



Foreign &  
Commonwealth  
Office

Southern Africa Team  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
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London SW1A 2AH

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

30 September 2016

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST REF: FOI 0760 - 16**

Thank you for your email of 10 August asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked:

*Please would you release any correspondence between Lord Mandelson and James Duddridge, then minister for Africa, relating to Lord Mandelson's visit to Zimbabwe in February 2016.*

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.

However, some of this information has been redacted. 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 information relating to your request could harm our relations with certain other countries.

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 Zimbabwe and two other countries. 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

these Governments could potentially damage the bilateral relationships. This would reduce the UK government's ability to protect and promote UK interests through its relations with the Governments in question, 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.

Yours sincerely,

Southern Africa Team



We keep and use information in line with the Data Protection Act 1998. We may release this personal information to other UK government departments and public authorities.