



Foreign &  
Commonwealth  
Office

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11 May 2016

## **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST REF: 0293-16**

Thank you for your request for information which we received on 11 March 2016. In your request you asked for:

- *On 22 April, 1992, Captain Strasser and several fellow RSLF officers deposed Momoh's All People's Congress government. My reporting of that coup and our protection of the British community promoted two complimentary messages from the FO: telegram 76 of 5 May; and a letter of 5 May to me from Minister Baroness Chalker.*
- *I therefore request copies of the telegrams that I sent over those several days covering the political developments and our work with the British community.*
- *You will see that one of the telegrams carries the text of Strasser's statement on the radio on 29 April explaining what was happening. This statement was unrehearsed. It should not be confused with a second statement by Strasser on the radio several days later which was written by the Attorney-General.*

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

I am pleased to enclose the material which we can release to you. Some information is being withheld under the following exemptions of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA):

### **Section 27 (2) International relations**

Section 27 (2) of the FOIA recognises the need to protect information provided in confidence to the UK Government by another Government. In this case, the information being withheld relates to information provided to UK government officials by representatives of the government of the United States.

This application of section 27(2) requires us to consider the public interest test arguments in favour of releasing and withholding the information. We acknowledge that it is in the public interest to show how the UK government officials interact with US government officials, especially in potentially volatile situations. However, disclosure of information that was given

to us in confidence would damage our relationship and future cooperation with US government officials would be more guarded. It is for these reasons that we considered that the public interest in maintaining exemption under section 27 (2) outweighs the public interest in disclosure of the information.

### **Section 40 (2) and (3) Personal Information**

Some information has been withheld under section 40 – personal information. 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.

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Please contact me if you have any queries about this letter.

Yours sincerely,

Sahel and West Africa Team

