with responsibility for The Maldives exchanged correspondence and or communications with Cherie Blair QC and or any representative and or employee of Omnia Strategy. If the answer is yes can you please provide copies of this correspondence and communications including emails.

3...Has the Foreign Office Team /desk with specific responsibility for The Maldives exchanged correspondence and or communications including emails with Cherie Blair QC and or the organisation known as Omnia Strategy. If the answer to this question is yes can you please provide full copies of all correspondence and communications including emails.'

I am writing to confirm that we have now completed the search for the information which you requested and can confirm that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) does hold information relevant to your request.

There have been no Ministerial meetings with Cherie Blair QC or any other representative or employee of Omnia Strategy since 1 January 2015.

FCO officials have met on three occasions with representatives of Omnia Strategy to discuss the Maldives, including once with Cherie Blair QC. The dates and senior representatives at these meetings are listed below:

- 13 July 2015 Giles Thomson, Head of South Asia Dept, FCO, London
Toby Cadman, Partner, Omnia Strategy
- 31 July 2015 James Dauris, High Commissioner, British High Commission, Colombo
Toby Cadman, Partner, Omnia Strategy
- 25 Aug 2015 James Dauris, High Commissioner, British High Commission, Colombo
Cherie Blair QC, Chair, Omnia Strategy

The only correspondence between Omnia Strategy and Ministerial offices or the FCO were two requests for meetings to discuss the Maldives and, on one occasion, follow-up arrangements (attached). The names and contact details of junior officials and junior representatives of Omnia Strategy have been withheld as this information is personal data relating to third parties, the disclosure of which would contravene one of the data protection principles. In such circumstances, Section 40 (2) and (3) of the FOIA applies. 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.

Arrangements for the other meetings were made verbally. No minutes were taken of the meetings. There has been no other correspondence or other communications between Ministerial offices or the FCO and Cherie Blair QC or any other representative of Omnia Strategy.

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Yours sincerely,

Desk Officer, Sri Lanka and the Maldives
South Asia Department



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