



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

Gulf Team
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
King Charles Street
London SW1A 2AH

Website: <https://www.gov.uk>

30 April 2015

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT (FOIA) 2000 REQUEST REF: 0168-15

Thank you for your request for information which we received on 17 February 2015. In your request you asked for;

Can I request all correspondence between the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Scottish Government relating to the 2022 World Cup in Qatar?

I am writing to confirm that on completion of our search for the information which you requested, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) does hold information relevant to your request.

Please find attached the information that the FCO can release to you.

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, s.40 confers an absolute exemption on disclosure. There is, therefore, no public interest test to apply.

A letter from the Scottish Cabinet Secretary for the Commonwealth Games, Sports, Equalities and Pensioners Rights, Ms Robison MSP, to Hassan Al-Thawadi, Secretary General of the Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy for Qatar 2022 has been withheld under Section 28, relations within the UK, and under Section 27 (1)(c), the interests of the UK abroad.

The FCO has to strike a balance between being able to give free and frank advice to Ministers and senior officials in London, while maintaining a good working relationship with the Scottish Executive to promote their interests. Section 28(1)(2)(b) is a qualified exemption and as such, we have considered where the greater public interest lies in disclosing or withholding the information. Disclosure could meet the public interest in transparency and accountability. However, the effective conduct of internal UK 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 internal relations will be hampered, which will not be in the public interest. The disclosure of information could potentially damage the relationship between the UK and the Scottish Administration which is not in the public interest. For these reasons we consider that the public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing it. We are aware that the Scottish Government has withheld the same information in responding to a similar request.

Section 27(1)(c) is also a qualified exemption. Disclosure could meet the public interest in transparency and accountability. However, the effective conduct of international relations depends upon maintaining trust and confidence between governments. If the UK 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 on our relationship with Qatar could potentially damage the relationship between the UK and that state. The relationship is on-going and these comments could be taken into account during negotiations with those states. This could reduce the UK Government's ability to protect and promote UK interests 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.

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.

The copies of information being supplied to you continue to be protected by the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. You are free to use it for your own purposes, including any non-commercial research you are doing and for the purposes of news reporting. Any other re-use, for example commercial publication, would require the permission of the copyright holder. Most documents supplied by the FCO will have been produced by government officials and will be protected by Crown Copyright. To re-use Crown Copyright documents please consult the [Open Government Licence v3](#) on the National Archives website.

Information you receive which is not subject to Crown Copyright continues to be protected by the copyright of the person, or organisation, from which the information originated. You must ensure that you gain their permission before reproducing any third party (non-Crown Copyright) information.

Yours sincerely,

Middle East and North Africa Department

