

4 June 2024

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OIA 29329

Tēnā koe

I refer to your email of 23 April 2024 in which you request the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA):

What advice that the Hon Minister is getting regarding Palestine statehood recognition? - Based on the recent request from opposition leader David Parker for the recognition, the media has covered the Hon Minister Winston Peters defer the recognition of statehood and also reiterated that it is not the priority at the moment.

Who are the advisors to the Hon Minister on this statehood recognition? Is it possible to get the list of public servants who are helping the Minister with information?

What sort of advice is the Hon Minister and the Ministry getting on the UN Security Council voting? As the recent voting was vetoed by USA whereas the most of the world leaders and countries have emphasised on the urgency of declaring Palestine statehood like the one mentioned by Russia and China - [US vetoes Palestine's request for full UN membership | UN News](#)

Also, how many meetings have happened between the Israel Ambassador and the Hon Minister after taking the position into the office?

On 22 May 2024, the timeframes for responding to your request were extended by an additional 10 working days due to the consultations necessary to make a decision on your request (section 15A(1)(a) of the OIA refers).

The information relevant to your request is attached. We have withheld some information as well as some documents in full 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(b)(i): to protect the passing of information from another government on a confidential basis;
- 9(2)(g)(i): to protect the free and frank expression of opinions by departments; and
- 9(2)(h): to maintain legal professional privilege.

Regarding your request for who are the advisors to the Minister on recognition of Palestinian statehood; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (the Ministry) withholds the names of all staff working on issues relating to the Israel-Hamas Conflict under section 9(2)(g)(ii) of the OIA to protect them from improper pressure or harassment, given the sensitive nature of public commentary, and taking into account staff safety and welfare considerations.

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.

Regarding your request for what sort of advice on United Nations (UN) Security Council voting the Ministry provides, the Ministry provides regular reporting from the New Zealand Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York on United Nations Security Council meetings and resolutions, including the meeting that took place on 18 April 2024 regarding Palestine's membership of the UN. The Ministry also provides advice from our United Nations, Human Rights and Commonwealth Division, Legal Division, and the Middle East and Africa Division on such matters, including regular situation reports and media talking points on the Israel-Hamas conflict.

Regarding your request for how many times the Minister of Foreign Affairs (the Minister) has met with the Israeli Ambassador to New Zealand, the Minister met with the Israeli Ambassador on 12 February 2024. The Minister publicised this on X (formerly known as Twitter):

twitter.com/NewZealandMFA/status/1756905148528681166

You may wish to refer to information regarding New Zealand's position on the Israel-Hamas conflict, and the Middle East Peace Process, on the Ministry website:

www.mfat.govt.nz/en/countries-and-regions/middle-east/israel-hamas-conflict/

Please note that it is our policy to proactively release our responses to official information requests where possible. Therefore, our response to your request (with your personal information removed) may be published on the Ministry website: www.mfat.govt.nz/en/about-us/contact-us/official-information-act-responses/

If you have any questions about this decision, you can contact us by email at: 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 or freephone 0800 802 602.

Nāku noa, nā



Sarah Corbett
for Acting Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade