



Foreign &  
Commonwealth  
Office

**Near East Department**  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
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Website: <https://www.gov.uk>

30 November 2016

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 - REQUEST REF: 0852-16**

Thank you for your request for information. In your request you asked:

*I request under the FOI that you provide proof that we did not contribute by way of our EU contributions to the following structures in Jabal al Baba.*

*If we did not, then show how this particular village was not provided for with our part of the donation in this particular instance and why.*

*Is the UK part of the Occupied Palestinian Territories Humanitarian Pooled Fund?*

*Are any EU monies paid into this Fund?*

*I refer you to the following statement by Tobias Ellwood.*

*Photo of Richard Burden Richard Burden Labour, Birmingham, Northfield To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether the UK Ambassador to Israel was asked to sign the letter, signed in July 2016 by eight European ambassadors, to Israeli officials on the confiscation of EU-funded structures and the displacement of 49 people in Jabal al Baba; and if he will make a statement.*

*Hansard source*

*(Citation: HC Deb, 5 September 2016, cW) Photo of Tobias Ellwood Tobias Ellwood The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs Our Ambassador to Israel was not asked to sign this letter. We understand that a group of international donors to the Occupied Palestinian Territories Humanitarian Pooled Fund wrote to the Israeli authorities to note their concerns about confiscation of several humanitarian assistance projects. The UK is not part of this fund.*

We do hold information answering the following parts of your request:

*I request under the FOI that you provide proof that we did not contribute by way of our EU contributions to the following structures in Jabal al Baba.*

*If we did not, then show how this particular village was not provided for with our part of the donation in this particular instance and why.*

*Are any EU monies paid into this Fund?*

Nonetheless, we do hold information which is linked to your request, but not within scope of the precise questions asked. As a courtesy we are releasing that information to you.

Additionally, I can confirm that, having completed the search of our records, we hold information relating to the following part of your request: *Is the UK part of the Occupied Palestian Territories Humanitarian Pooled Fund?* I apologise that the process of collating and considering all of the relevant information has taken longer than expected.

We are withholding some information under section 27 – International Relations, section 35 – Formulation of Government Policy, and section 40 – Personal Information.

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. However, section 27 (1)(a) recognises that the effective conduct of international relations depends upon maintaining trust and confidence between governments. If the United Kingdom 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 that could potentially damage bilateral relationships with States in the Middle East would reduce the UK government's ability to protect and promote UK interests, 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 it.

Some information has been withheld under section 35 as it relates to the formulation of government policy. This exemption requires the application of a public interest test. There is public interest in protecting policy-making processes and ensuring this process remains able to deliver effective government. This is considered against the public interest in making publicly available information about policy-making processes. We consider that the balance of the public interest lies in favour of withholding certain information in relation to your request because it relates to ministerial correspondence and the operation of private offices, which are necessary to develop and deliver government policy.

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, section 40 confers an absolute exemption on disclosure. There is, therefore, no public interest test to apply.

Please find enclosed the information that we can release to you in response to your request.

Yours sincerely,

**Near East 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.