



Headquarters
New Zealand Defence Force
Defence House
Private Bag 39997
Wellington Mail Centre
Lower Hutt 5045
New Zealand

OIA-2023-4626

14 June 2023

Peter French
fyi-request-21699-22517223@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Peter French

I refer to your email of 2 February 2023 requesting, a *“definitive statement”* from the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) as to how they assisted, or did not assist, the New Zealand Police with regard to the *“2022 Wellington protest”*...I am also requesting any NZDF records which support the above-mentioned *“definitive statement”*.

Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA). As you may be aware, the Independent Police Conduct Authority (IPCA) has completed an independent review (Review) of the policing of the occupation on and around Parliament grounds in Wellington during February and March 2022. The findings are publicly available on the IPCA’s website¹ and include details of engagement with agencies to develop and execute operational plans.

With respect to NZDF assistance, relevant email correspondence between the NZDF and New Zealand Police (NZ Police) is provided at Enclosure 1. Where indicated, the names and contact details of operational personnel is withheld in accordance with section 6(a) of the OIA to avoid prejudice to the security and defence of New Zealand and the name and contact detail of a non-operational staff member is withheld in accordance with section 9(2)(a) of the OIA, to protect privacy. Personal information for other agency’s staff is withheld in accordance with section 9(2)(a) of the OIA, as described above. A NZ Police operational email is withheld in accordance with section 9(2)(k) of the OIA to prevent inappropriate use. Information that has been provided on a basis of confidence is withheld in accordance with section 9(2)(ba)(i) of the OIA as the making available of the information would be likely to prejudice the supply of similar information from the same source.

The following points provide a summary of SMS messages between the Chief of Defence Force and the Commissioner of Police:

10 February 2022:

- The Commissioner of Police messaged the Chief of Defence Force at 07:18 advising that NZ Police may seek NZDF logistical assistance to move vehicles parked in and around Parliament.

¹ <https://www.ipca.govt.nz/Site/parliament-protest>

- The Chief of Defence Force replied at 07:20 advising that he had not heard anything but will raise this with his staff. The Commissioner of Police acknowledged the message with thanks at 07:21.
- At 07:25, the Chief of Defence Force advised the Commissioner of Police that NZDF staff looking into the request. The Commissioner of Police acknowledged the text with thanks at 07:27.

11 February 2022:

- The Chief of Defence Force advised the Commissioner of Police that a note had gone to the Minister of Defence at 10:33am regarding the NZ Police request to move vehicles and the Commissioner of Police acknowledged the message with thanks at 10:42. [This note was drafted for the Minister of Defence but was not sent until 15 February 2022, see Enclosure 2]
- The Chief of Defence Force advised the Commissioner of Police at 10:44 that he will keep him posted of any update from the Minister of Defence.

15 February 2022:

- At 08:36, the Commissioner of Police requested a phone call with the Chief of Defence Force. Notes from the phone call are detailed below.
- At 12:01pm, the Commissioner of Police informed the Chief of Defence Force that the Minister of Police had advised that the Minister of Defence asked that the request for assistance be presented again. A copy of this briefing is provided at Enclosure 2.

2 March 2022:

- At 18:30, the Commissioner of Police texted the Chief of Defence Force advising he had spoken to the Prime Minister and she may notify the Minister of Defence. Indication was given regarding contingency discussion. The Commissioner of Police will confirm once the planning is completed.
- The Chief of Defence Force acknowledged the message from the Commissioner of Police at 18:36 with the request for NZ Police planners to provide tasking details to NZDF Liaison Officers in NZ Police Headquarters. The Commissioner of Police replied at 18:43 with acknowledgement and thanks.
- At 18:46, the Chief of Defence Force advised the Commissioner of Police that whilst NZDF await NZ Police requirements, 25 personnel from Trentham are available at two hours' notice and planning had started on 22 personnel for the following day. The Commissioner of Police acknowledged the text with thanks at 18:48 and advised he will come back shortly.
- The Commissioner of Police texted the Chief of Defence Force at 19:09 with a request for 25 NZDF personnel to come to Wellington that evening to support the removal of flammable material from in and around Parliament. No requirement for support for tomorrow. [No NZDF personnel were sent to support the removal of flammable material]

The following points provide a summary of telephone conversations between the Chief of Defence Force and the Commissioner of Police:

15 February 2022:

- The Chief of Defence Force called the Commissioner of Police at 08:39 for 5 minutes concerning: Envisage towing tomorrow; Not sure of support; Will not get many vehicles out, will not get them back in a hurry.
- The Commissioner of Police called the Chief of Defence Force at 11:17 for 3 minutes concerning: Unable to secure tow-truck support; Time has moved on.
- The Chief of Defence Force called the Commissioner of Police at 15:03 for 3 minutes concerning the need to clear the streets.

16 February 2022:

- The Chief of Defence Force called the Commissioner of Police at 08:24 for 6 minutes concerning: Tow request; Can provide any public service; Lots of general support i.e. helicopters; Ministers should approve this against damage/danger; Authorise; Reputation.

A copy of the briefing to the Minister of Defence concerning the use of NZDF equipment to remove protest vehicles is provided at Enclosure 2. Where indicated, the name of the NZDF contact is withheld in accordance with section 9(2)(g)(i) of the OIA to maintain effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions; and their personal information is withheld to protect privacy in accordance with section 9(2)(a) of the OIA.

You have the right, under section 28(3) of the OIA, to ask an Ombudsman to review this response to your request. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that responses to official information requests are proactively released where possible. This response to your request will be published shortly on the NZDF website, with your personal information removed.

Yours sincerely

AJ WOODS
Air Commodore
Chief of Staff HQNZDF

Enclosures:

1. Email correspondence
2. Police Request to Remove Protest Vehicles from the Vicinity of Parliament, 14 Feb 2022