

22 November 2022

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Personal details removed for proactive release

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OIA 28370

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I refer to your email of 26 October 2022 in which you request the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA):

- *A breakdown of all costs associated with the Government's efforts to free Topher Richwhite and Bridget Thackwray from detention in Iran.*
- *Any costs associated with their extraction from the country.*

Funding for the Ministry's consular service comes out of the Ministry's baseline funding and is not broken down among individual cases, as such, it is not possible to provide a breakdown of all costs associated with consular assistance given in this particular case. Therefore, we are refusing this part of your request under section 18(e) of the OIA, as the information requested does not exist.

Costs incurred by Christopher Richwhite and Bridget Thackwray during their time in Iran and in the course of their departure were met by their families. In accordance with established consular practice, as outlined on the Safetravel website: <https://www.safetravel.govt.nz/financial-difficulties>, some funds provided by their families were transferred to them through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade's financial systems.

We have one identifiable cost directly related to Christopher Richwhite and Bridget Thackwray's *departure from Iran*, NZ\$1368. This cost was covered from Ministry baselines.

We are withholding further details of this case under the following sections of the OIA:

- 6(a): to avoid prejudicing the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the New Zealand Government;
- 6(d): to avoid endangering the safety of any person; and
- 9(2)(a): to protect individuals' privacy.

Where the information has been withheld under section 9 of the OIA, we have identified no public interest in releasing the information that would override the reasons for withholding it.

Please note that we may publish this letter (with your personal details redacted) on the Ministry's website.

If you have any questions about this decision, you can contact us by email at: [DM-ESD@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:DM-ESD@mfat.govt.nz). You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision by contacting [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'S' followed by a horizontal line that tapers to the right.

Sarah Corbett  
for Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade