



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

North Africa Department
King Charles Street
London
SW1A 2AH

25 April 2016

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST REF: 1080-15

Thank you for your email of 10 November 2015 asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. You asked:

“Mohammed Ismail was reportedly in London for talks (with the FCO) in March or April 2011 to do with the Libyan situation : I would like to see any available documents from March or April 2011 dealing with his mission to the UK.”

I wrote to you on 7 April to say that we had not yet reached a decision on where the balance of the public interest lay. I am writing to confirm that we have now completed the search for the requested information, and that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) does hold information relevant to your request.

We are able to release some information to you as a digest. This is attached.

We have withheld some information under Section 31(1)(a) Law Enforcement - the prevention or detection of crime and 31(1)(e) Law Enforcement – the operation of immigration controls. Section 31 is subject to a public interest test. We acknowledge that there is a strong public interest in the case and the progress of any investigation. However, it is our view that in this case, the balance is in favour of non-disclosure, as to release the requested information would likely inhibit the UK government's ability to gather intelligence about anticipated criminal activities and would likely inhibit the effectiveness of policies and procedures relating to operational activity.

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 (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 documents released to you reference a meeting that took place between the then Middle East and North Africa Director, Christian Turner, and Mohammed Ismail. Following a comprehensive search of our records it has not been possible to locate a formal note of that meeting.

The FCO can neither confirm nor deny whether the above information represents all the information held that would meet the terms of your request, as the duty to comply with section 1(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 does not apply by virtue of section 23(5).

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

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Yours sincerely,

North Africa Department



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