



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

Sahel and West Africa Team
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
King Charles Street
London SW1A 2AH

Website: www.gov.uk

09 May 2016

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST REF: 0126-16

Thank you for your request for information which we received on 1 February 2016. In your request you asked for:

- *A list of all meetings with external organisations held by the UK's Ambassador to Liberia, David Belgrove, between May 2015 and today.*

At the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's request for clarification, you asked for:

- *The government regularly publishes lists of meetings held by ministers, permanent secretaries and special advisers as part of its commitment to transparency. However, if it helps, you could restrict it to meetings between the ambassador and organisations outside of the UK / Liberian government.*

I can confirm that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) does hold information relevant to your request. I am pleased to enclose the material which we can release to you. Some information is being withheld under the following exemptions of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA):

Section 27 (1) (a) (b) (c) (d) International Relations

Section 27 (1) provides that information is exempt if its disclosure would or would be likely to prejudice (a) the relations between the UK and any other state or (b) international organisation (c) the interests of the UK abroad or (d) the promotion or protection by the UK of its interests abroad.

In applying section 27 we have had to balance the public interest in withholding the information against the public interest in disclosing it. Factors in favour of disclosure include the strong public interest in transparency and, accountability as well as interest in wider international relations. Factors against disclosure include the strong public interest in ensuring that the FCO are able to conduct the UK's international relations effectively and protect UK interests abroad. The effective conduct of the UK's international relations depends upon maintaining the trust and confidence of other governments and international organisations. To do this there must be good working relationships with other governments based on confidence and trust. This relationship of trust allows for the free and frank exchange of information, both between governments but also between politicians on the understanding that it will be treated in confidence. If the UK does not maintain this trust and

confidence, our ability to protect and promote UK interests through international relations, will be hampered. Other governments and international organisations may be more reluctant to share information with the UK Government in future, and may be less likely to respect the confidentiality of information supplied by the UK Government to them, to the detriment of UK interests. In this case, the information being withheld relates to confidential meetings between Her Majesty's Ambassador to Monrovia and foreign governments through their diplomatic missions.

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 information supplied to you continues 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,

Sahel and West Africa Team

