



Foreign &
Commonwealth
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25 November 2016

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 - REQUEST REF: 0921-16

Thank you for your email of 3 October 2016, asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked the following:

“In a statement in August this year, the British Ambassador to Honduras said that “the United Kingdom will invest...in projects aimed at strengthening the investigative capabilities of the police” in Honduras.

Could you please provide me with (1) a list of the projects referred to by the Ambassador, and (2) where possible, any assessments undertaken of the human rights impact of those projects.

The statement I’ve quoted from is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/world-location-news/uk-reaffirms-commitment-to-work-with-honduras-after-referendum-result>.”

We are writing to confirm that we have now completed the search for the information you requested. Information related to your request is contained in the attached digest.

So far there has been one project in the area you highlighted, which aims to improve the investigative capacity of the Honduran police force (as well as those of Guatemala and El Salvador). The project involved the delivery of a training course held on 24-28 October 2016. The attached digest covers those ‘assessments undertaken’ before the project began.

Some of the information you have requested is exempt under section 40(2) of the FOIA. Section 40(2) exempts personal information from disclosure if that information relates to someone other than the applicant, and if disclosure of the information would, among other things, contravene one of the data protection principles in schedule 1 of the Data Protection Act. In this case, I believe disclosure would contravene the first data protection principle, which provides that personal data must be processed fairly and lawfully. Section 40(2) is an absolute exemption and the FCO is not obliged to consider whether the public interest favours disclosing the information

Some of the information you have requested has also been withheld under Section 27 – International relations. Section 27 is a qualified exemption and is subject to a public interest test. 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 discussions with Honduras on police training. But section 27(1)(a) also recognises that the effective conduct of international relations depends upon maintaining trust and confidence between governments. If the UK 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 private discussions with the Honduran Government could potentially damage the bilateral relationship between the UK and Honduras. This would reduce the UK Government's ability to protect and promote UK interests through its relations with Honduras, 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.

Finally, some of the information has been assessed as falling under the exemption in Section 23(1) of Act, which is an absolute exemption. The reason the exemption applies is that the information was directly or indirectly supplied to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office by, or relates to, one of the bodies specified in subsection 23(3).

According to the Observatory of Violence in Honduras (UNAH), the National Police is perceived as one of Honduras' most corrupt institutions. There have also been complaints about police and military police practices from human rights defenders. However, in 2015 the Direction of Police Investigation (DPI) was created to help ensure a better quality of investigation in Honduras, and the reduction of impunity, and a process of professionalising the police is currently underway. Most officers that received the training were recent graduates of the Honduran Police Academy and have undergone evaluations to become members of the DPI or special investigations units.

The College of Policing (CoP) is implementing the project. It is a well respected organisation with significant experience of implementing similar projects globally and has worked with the FCO in the past. Its core principles include respect for human rights, supported by a code of ethics and guidance for reporting concerns. The British Embassy in Guatemala (which covers Honduras) has worked closely with the CoP to ensure the workshop includes considerations on human rights and police investigation and issues such as the legality of the evidence and femicide. Ultimately, the project aims to improve the ethical investigative capabilities of the police forces in Honduras.

Yours sincerely,

Caribbean, Central America and Mexico Department
Americas Directorate



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.