



Foreign &  
Commonwealth  
Office

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
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London  
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05 June 2015

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST REF: 0350-15**

Thank you for your email of 08 April 2015 asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked:

*Would you please provide me with copies of all correspondence, or records of oral conversations, between Tony Blair and the Foreign Office (i.e. the central department) between July 2012 and today [08 April 2015].*

*Please include in this request correspondence originating from, or sent to, representatives of Tony Blair's organisations:*

*Office of Tony Blair  
Tony Blair Africa Governance Initiative  
Tony Blair Faith Foundation  
Government Advisory Practice*

*Please also include internal FCO memos and correspondence relating to Mr Blair and the work of his organisations.*

We accepted this as three separate FOI requests covering Brazil, China and Kazakhstan. This response relates to information relating to Kazakhstan.

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. However, some information is being withheld under the following exemptions: *section 27 (International Relations); section 40 (personal information); section 41 (information provided in confidence)*. Please find attached the information that the FCO can release to you.

Some of the information within the scope of your request is exempt under Sections 27(1)(a), (c), (d) and (2) of the FOIA as it relates to confidential government to government discussion. Under section 27(1)(a) - relations between the UK and any other state, (c) – the interests of the UK abroad and (d) – the promotion and protection by the UK of its interest abroad releasing information shared with the UK on a confidential basis could undermine the UK's relationship with Kazakhstan. The effective conduct of international relations depends on maintaining trust and confidence between governments. This relationship of trust allows for the free and frank exchange of information on the understanding that it will be treated in confidence. If the UK does not respect such confidences, its ability to protect and promote UK interests through international relations will be hampered. Kazakhstan may, for example, be reluctant to share sensitive information with the UK Government in future and may be less likely to respect the confidentiality of information supplied by the UK Government, to the detriment of UK interests. Under section 27(2) disclosure of the information that was given to us in confidence would damage our relationships with the individuals concerned: they would be more guarded and less co-operative in their dealings with us. We recognise that there is public interest in the relationship between a former UK Prime Minister and the Government of Kazakhstan. But, for the reasons mentioned above, we consider that the public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

Some of the information you have requested contains 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 FOIA 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.

In addition, some of the information you requested is exempt under section 41 (1) (b), as it is information that was provided in confidence. It is our view that disclosure of this information would constitute an actionable breach of confidence and so disclosure would be unlawful under the Act. The successful working of British diplomacy depends upon sources being able to provide information in confidence without fear that this will be made public. In these circumstances, section 41 of the FOIA confers an absolute exemption on disclosure and there is no public interest test to apply.

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.

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Yours sincerely,

Desk Officer Central Asia Team  
Eastern Europe and Central Asia Directorate



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