



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

Arabian Peninsular and Iran Department
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
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Website: <https://www.gov.uk>

21 September 2017

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REF: 0713-17

Thank you for your email which we received on 27 July 2017 asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. In your request you asked;

I am writing to request a Freedom of Information Act release in relation to technical assistance delivered by the Causeway Institute for Peace-Building and Conflict Resolution to the Government of Bahrain and Bahraini organisations.

Please disclose the financial spending and funding streams on CIPCR projects to Bahrain broken down by year from FY 2015/16 to the present financial year (including finance budgeted if spending figures are unavailable for 2017/18).

Please disclose emails, documents and correspondence between the FCO and CIPCR regarding impacts and outcomes of this technical assistance during the same period of time.

I can confirm that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) does hold information within the scope of your request.

With regard to funding and spending of the Causeway Institute for Peace-Building and Conflict Resolution (CIPCR), this information has already been released to the public domain and can be found <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/foi-release-assistance-to-bahrain>. We are therefore withholding this information under Section 21 (information accessible to the applicant by other means). The UK Government has not worked with CIPCR since financial year 2015/16.

With regard to the second part of your request to see correspondence between HMG and Causeway, the disclosure of this information would be likely to prejudice the interests of the UK abroad. (Section 27(1)(a)). Section 43 (Commercial Interests) was also looked at but considered not to apply.

Section 27(1)(a) is a qualified exemption and as such we have considered where the greater public interest lies. Section 27(1)(a) International relations applies here because disclosure would be likely to prejudice the relationship between the United Kingdom and Bahrain. The application of section 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 Bahrain. But section 27(1)(a) recognises that the effective conduct of international relations depends upon maintaining trust and confidence between States. The disclosure of specific detailed information in regards to UK funded Bahraini projects could potentially damage the bilateral relationship between the UK and Bahrain. This would reduce the UK Government's ability to

protect and promote UK interests through its relations with Bahrain, 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 the information.

Some of the withheld information is personal data relating to third parties. It is our view that disclosure of this information would breach the first data protection principle, which states that personal data should be processed fairly and lawfully. Section 40(2) and (3) of the Freedom of Information Act therefore apply. It is the fairness aspect of this principle which we think would be breached by disclosure in this case. In such circumstances section 40 confers an absolute exemption on disclosure. We do not therefore have to apply the public interest test.

Yours sincerely,

Arabian Peninsula & Iran Department



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.