



Foreign & Commonwealth Office

Consular Directorate
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
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15 March 2017

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 - REQUEST REF: FOI 0191-17

Thank you for your email of 22 February 2017 asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You wrote:

Q1. *The most common countries that have been complained about to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) in regards of violent, rape and sexual assaults abroad from January 2010-2016.*

Q2 *'High alert' countries abroad for violence, rape and sexual assault from January 2010-2016 (countries known for their increases/ decreases of these crimes annually).*

Q3 *The changes countries have made from violent, rape and sexual assault complaints made against them since January 2010 onwards.*

Outcome of search

We have now completed the search for the information you request and I can confirm that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) does hold information relevant to your request.

I attach with this letter a PDF spreadsheet which sets out the statistics we hold in relation to the rape and sexual assault of British Nationals abroad between 2010 and 2016.

Please note that where the number of reported cases is less or equal to five, these are annotated as ≤ 5 , to avoid the risk of identifying the individuals concerned. To release this data 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.



Disclosure

The FCO collect global statistics of the British nationals, of whom we are aware, who have reported being victims of rape and sexual assault. The victims of rape and sexual assault may choose not to report what has happened to them or seek consular assistance. There is no requirement for them to do so.

We take any report of rape and other forms of sexual assault seriously and will try to see people to offer support as soon as possible and in private. Support includes giving the person information on what professional help is available locally and in the UK, both for the person and their family. We can also tell people about the local police and legal procedures. We cannot give legal advice, but if the person wants us to we can give them a list of local lawyers. If the person wants to contact the police, we can go to the police station with them. However, only the person can decide whether or not to report the crime to the police or take legal action – we cannot make that decision for them.

We will consider intervening to make representations to the local authorities if there are concerns that an investigation is not being carried out in line with local procedures; if there are justified complaints about discrimination against the person involved; or where we judge that a local delay or decision creates significant distress for those involved. However we do not interfere in investigations or judicial processes of a country, just as we expect them not to interfere with investigations or judicial processes in the UK.

Withheld Information (Exemptions Applied)

Section 21 Information accessible by other means

Q2 – Q3 The FCO does not hold this information. Under Section 21 of the FOIA, we are not required to provide information in response to a request if it is already reasonably accessible. I would suggest you contact the United Nations World Health Organisation for further information on this subject. They can be found at the following: <http://www.who.int>

Consular FOI/DPA Team
Consular Directorate

