



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

Africa Directorate
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
King Charles Street
London
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17 April 2014

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 - REQUEST REF: 0008-14

Thank you for your email dated 3 January asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). You requested the following documents:

'The Annual Reviews on Sierra Leone, including the calendars of events, covering the years 1991, 1992 and 1993'

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. I apologise for the time it has taken for you to receive a response to your request.

Please find attached the information that the FCO can release to you. Some of the information has been withheld under the following exemptions:

- *Section 27 – International Relations*
- *Section 40 – Personal information*
- *Section 41 – Information provided in confidence.*

Please note: In the document titled 'Annual Review and Calendar of Events 1993: paragraph 6 - the month referred to is *September*.

Section 27 (1) (a): This section requires us to consider the public interest test arguments in favour of releasing and withholding the information. We acknowledge that releasing information on this issue would increase public knowledge about our relations with Sierra Leone. But section 27(1)(a) recognises that the effective conduct of international relations depends upon maintaining trust and confidence between governments. The disclosure of some of the information in these reviews could potentially damage the UK's bilateral relationship with Sierra Leone. This would reduce the UK Government's ability to protect and promote UK interests through its relations with Sierra Leone, 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 disclosing the information.

Section 40: Some of the withheld information is personal data relating to third parties. It is our view that disclosure of this information would breach the first data protection principle, which states that personal data should be processed fairly and lawfully. Section 40(2) and (3) of the FOIA therefore apply. It is the fairness aspect of this principle which we think would be breached by disclosure in this case. In such circumstances section 40 confers an absolute exemption on disclosure. We do not therefore have to apply the public interest test.

Section 41 (1): Some information has been withheld 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 disclosure would be unlawful under the FOIA. In these circumstances, section 41 of the FOIA confers an absolute exemption on disclosure, and there is no public interest test to apply.

In keeping with the spirit and effect of the FOIA, all information is assumed to be releasable to the public unless it is exempt. The information we have supplied to you may now be published on our website together with any related information that will provide a key to its wider context.

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Yours sincerely,

Desk Officer for Sierra Leone
Foreign and Commonwealth Office



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