



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

Middle East and North Africa Directorate
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
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14 April 2016

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST REF: 0277-16

Thank you for your email of 7 March asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked:

'I would like to request – under the Freedom of Information Act 2000- a copy of the full report entitled ' Muslim Brotherhood Review'.

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.

The Prime Minister's commitment to make public the review's findings is on public record. A summary of the review's main findings was presented in a Written Ministerial Statement on 17 December 2015.

Under section 21 of the Act, we are not required to provide information in response to a request if it is already reasonably accessible to you. Some information relevant to your request is available in the Written Ministerial Statement which was laid before Parliament on 17 December 2015, through the following link. [Muslim Brotherhood review: statement by the Prime Minister - Written statements to Parliament - GOV.UK](#)

After careful consideration of your request, other information which the FCO holds on this subject has been withheld using the following exemptions:

Section 23 - Information supplied by, or relating to, bodies dealing with security matters; Section 27 - International Relations; and Section 40 - Personal Information

and Information provided in confidence. Further details of our assessment of your request are set out below.

Section 23 applies in this case because some of the information you have requested has been supplied by, or relates to, bodies listed in section 23(3). Section 23 is an absolute exemption so does not require the application of a public interest test.

Section 27 exists to protect the UK's international relations, its relations abroad and the UK's ability to protect and promote those interests. It recognises the need to protect information relating to confidential discussions the UK may have with other states. The information you requested would involve the release of information provided in confidence by foreign governments which would, or would be likely to, prejudice relations between the UK and those governments if disclosed. Section 27 is a qualified exemption, so requires the consideration of the public interest in favour of releasing and of withholding the information in question.

Releasing information from this internal Government report might increase public understanding about the Muslim Brotherhood and how it is viewed by foreign states. This might allow more informed debate and public engagement in this issue. However, section 27(2) recognises that the effective conduct of international relations and the free and frank exchange of information given in confidence depends on respecting that confidence and maintaining trust. Disclosing information offered confidentially by states consulted during the review may damage this confidence and trust. This may make these states less willing to exchange sensitive information with the UK in future, negatively prejudice the UK's relations with them, and hamper the UK's ability to protect and promote UK interests abroad. The public interest in withholding this information therefore strongly outweighs the public interest in its disclosure.

Section 40 confers exemptions in relation to information that constitutes personal data as defined by the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA). Specifically, section 40(2) and (3)(a) exempt personal data of someone other than the applicant, and exempt information if its disclosure would contravene either one of the data protection principles in DPA schedule 1 or the data subject's right under DPA section 10 to prevent data processing which would cause damage or distress. The report includes references to many frank conversations with individuals, who gave their views in the expectation that these would not be made public. Disclosure of personal information contained in the review would therefore contravene both DPA schedule 1 – which provides that personal data must be processed fairly and lawfully – and the rights of certain individuals to prevent processing under DPA section 10. Section 40 is an absolute exemption so does not require the application of a public interest test.

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](https://www.gov.uk) in the [FOI releases](#) section. All personal information in the letter will be removed before publishing.

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Yours sincerely,

Central Operations Dept
Middle East and North Africa Directorate



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