

21 November 2024

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Personal details removed for proactive release

OIA 29784

Thank you for your email of 26 October 2024 in which you request the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA):

*"I request copies of all briefings and similar reports and assessments and suggested talking points to the Minister of Foreign Affairs over the Israeli attacks on UNIFIL posts in southern Lebanon since 1 October 2024."*

On 4 November 2024, you were contacted to confirm that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (the Ministry) would be interpreting the scope of your request to be for:

*"Copies of all briefings and similar reports and assessments and suggested talking points prepared by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade for and sent to the Minister of Foreign Affairs primarily relating to the Israeli attacks on UNIFIL posts in southern Lebanon since 1 October 2024."*

### Background

A significant amount of information relating to the Israel-Hamas conflict is publicly available on the Ministry's website. This information is regularly updated and includes links to announcements, details on funding, statements and press releases, proactively released OIA responses, and responses to frequently asked questions. We encourage you to check the Ministry website before submitting future OIA requests, as the information you are seeking may already be publicly available:

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

### Response to your request

Please see the following table for a list of documents in scope of your request and attached to this response:

#	Title	Date	Decision
1.	Email subject "Middle East Tensions: Update from MFAT: 11 October"	11 October 2024	Released with some redactions.

#	Title	Date	Decision
2.	Email subject "Middle East Tensions: Update from MFAT: 12 October"	12 October 2024	Released with some redactions.
3.	Email subject "Middle East Tensions: Update from MFAT: 14 October"	14 October 2024	Released with some redactions *
4.	Email subject "Middle East Tensions: Update from MFAT: 17 October"	17 October 2024	Released with some redactions.
5.	Email subject "Middle East Tensions: Update from MFAT: 21 October"	21 October 2024	Released with some redactions.

\* A final version of the recommended X post can be found here:

<https://x.com/NewZealandMFA/status/1845691123186151520>

Some information is withheld 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;
- 9(2)(a): to protect individuals' privacy;
- 9(2)(f)(iv): to protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials;
- 9(2)(g)(i): to protect the free and frank expression of opinions by departments; and
- 9(2)(g)(ii): to protect officers and employees from improper pressure or harassment.

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

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/](http://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](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



Sarah Corbett  
for Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Out of scope

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**From:** s9(2)(g)(ii)

**Sent:** Friday, October 11, 2024 11:17 AM

**To:** s9(2)(g)(ii)

Released under the  
Official Information Act

MEDIA <media@mfat.govt.nz>; s9(2)(g)(ii)

**Subject:** Middle East Tensions: Update from MFAT: 11 October

[RESTRICTED]

Kia ora koutou,

Attaching today's SitRep on tensions in the Middle East.

Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions.

Out of scope

Thanks,

s9(2)(g)(ii)

Senior Policy Officer | Kaupapa Here Matua  
Middle East and Africa Division  
New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade | Manatū Aorere

s9(2)(a)       s9(2)(g)(ii)

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Official Information Act

Situation Update: Middle East Tensions, 11 October 2024

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**Media Lines**

s9(2)(g)(i)

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Out of scope

### Latest Developments

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- **UNIFIL headquarters and positions were repeatedly hit by the IDF in the last 24 hours.** An observation tower was directly hit by an IDF tank, injuring two Indonesian peacekeepers.
- **UNIFIL has publicly described the attacks as “direct” and “deliberate”** and says any deliberate attack on peacekeepers is a violation of international law.
- s6(a)
- The strikes take place following an Israeli request to UNIFIL for UN peacekeepers to withdraw to at least 5km from the Lebanon/Israel border. UNIFIL refused this request as being contrary to their mandate as set by UN member states.

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Official Information Act

*For further information, please see the following formal messages:*

***ANK: 11 October - ISRAEL - HAMAS - HEZBOLLAH: ISRAEL FIRES DIRECTLY AT UNIFIL AND OTHER UN POSITIONS IN LEBANON***

Out of scope

POLI-554020652-805

MFAT Assessment

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Out of scope

s6(a)

Out of scope

Released under the  
Official Information Act



**From:** s9(2)(g)(ii)  
**To:** s9(2)(g)(ii)

**Cc:** s9(2)(g)(ii)

**Subject:** Middle East Tensions: Update from MFAT: 12 October  
**Date:** Saturday, 12 October 2024 9:38:01 am  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[SitRep Middle East Tensions - 11 October 2024.pdf](#)

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[RESTRICTED]

Hi all

A short update this morning, related to reports overnight of a further Israeli strike on UN premises in Lebanon:

- The UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) confirmed in a statement that its headquarters in southern Lebanon's Naqura was hit by explosions for the second time in 48 hours, injuring two peacekeepers. The two wounded soldiers are believed to be members of the Sri Lankan battalion. Reports indicate IDF fired an artillery shell at the main entrance of the UNIFIL headquarters.
- The Leaders of Spain, France and Italy (the largest European contributors to UNIFIL personnel) issued a joint statement condemning the attacks as "unjustifiable" and constituting a "serious violation of the obligations of Israel" under humanitarian international law. They called for an immediate ceasefire and said they counted on "Israel's commitment to the security of UN and bilateral peacekeeping missions in Lebanon as well as international organisations active in the region".

s9(2)(g)(i)

s9(2)(g)(ii)

**Senior Policy Officer**

Middle East and Africa Division

New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade | Manatū Aorere

**M** s9(2)(a)

**E** s9(2)(g)(ii)

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195 Lambton Quay, Private Bag 18901, Wellington 5045, New Zealand

[www.mfat.govt.nz](http://www.mfat.govt.nz) | [www.safetravel.govt.nz](http://www.safetravel.govt.nz)



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Official Information Act

Situation Update: Middle East Tensions, 11 October 2024

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Duplicate attachment to email of 11 October 2024

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Out of scope

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**From:** s9(2)(g)(ii)

**Sent:** Monday, October 14, 2024 11:46 AM

**To:** s9(2)(g)(ii)

**Cc:** s9(2)(g)(ii)

Released under the  
Official Information Act

MEDIA <media@mfat.govt.nz>; s9(2)(g)(ii)

**Subject:** Middle East Tensions: Update from MFAT: 14 October

[RESTRICTED]

Kia ora koutou,

Attaching today's SitRep on tensions in the Middle East, including a draft X post as requested.

Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions.

Thanks,

s9(2)(g)(ii)

Ⓢ s9(2)(a)    Ⓔ s9(2)(g)(ii)

Mon Tues Wed Thur Fri

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**From:** s9(2)(g)(ii)

**Sent:** Friday, October 11, 2024 11:17 AM

**To:** s9(2)(g)(ii)

**Cc:** s9(2)(g)(ii)

Released under the  
Official Information Act

MEDIA <[media@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:media@mfat.govt.nz)>; s9(2)(g)(ii)

s9(2)(g)(ii)

**Subject:** Middle East Tensions: Update from MFAT: 11 October

Duplicate email

Released under the  
Official Information Act

## Situation Update: Middle East Tensions, 14 October 2024

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### Recommended X Post

As requested by OMFA we provided a draft X post below.

#### Recommended X Post

*New Zealand is alarmed at injuries to UN peacekeepers and damage to UN facilities in Lebanon caused by the Israel Defence Force as recently as yesterday. Any targeting of UN peacekeepers is a violation of international law and is completely unacceptable. The UN Interim Force in Lebanon and the UN Truce Supervision Organisation play a critical stabilising role in the region and must be part of efforts to reduce tensions.*

s9(2)(g)(i)

*actions undermine the United Nations' ability to carry out its mandate, which includes mediating conflicts and providing humanitarian support. The UN system must be allowed to do the jobs entrusted to them by the UN Security Council and Member States.*

*Israel's*

### Media Lines

s9(2)(g)(i)

Out of scope

The following page is out of scope.

POLI-554020652-805



Out of scope

## Latest Developments

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- Israeli PM Netanyahu told the UN Secretary-General over the weekend “to get UNIFL forces out of harm’s way”; saying “I appeal to the UN Secretary General; Your refusal to evacuate UNIFIL soldiers has turned them into hostages of Hezbollah.” UNIFIL has refused, stating that it will remain in southern Lebanon, as set out in its mandate.
- Since 1 October, UN peacekeepers in southern Lebanon have stated that seven of their posts, including their headquarters have been damaged due to conflict between the IDF and Hezbollah.
- 5 UNIFIL peacekeepers have been injured by IDF activities between 10-12 October.
- NZDF personnel deployed to UNTSO have not been involved in any of the IDF attacks on UN peacekeepers in southern Lebanon. s6(a)
- s6(a)
- s6(a)
- In response to these attacks on UN peacekeepers by Israel we recommend that MFA issue an X post (see draft above). MFAT officials in Wellington will also meet with the Israeli Ambassador today to register our concern with Israel’s actions.

Out of scope



Out of scope

MFAT Assessment

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s6(a)

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Out of scope

Out of scope

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**From:** s9(2)(g)(ii)

**Sent:** Thursday, October 17, 2024 10:32 AM

**To:** s9(2)(g)(ii)

Released under the  
Official Information Act

**Cc:** s9(2)(g)(ii)

**Subject:** Middle East Tensions: Update from MFAT: 17 October

[RESTRICTED]

Kia ora koutou,

MFAT's latest SitRep on tensions in the Middle East is attached that went over to MFA and PM this morning.

Out of scope

Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions.

Thanks,

s9(2)(g)(ii)

Senior Policy Officer | Kaupapa Here Matua  
Middle East and Africa Division  
New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade | Manatū Aorere

s9(2)(a)     s9(2)(g)(ii)

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Situation Update: Middle East Tensions, 17 October 2024

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**Media Lines**

s9(2)(g)(i)

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Official Information Act

The following three pages are out of scope.

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**From:** s9(2)(g)(ii)

**Sent:** Monday, October 21, 2024 11:36 AM

**To:** s9(2)(g)(ii)

Released under the  
Official Information Act

MEDIA <media@mfat.govt.nz>; s9(2)(g)(ii)

**Subject:** Middle East Tensions: Update from MFAT: 21 October

[RESTRICTED]

Kia ora koutou,

Please find attached a short sit rep and latest media lines on the Middle East, Out of scope

Out of scope

Thanks,

s9(2)(g)(ii)

Ⓒ s9(2)(a)      Ⓔ s9(2)(g)(ii)

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Situation Update: Middle East Tensions, 21 October 2024

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**Media Lines**

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s9(2)(g)(i)

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The following three pages are out of scope.