



15 November 2024

Sarah Allison

By email: fyi-request-28644-2f49b8d1@requests.fyi.org.nz

Tēnā koe Sarah

Official information request regarding Yael Holan guest lecture

We refer to your request for information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) dated 3 October 2024:

"I am writing to request all documents held relating to Yael Holan's visit and guest lecture/presentation to VUW students in October 2024.

To assist, my request covers any documents that detail:

- *Who invited Yael Holan to present to VUW students?*
- *The basis upon which the invitation was extended*
- *A copy of any speech notes or powerpoint slides delivered by Yael Holan*
- *Whether any permission was sought by the relevant Head of Programme for the School of Political Science and International Relations, and whether permission was granted*
- *Whether any permission was sought by the University's senior leadership*
- *Whether any concerns or objections were raised proceeding, during, or following the presentation of Yael Holan*
- *The current policy of VUW regarding allowing serving Israeli government officials to speak at the University*
- *Whether any internal meetings at VUW have been convened prior, during, or post the visit of Yael Holan to discuss or debrief on the visit have occurred by any senior staff, comms staff, of the VC*
- *Whether any internal investigation is underway or being contemplated in regards to Yael Holan's visit*
- *Whether any disciplinary action of any VUW staff member has occurred in relation to Yael Holan's visit*
- *The University's current policy or position on the current conflict*
- *Any correspondence between the University and the Embassy of Israel relating to Yael Holan's visit*
- *Any correspondence between the University and MFAT relating to Yael Holan's visit."*

International Security (INTP 248) is an introductory course to the study of conflict and security offered by the School of History, Philosophy, Political Science, and International Relations. The course examines how and why conflict emerges in the international system and explores different approaches to its mitigation and resolution, using both traditional

materialist theories of security and alternative critical approaches to security. As stated in the [course description](#), one of the main learning objectives of this course is for students to gain a good understanding of the debates about the causes of conflict, along with a good grasp of the different theoretical perspectives on conflict and how these perspectives impact approaches to conflict in world politics.

In trimester 2 of this year, INTP 248 was taught by Senior Lecturer Dr. Iati Iati, who invited guest lecturers to help achieve the previously mentioned learning objectives. Guest lectures on the Israel-Palestine topic this trimester was delivered first by Palestinian Professor Mazin Qumsiyeh from Bethlehem University on 26 September 2024, followed by Ms. Yael Holan, First Secretary at the Embassy of Israel in New Zealand on 1 October 2024. Both lectures were delivered online and recorded for student learning.

There has been no specific communication within the department regarding Ms. Holan's guest lecture, aside from Dr. Iati's email exchanges with tutors. These email exchanges are withheld to protect the privacy of natural persons (s9(2)(a)).

There has also been no communication with the Embassy of Israel in Wellington aside from the correspondence between Dr. Iati and Ms. Holan. The University does not hold a copy of any speech notes or PowerPoint slides. Dr. Iati's communications with Ms. Holan and a recording of the lecture is withheld for the following reasons:

- Not to prejudice the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the Government of New Zealand (s6(a));
- Not to prejudice the entrusting of information to the Government of New Zealand on a basis of confidence by the Government of any other country or any agency of such a Government (s6(a)(ii));
- To protect the privacy of natural persons (s9(2)(a)); and
- To protect information which is subject to an obligation of confidence where the making available of the information would be likely to prejudice the supply of similar information, or information from the same source, and it is in the public interest that such information should continue to be supplied (s9(2)(ba)(i)).

At the University, lecturers do not need permission from senior leadership or the head of the programme to invite guest lecturers to their classes. Therefore, no such permission was requested for Ms. Holan's guest lecture.

No specific concerns or objections were raised preceding, during, or following Ms. Holan's guest lecture.

No senior staff, including the communications team, held any internal meetings preceding, during, or following Ms. Holan's guest lecture to discuss or debrief.

The University, as a principle, does not take a position on any issue on behalf of all its individuals. This policy of institutional neutrality is shared by many leading universities and is independent of any particular issue but also says nothing about the position of individuals within the institution, including the leadership team, or our wider community.

There is no internal investigation into Ms. Holan's visit to the University.

No disciplinary action has been taken against any staff member in connection with Ms. Holan's visit to the University.

There has been no communication between the University and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade regarding Ms. Holan's guest lecture at the University.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of the decisions made regarding this request. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

If you wish to discuss this decision with us, please feel free to contact us at oiarequests@vuw.ac.nz.

Ngā mihi nui

Legal Services

Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington