

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (FOI) ACT: REQUEST REF 0430-15

INFORMATION FOR RELEASE (REDACTED)

ITEM NO.	TYPE	CONTENT
1.	Email chain from FCO official to Her Majesty's Ambassador (HMA) Cairo and FCO Media Office, copying FCO officials.	<p>From: REDACT Sent: 28 April 2015 18:09 To: REDACT; John Casson CC: REDACT Subject: RE: Times asking if HMA Cairo accompanied Sainsburys CEO to court in Egypt last Sunday</p> <p>Thanks all. We've discussed here and I've just spoken to REDACT too. They are already aware that the Times are interested and speaking to them. We agreed that we would answer this question but refer the journalist to REDACT.</p> <p>Did HMA attend?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - HMA did not attend - We have been providing normal consular and commercial assistance to Sainsbury's <p>Contact at REDACT are below REDACT</p> <p>REDACT</p> <p>Thank you for getting in touch, and I have copied in my colleagues from the press office.</p> <p>REDACT</p>
2.	Email chain between FCO officials, FCO Media Office and HMA Cairo, copying FCO officials.	<p>From: REDACT Sent: 29 April 2015 08:39 To: REDACT; John Casson CC: REDACT; Newsdesk Subject: RE: Times asking if HMA Cairo accompanied Sainsburys CEO to court in Egypt last Sunday</p> <p>All,</p> <p>The Times didn't report say [sic] that John had attended (we knocked that down last night) but did include the</p>

		<p>following in terms of <i>the Times</i> understands:</p> <p><i>“He was accompanied by Sainbury’s [sic] chief executives and security staff in an appearance that was carefully orchestrated by John Casson, British Ambassador”.</i></p> <p>REDACT has now asked us for a reaction to this, should we just stick to referring to our usual consular support line?</p> <p>Thanks,</p> <p>REDACT</p> <p>From: Newsdesk Sent: 28 April 2015 17:46 To: REDACT; John Casson CC: REDACT; Newsdesk Subject: Times asking if HMA Cairo accompanied Sainsburys CEO to court in Egypt last Sunday</p> <p>Call from REDACT of the Times. She is writing a piece for tomorrow about the appearance of the CEO of Sainsburys in an Egyptian court on Sunday.</p> <p>She said she had seen a translation of a report in an Egyptian paper ‘Al Watan’ which stated that the CEO had been to court accompanied by HMA Cairo and ‘15 officials’. She said that she thought the 15 was likely to be an exaggeration but asked if we could confirm that HMA attended.</p> <p>Grateful for advice on handling/press line.</p> <p>The piece is for tomorrow in the business section with a possible smaller story in the news section.</p> <p>Contact details for journalist: REDACT</p> <p>REDACT</p>
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3.	Email from FCO official to HMA Cairo and FCO official, copying FCO official.	<p>From: REDACT Sent: 29 April 2015 14:24 To: REDACT; John Casson Cc: REDACT Subject: Sainsbury’s Case coverage in Egyptian Media</p> <p>Hi REDACT,</p> <p>The court case against the CEO of Sainsbury’s supermarket operator, Mike Coupe, was widely reported – today – by the Egyptian local media, however, most of news portal [sic] are quoting Reuters article in this regard. Overall, Al-Ahram article was the most critical to the supermarket.</p> <p>Details:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Al-Ahram [primary government newspaper]: “Sainsbury’s a history of crises .. Exited Egypt after 4 years of burning prices .. and its president faces an imprisonment sentence”. The article states that Sainsbury’s supermarket is renewing the debate around it by rejecting the accusations against its CEO following a court ruling handing “Coupe” two years imprisonment sentence. The article gives a brief about the emergence of Sainsbury’s in the Egyptian market and its exit. It added that the supermarket was accused, during its operation time in Egypt, that it was deliberately cutting prices of products and goods, which make competitors lose and contributed to the end of their business in Egypt. Al-Ahram Online [Ahram English online version]: Copying Reuters article. 2) Al-Masry Al-Youm [privately owned newspaper, wide readership]: “British Sainsbury denies the imprisonment of its CEO in Egypt”. AMAY has quoted Reuter’s article – published today – underlining Sainsbury’s rejection of all allegations against its CEO Mike Coupe, clarifying that he was forced to attend a court hearing on Sunday in order to drop the charges filed against him in a case related to embezzlement. The article added that Coupe wasn’t hired in Sainsbury’s in 2001 and never met with the plaintiff. 3) Veto Gate [privately owned news portal, medium readership]: “British Sainsbury’s rejects legal case in Egypt against its CEO” Content quoted from Reuters article.
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4.	Email from FCO official to Sainsbury’s official, copying HMA Cairo, FCO officials and Sainsbury’s officials.	<p>From: REDACT Sent: 29 April 2015 15:22 To: REDACT Cc: John Casson; REDACT Subject: Sainsbury’s Egyptian media coverage</p> <p>REDACT,</p> <p>Below is a summary of the case in the local press. There has been a good deal of coverage but overall it has been factual, including the denial, and based on the Reuters article. The more critical was the Al-Ahram and Al-Watan article. REDACT</p> <p>There wasn’t a great deal on social media about the case and no prominent Twitter or Facebook commentators</p>

		<p>have focused on it.</p> <p>Details:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Al-Ahram [primary government newspaper]: “Sainsbury’s a history of crises .. Exited Egypt after 4 years of burning prices .. and its president faces an imprisonment sentence”. The article states that Sainsbury’s supermarket is renewing the debate around it by rejecting the accusations against its CEO following a court ruling handing “Coupe” two years imprisonment sentence. The article gives a brief about the emergence of Sainsbury’s in the Egyptian market and its exit. It added that the supermarket was accused, during its operation time in Egypt, that it was deliberately cutting prices of products and goods, which make competitors lose and contributed to the end of their business in Egypt. Al-Ahram Online [Ahram English online version]: Copying Reuters article. 2) Al-Masry Al-Youm [privately owned newspaper, wide readership]: “British Sainsbury denies the imprisonment of its CEO in Egypt”. AMAY has quoted Reuter’s article – published today – underlining Sainsbury’s rejection of all allegations against its CEO Mike Coupe, clarifying that he was forced to attend a court hearing on Sunday in order to drop the charges filed against him in a case related to embezzlement. The article added that Coupe wasn’t hired in Sainsbury’s in 2001 and never met with the plaintiff. 3) Veto Gate [privately owned news portal, medium readership]: “British Sainsbury’s rejects legal case in Egypt against its CEO” Content quoted from Reuters article. 4) Youm7 [privately owned newspaper, wide readership]: “Sainsbury commenting on a two-year-imprisonment sentence in Egypt against its CEO: “we refute allegations”. Content quoted from Reuters article. 5) Masrawy [privately owned news portal, medium readership]: “British Sainsbury’s rejects legal case in Egypt against its current CEO”. Content quoted from Reuters article.
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		<p>that Mounir Fakhry Abdel Nour – the minister of foreign trade – has refused to answer Qatar calls during last week, in an attempt to resolve Sainsbury’s crisis. Consequently the Qataris tried to contact with Mehleb – the Prime Minister – but failed to reach a solution. The article went further on saying that Abdel Nour criticized the efforts of the Qataris who he deemed fail to understand the impartiality and independence of the Judiciary and that the Egyptian executive doesn’t interfere in Judicial and criminal matters.</p> <p>REDACT</p>
5.	Email from FCO official to HMA Cairo and FCO official, copying FCO official.	<p>From: REDACT Sent: 29 April 2015 15:38 To: REDACT; John Casson Cc: REDACT Subject: Sainsbury’s Case coverage in Egypt Media</p> <p>Yes REDACT, I totally agree. Almost all articles are literally quoting Reuters with the exception of Al-Ahram and Al-Watan.</p> <p>REDACT</p> <p>Generally, the news didn’t seem to have picked a lot of attention on social media. Only news portals have covered the issue, but couldn’t find influential individual accounts on twitter or facebook commenting on it.</p> <p>Regards</p> <p>REDACT</p>
6.	Email chain from FCO official to HMA Cairo, copying FCO official.	<p>From: REDACT Sent: 03 May 2015 10:10 To: John Casson CC: REDACT Subject: FW: Times day three Importance: High</p>

		<p>John,</p> <p>REDACT has flagged up that Nasharty has been interviewed by the Times. The article here: (http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/business/industries/retailing/article 4427631.ece) appeared on Friday. Unfortunately I don't have a Times subscription so I haven't been able to read it in full.</p> <p>REDACT</p>
7.	Email from Sainsbury's official to HMA Cairo and FCO official	<p>From: REDACT Sent: 29 April 2015 11:19 To: John Casson; REDACT Subject: FW: all coverage</p> <p>John, REDACT</p> <p>REDACT</p> <p>From: REDACT Sent: 29/04/2015 10:15 To: REDACT Cc: REDACT Subject: all coverage (have I missed anything)?</p> <p>Headlines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Some information exempt under Section 21 (see digest item 8)</i> • Press Association National Newswire: FROM THE FIRST EDITIONS <p>Also</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Some information exempt under Section 21 (see digest item 8)</i> • BBC Radio 4: The piece was reported on the Today programme by Simon Jack at 0845 – the tone was one of surprise – it's widely considered by the press as a bizarre story relating to a historical allegation.

		<p>A further article from Deidre Hipwell at The Times comments that at the time when Sainsbury's entered into the joint venture with Egyptian Distribution Group, Egde, in 1999 Sainsbury's did everything right "on paper". However, following political problems and local competition, Sainsbury's pulled out after 18 months, resulting in a criminal claim filed in a summary court in Giza accusing Mr Coupe of trying to seize cheques relating to Edge's bankruptcy from a trust in Giza. Hipwell highlights that prior to the purchase of a stake in Edge, analysts had criticised the move. The piece adds that Mike's appearance in a hearing in Giza on Sunday was "carefully managed by John Casson, the British ambassador, and other embassy officials".</p> <p>A full piece from Bloomberg includes comments from Sainsbury's that the Egyptian court convicted Coupe in September last year in his absence and without notifying him of the proceedings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retail Note: Nick Bubb: Sainsbury: After the extraordinary story in the <i>Times</i> today about CEO Mike Coupe being sentenced to prison in Egypt, in absentia, Sainsbury has used a clarification statement, pointing out that he wasn't even in the business when the ill-fated move into Egyptian supermarket retailing took place back in 2001 and that "<i>When Mr El Nasharty bought our interest in the Egyptian joint venture we had with him in 2001, he paid us with cheques that were dishonoured</i>". No doubt Mike Coupe could do without these silly legal distractions, as he battles to wean his customers off their addiction to quantitative vouchering back in the UK... <p>Further tweets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Some information exempt under Section 21 (see digest item 8)</i> • REDACT: Sainsbury's boss Mike Coupe sentenced to 2 years in jail in Egypt, court says he tried to seize cheques from local business. S/burys denies. • REDACT: Pharaoh tale about @sainsburys boss Mike Coupe being sentenced to two years in jail by Egypt court in @thetimes. Well done @DeirdreHipwell • REDACT: No Sharm el-Sheikh holidays for Mike Coupe, I guess... Sainsbury's chief caught up in Egypt court drama via @thetimes • REDACT Strange tale regarding Mike Coupe, presumably there are enough bakers in the business who could do him a cake with a file in it? <p>Coverage:</p>
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Information exempt under Section 21	Information can be found at the following links.	<p>http://uk.reuters.com/article/2015/04/29/uk-sainsbury-coupe-egypt-idUKKBN0NK0G120150429</p> <p>http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/business/industries/retailing/article4427631.ece</p> <p>http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/business/industries/retailing/article4425774.ece</p> <p>http://elwatannews.com/news/details/717891</p> <p>http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/business/industries/retailing/article4425425.ece</p> <p>http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/business/industries/retailing/article4425528.ece</p> <p>http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/newsbysector/retailandconsumer/11570005/Sainsburys-chief-executive-Mike-Coupe-sentenced-to-jail-in-Egypt.html</p> <p>http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-04-29/sainsbury-denies-allegations-against-ceo-in-egyptian-court-case</p>

	<p>http://news.sky.com/story/1474242/sainsburys-boss-jailed-in-absentia-in-egypt</p> <p>http://www.cityam.com/214771/sainsburys-chief-executive-mike-coupe-sentenced-two-years-egyptian-jail</p> <p>http://www.itv.com/news/2015-04-29/mike-coupe-sainsburys-boss-given-two-year-jail-sentence-in-egypt/</p> <p>http://uk.businessinsider.com/sainsburys-boss-mike-coupe-just-got-sentenced-to-two-years-in-an-egyptian-prison-2015-4</p> <p>http://www.thegrocer.co.uk/finance/media-bites-mike-coupes-egyptian-conviction-walmart-reckitt-benckiser/517729.article</p> <p>http://www.retail-week.com/home/breakfast-briefing-retail-news-on-sainsburys-walmart-amazon-and-more/5074456.article</p> <p>http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/reuters/article-3060254/Sainsburys-rejects-Egypt-legal-case-against-CEO-Coupe.html#ixzz3YgW67rrY</p> <p>https://mobile.twitter.com/fletcherr/status/593289869192888320</p> <p>https://mobile.twitter.com/graemewearnden/status/593301156484493312</p> <p>https://mobile.twitter.com/georgemacd/status/593319834793996288</p> <p>https://mobile.twitter.com/georgemacd/status/593295462733619200</p> <p>https://mobile.twitter.com/catneilan/status/593316576318922752</p> <p>https://mobile.twitter.com/clarkaw/status/593315154307186689</p> <p>https://mobile.twitter.com/adamparsons1/status/593303041857708032</p>
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