

13 October 2021

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OIA 27622

Tēnā koe Lobby New Zealand

I refer to your email of 4 August 2021 in which you request the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA):

We are seeking all information about, and all communications with, any individual or group from any United Nations organisation, in regards to the recent transfer of a COVID-19 case to New Zealand.

Specifically, as to whether any of these communications altered the view of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade or contradicted the advice given from other ministries, including the Ministry of Health.

On 1 September 2021, the deadline for your request was extended to 13 October 2021.

The Ministry has made a decision on your request. The information is in the final stages of preparation and will be sent to you as soon as possible. We have withheld some information 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)(ii): to protect the passing of information from an international organisation on a confidential basis;
- 9(2)(a): to protect individuals' privacy; and
- 9(2)(g)(i): to protect the free and frank expression of opinions by departments.

Some information has been withheld in full under section 6(b)(ii) of the OIA to protect the passing of information from an international organisation on a confidential basis.

Where 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.

For your information, during COVID-19 Alert Level 3, Ministry staff are working remotely; in addition, a large number of Ministry staff are currently working on the Government's response to the situation in Afghanistan. This means that we have reduced capacity to process some OIA requests.

The Chief Ombudsman has published updated guidance on OIA requests during the COVID-19 emergency:

- [Chief Ombudsman's statement on official information response times during COVID-19 lockdown](#)
- [FAQs about official information requests during COVID-19](#)

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



Julie-Anne Lee
for Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade