



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

South America Department
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
King Charles Street
London SW1A 2AH

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

1 September 2015

Dear

Your Freedom Of Information Request: 0458-15

Thank you for your request for information which we received on 8 May 2015. We wrote to you on 3 August to say that we would require additional time to consider where the balance of public interest lies for the information you have requested. In your request you asked:

'Please provide me with all exchanges of communication between the FCO and employees of Top Gear and/or the BBC in relation to the incident in Argentina recently when the Top Gear 'team' had to flee to Chile. Please also provide me with any documents on the topic that were written by the ambassador in Argentina.

I am writing to confirm that we have now completed the search for the information which you requested and can confirm that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) does hold information relevant to your request.

Some of the information you have requested, is however, 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.

Section 27(1)(a) of the FOIA recognises the need to protect information that would be likely to prejudice relations between the United Kingdom and other states if it was disclosed. In this case, the release of sensitive internal communications could harm our relations with Argentina.

The application of s.27(1)(a) 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 Argentina. However, s.27 (1) (a) recognises that the effective conduct of international 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 international relations will be hampered, which will not be in the public interest. The disclosure of information detailing our relationship with the Argentine Government could potentially damage the bilateral relationship between the UK and Argentina. This would reduce the UK government's ability to protect and promote UK interests through its relations with Argentina, 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 it.

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Yours sincerely,

Desk Officer for Brazil and Assistant Desk Officer for Argentina
South America Department



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