

Rt Hon Winston Peters

Deputy Prime Minister

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Minister for Racing



18 March 2024

Michael Brenndorfer

fyi-request-25717-0ef5ad2e@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Michael Brenndorfer

Thank you for your email of 13 February 2024 in which you request the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA):

"On the 12th of February, at the same time Israel was bombing the city of Rafah in Gaza, the Minister of Foreign Affairs Winston Peters had a photo of himself with the Israeli ambassador posted to the official @NewZealandMFA twitter/X account, including a list of topics it was claimed they discussed during their meeting.

My query is relatively simple: how many times did the Minister of Foreign Affairs utter the word "ceasefire" during this meeting?"

Your request was transferred to me by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade on 19 February 2024.

Your request is refused in full under section 18(e) of the OIA, as the document alleged to contain the information requested does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found.

While there were notes taken in this meeting, there is no formal transcript, and therefore no ability to provide an accurate answer to your request. For completeness, information contained in the meeting notes is withheld in full under section 6(a) and 6(b)(i) of the OIA:

- 6(a): to avoid prejudicing the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the New Zealand Government; and
- 6(b)(i): to protect the passing of information from another government on a confidential basis.

For your reference, the following information sets out the messaging that New Zealand has conveyed, both privately and publicly:

New Zealand has repeatedly called for urgent efforts to halt the current fighting in Gaza, including calling for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire, and a sustainable ceasefire. Any ceasefire cannot be one-sided. Hamas must play its part, including releasing all hostages and ceasing its attacks.

New Zealand has been clear from the outset of the conflict that we support Israel's right to defend itself against the appalling attacks by Hamas, acting in accordance with its obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law. In addition to its moral and legal obligations to protect civilians, Israel needs to consider the long-term impact of its actions, including on its own security. New Zealand has consistently said that there can be no military solution to this conflict. A lasting solution will only be achieved by peaceful means.

Since the commencement of the conflict, New Zealand has been clear that all parties must uphold international law, including international humanitarian law. This includes the orders issued by the International Court of Justice of “provisional measures”, which are legally binding. We expect Israel to fully adhere to these. Among other things, Israel must ensure that its military does not commit any acts within the scope of the Genocide Convention. It also must take immediate and effective measures to enable the provision of basic services and humanitarian assistance to Palestinians in Gaza.

The bilateral meeting with Ambassador Yaakoby on 12 February 2024 presented the opportunity to emphasise New Zealand’s consistent positions on the conflict as outlined above and repeat calls regarding the need for a cessation of violence, and the dire humanitarian consequences of continued military attacks in Gaza, including any military offensive in Rafah.

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.

Yours sincerely



Rt Hon Winston Peters
Minister of Foreign Affairs