



MP for Manukau East

Minister for Building and Construction

Minister of Customs

Minister for Ethnic Communities

Associate Minister of Education

Associate Minister of Health

Harry Robson

fyi-request-11254-04e6a2af@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Harry Robson

On 18 September 2019, you contacted the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) requesting the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

- 1) *How many meetings have the PM and Cabinet had with theistic leaders and theistic organisations since October 2017?*
 - a) *Which leaders and organisations have been met with?*
How many times were said leaders and organisations met with?
 - b) *How long were these said meetings?*
 - c) *What was discussed during said meetings?*
 - d) *Did said meetings impact on any governmental action (including policy and legislation)?*
- 2) *Has the PM or members of Cabinet ever met with "The Family and International Foundation" (USA) or communicated with them, in any capacity (including indirectly)?*
 - a) *How long were these said meetings? Who was involved in and with them?*
 - b) *What was discussed during said meetings?*
- 3) *Does the PM or Cabinet have any protocols regarding the separation of church and state?*

Parts one and two of the request are for information that is held by the Prime Minister and all Cabinet Ministers. Accordingly, DPMC has decided under section 14(b)(i) of the Act to transfer these parts of the request to Cabinet Ministers.

In response to parts 1(a), 1(b), and 1(c) of your request, I have provided a table of my meetings with theistic leaders and organisations from October 2017 to 18 September 2019 at **Appendix A**. Please note that I have excluded ethnic or multicultural events, including celebrations that I attended, such as community celebrations of Chinese New Year or Diwali. In relation to part 1(c), I have provided the purpose of each of the meetings listed as my office does not keep an exhaustive list of what was discussed during such meetings.

In addition, I meet with community leaders and organisations established to work for faith groups that promote a religion and carry out social cohesion work. These organisations include the Federation of Islamic Association of New Zealand, Islamic Women's Council of New Zealand and the Hindu Council of New Zealand. For further information, my ministerial diary is published every month and can be found on the Beehive website www.beehive.govt.nz.

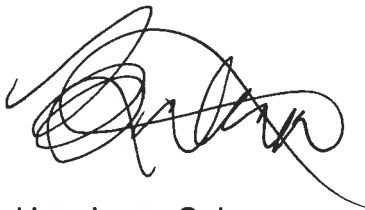
Regarding part 1(d) of your request, the meetings listed at Appendix A have not resulted in any specific New Zealand Government policy or legislation. However, these meetings contributed to the Office of Ethnic Communities' overall work of improving knowledge and understanding ethnic diversity and inclusion in New Zealand.

In relation to the entirety of part two of your request, I have not met with any representatives from The Family and International Foundation (USA).

If you are not satisfied with this response, you have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman. You can find out information about how to make a complaint available online at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or phoning 0800 802 602.

Thank you for taking the time to write to me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Jenny Salesa', written in a cursive style.

Hon Jenny Salesa
Minister for Ethnic Communities

Appendix A: Table of meetings with theistic leaders and organisations

#	Theistic Leader/Organisation	Duration of meeting	Date of meeting	What was discussed?
1.	Leaders from religious communities	60 minutes	9 December 2017	The Religious Communities Leadership Forum provides opportunities for leaders to discuss issues of mutual interest, and to support relationships between different organisations across New Zealand.
2.	Zionist Federation	30 minutes	11 May 2018	Matters which included, Government representation at Jewish community events, concerns of the Jewish community regarding anti-Semitism in New Zealand, compulsory teaching of the Holocaust in schools; and how the Jewish community can work with the Government.
3.	Muslim leaders	60 minutes	(1) 19 March 2019	The planning of the 15 March terror attacks memorial service held on 29 March 2019.
		360 minutes	(2) 20 July 2019	This meeting took place during the leader's dialogue that I hosted. The dialogue served as a formal platform to engage with leaders of Muslim communities on issues of safety and wellbeing, social inclusion and interfaith unity.
		120 minutes	(3) 28 March 2019	About the 15 March terror attacks memorial service held on 29 March 2019.
4.	Turkish President of Religious Affairs, Professor Ali Erbas	30 minutes	16 April 2019	The work that the Office of Ethnic Communities is doing and has been doing since the 15 March terror attacks.
5.	Key faith leaders	90 minutes	20 June 2019	Engagement with key faith leaders to discuss how we can work together to increase interfaith unity and understanding, following the 15 March terror attacks.
6.	Religious leaders from the 1000 Abrahamic Circles project	30 minutes	13 August 2019	The Government's commitment to supporting greater interfaith unity and the interfaith dialogues that were held in June and July 2019.