



Foreign &  
Commonwealth  
Office

**Sudan and South Sudan Unit**  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
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London SW1A 2AH

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

16 August 2017

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST REF: FOI 0683-17**

Thank you for your email of 19 July 2017 asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked:

*We should be grateful if you would supply a copy of all documents containing, referring to, and/or relating to, Her Majesty's Government's assessment of:*

- 1. the prospect of the Sudansese economy and/or oil sector; and or*
- 2. investment opportunities in the same,*

*in each case, made and or relating to the period 1998 to 1999.*

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.

Please find attached the information that the FCO can release to you. Some of the information you have requested includes 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, s.40 confers an absolute exemption on disclosure. There is, therefore, no public interest test to apply.

Further to this, some of the information has been withheld under section 43(2) of the Act. The use of this exemption was carefully considered, in consultation with the relevant stakeholders. The factors in favour of disclosure of this information, including the general public interest and greater transparency and accountability, were carefully weighed against the need to allow business-people and commercial organisations the space to conduct their lawful business competitively and without fear of disclosure of sensitive commercial information. We consider that this transparency also poses risks to the protection of commercially confidential information. Failure to protect such commercially sensitive

information would limit the sources of information and interlocutors available to the FCO and limit the FCO's ability to promote the British economy and lobby for the interests of British businesses overseas. In this case after such consideration we believe that the public interest in withholding the redacted information outweighs the public interest in its release.

Yours sincerely,

Sudan and South Sudan Unit  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office



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.