



## Foreign & Commonwealth Office

Bangladesh, Sri Lanka & Maldives Team  
South Asia Department  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
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### **Freedom Of Information Request: 0456-17**

Thank you for your request for information which we received on 26 May 2017. In your request you asked for:

*'Under the FOIA 2000, please provide copies of the following documents, which your department should hold:*

*"An evaluation of Police Training provided by the British Government in 2001", by [Redacted] March 2002.*

*"The North and East of Sri Lanka Looking Ahead in Policing - An assessment of future needs" by [Redacted and [Redacted], February 2003.'*

I can confirm that the FCO does hold information which falls within the scope of your request. However, we do not hold a copy of *"The North and East of Sri Lanka Looking Ahead in Policing - An assessment of future needs"* by [Redacted] and [Redacted] (February 2003).

A copy of *"An evaluation of Police Training provided by the British Government in 2001"* by [Redacted] (March 2002) is enclosed. Some of the information is being withheld using the following exemptions:

Section 27 (international relations);  
Section 40 (personal information);  
Section 41 (information provided in confidence); and  
Section 43 (commercial interests).

#### **Section 27 International Relations**

Section 27 is a qualified exemption and is subject to a public interest test. Under Section 27(1) (a), (b) and 27(2) of the FOIA, information is exempt if its disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice relations between the United Kingdom and any other State, or the relations between the UK and any international organisations. I have considered whether the balance of the public interest favours releasing or withholding this material, balancing open and transparent government against the possible impact to our international relations and foreign policy objectives. Having examined the material available, we acknowledge that releasing information on this issue would increase public knowledge about this subject. However, Section 27 (1) and (2) recognises that the effective conduct of international relations depends upon maintaining trust and confidence between governments and international organisations. This relationship of trust allows for the free and frank exchange

of information on the understanding that it will be treated in confidence. If the UK does not respect such confidences, its ability to protect and promote UK interests through international relations will be hampered. The states concerned may be reluctant to share sensitive information with the UK Government in future and may be less likely to respect the confidentiality of information supplied by the UK Government to them, to the detriment of UK interests.

#### **Section 40 Personal Information**

Some of the information you have requested is 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.

#### **Section 41 Information Provided in Confidence**

Some of the information that you requested has been withheld under Section 41 (1) of the Freedom of Information Act – information provided in confidence. This allows for information to be exempt if it was obtained by the public authority from any other person and the disclosure of the information to the public (otherwise than under this Act) by the public authority holding it would constitute a breach of confidence actionable by that or any other person. Section 41 also confers an absolute exemption on disclosure, and therefore a public interest test is not required.

#### **Section 43**

Some of the information is exempt under Section 43 (2) of the Act, which relates to commercial interests. The use of this exemption was carefully considered. 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,

Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Maldives Team  
South Asia 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.