

19 August 2022

Andrew Li  
fyi-request-19742-896e723d@requests.fyi.org.nz

195 Lambton Quay  
Private Bag 18-901  
Wellington 6160  
New Zealand

T +64 4 439 8000  
F +64 4 472 9596

OIA 28155

Tēnā koe Andrew Li

I refer to your email of 24 June 2022 in which you request the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA):

*Yesterday, the Zionist lobby group IHRA announced that New Zealand had become an 'observer country'. The IHRA is best known for its anti-semitic 'Working Definition of Antisemitism', which conflates the Jewish religion and Jewish people with the Zionist ideology by defining criticism of 'Israel' for its crimes against the indigenous Palestinian population of Palestine as 'anti-Semitism'. Jewish groups which oppose Palestinian genocide, both in New Zealand and abroad, as well as other human rights groups, have condemned this organization for that reason.*

*This is of particular relevance given MFAT's track record of opposing the recognition of the Nakba, the ethnic cleansing and genocide of the Palestinian people, and providing other support to the Zionist entity.*

*Disclose, in electronic form:*

- \* all documents from Jan 2017 onwards related to the decision to affiliate with this anti-semitic organization*
- \* all communications from Jan 2017 onwards regarding the IHRA, inclusive but not limited to those with foreign governments, and their local representatives and paid lobbyists, such as Rob Berg and Sheree Trotter*

On 4 July 2022, we wrote to you to advise that responding to your request as currently framed would capture a significant volume of information. As such, we advised that it was likely that your request would be refused under section 18(f) of the OIA, as it would require substantial collation and research.

On 5 July 2022, you replied to our suggested refinement email and submitted a request for the following:

- key documents from Jan 2017 onwards related to the decision to affiliate with this anti-semitic organization*
- the subjects and sender/recipients names/email addresses for all emails from Jan 2017 onwards regarding the IHRA, inclusive but not limited to those exchanged with official representatives of foreign governments, and local subversives and paid lobbyists, such as Rob Berg and Sheree Trotter*

On having reviewed the scope of your refined request of 5 July 2022, we established that point two of your request would still capture a significant volume of information, and it would again likely be refused under section 18(f) of the OIA.

On 13 July 2022 we advise you of this and sought your agreement to refine point two of your request to be for:

*A summary of all emails from Jan 2017 onwards from foreign governments regarding the IHRA.*

Between 14 July and 22 July 2022, we had further exchanges of correspondence with you, in which you agreed to refine your request to the below three points:

- 1. Key documents in the decision for New Zealand to apply for observer status of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance [IHRA].*
- 2. A summary of all emails from Jan 2017 onwards from foreign governments regarding the IHRA.*
- 3. Incoming and outgoing ministerial correspondence with the public, related to advocating for New Zealand to join the IHRA or to adopt the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism.*

In answer to point two of your request, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade has received only one email from a foreign government that makes reference to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA). A very brief reference to the IHRA was made in an otherwise-unrelated email from Israel on a United Nations General Assembly Resolution on Holocaust denial.

The information relevant to your request is attached. 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;
- 9(2)(a): to protect individuals' privacy;
- 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, we have identified no public interest in releasing the information that would override the reasons for withholding it.

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