



Foreign & Commonwealth Office

21 April 2015

Consular Directorate
WH4.3
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
King Charles Street
London SW1A 2AH

www.gov.uk/government/organisations

Dear

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST REF: 0305-15

Thank you for your email dated 21 March asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 1998. You asked the following questions;

Q1. Could you please clarify for me the criteria by which you record deaths in the Death - Murder category. I am aware, from the link to the consular data which you provided to me, that there are several categories for the recording of death including, Death - Open and Death - Unknown.

Q2. For a death in the UK a British coroner would decide how to record the death. Does a British coroner have this responsibility for a death abroad. If not who else makes that judgement and how?

Q3. In the case of a terrorist act would the death always be recorded as Death - Murder, even where they may be no prosecution?

Q4. You have also given information in your letters on the use of your material. Please can you clarify for me if the questions I have asked and your letters replying are available for anybody to view or to refer to?

Outcome of Search

I am writing to confirm that we have now completed the search for the requested information.

I can confirm that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) does hold information relevant to your request.

Disclosure

Please see below in response to your questions.

Q1. Could you please clarify for me the criteria by which you record deaths in the Death - Murder category. I am aware, from the link to the consular data which you

provided to me, that there are several categories for the recording of death including, Death - Open and Death - Unknown.

When Consular staff are informed of a death of a British National caused by murder or manslaughter, the details are recorded on our database using a 'Death – Murder' case attribute. At times when we are initially unaware if a 'Death' is a 'Murder' or 'Manslaughter', the 'Death' can be recorded under a different 'Death' case attribute, and then modified to 'Death – Murder' once we have more information.

Q2. For a death in the UK, a British coroner would decide how to record the death. Does a British coroner have this responsibility for a death abroad. If not who else makes that judgement and how?

When a British person dies overseas their death is registered locally by the local authorities and a death certificate is issued by that authority. The certificate does not always state a cause of death. It will always be the decision of the local authority whether to investigate the death. The UK Coroner's do not have the jurisdiction to lobby or raise concerns overseas like they do in the United Kingdom – however, many do feel that they want to bring issues to light with Foreign Governments and we always offer to forward these letters on their behalf. However, if actions are required we advise the family of the bereaved to engage a local lawyer to take these forward. If a body is repatriated to the UK the Coroner may open an inquest and investigation in England and Wales.

The Ministry of Justice work closely with Coroners and they may be able to answer further questions about the role of the Coroner. See this link for further information:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guide-to-coroner-services-and-coroner-investigations-a-short-guide>

Q3. In the case of a terrorist act would the death always be recorded as Death - Murder, even where they may be no prosecution?

In the case of a terrorist act, the death of a British National would always be recorded under the 'Death – Murder' attribute. This would be the case whether or not a prosecution is initiated.

Q4. You have also given information in your letters on the use of your material. Please can you clarify for me if the questions I have asked and your letters replying are available for anybody to view or to refer to?

Yes, we do publish Freedom of Information Act requests on the .gov.uk website. We publish the questions asked and our response. We do redact third party information – we withhold personal details to ensure individuals are not identified

Publication and Copyright

In keeping with the spirit and effect of the Freedom of Information Act, 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

FOI / DPA Team
Consular Directorate



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