



NEW ZEALAND
FOREIGN AFFAIRS & TRADE



The Minister of
Foreign Affairs and Trade
Mauri Huria

15 February 2019

Katjoesja Buissink
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Dear Katjoesja Buissink

I refer to your email 17 January 2019 in which you request the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA):

"...I am writing under the Official Information Act to ask whether the New Zealand Government recognises Nicolás Maduro as the President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, and to request any documents relating to:

1) the NZ Government's view of the legitimacy of the 20 May 2018 Presidential Election in Venezuela and papers which led to this decision;

2) the NZ Government's view of the legitimacy of the National Constituent Assembly of Venezuela and papers which led to this decision;

3) any other documents which refer to Juan Guaido..."

1) the NZ Government's view of the legitimacy of the 20 May 2018 Presidential Election in Venezuela and papers which led to this decision;

New Zealand has a long-standing policy of not making statements of recognition of governments. New Zealand's position is that recognition of a government is to be inferred from the nature and level of its dealings with that government. New Zealand expressed concerns about the Venezuelan Presidential elections in May 2018. Here is the link to the public statement from the Minister of Foreign Affairs:

<https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/new-zealand-expresses-concern-regarding-venezuelan-elections>.

2) the NZ Government's view of the legitimacy of the National Constituent Assembly of Venezuela and papers which led to this decision;

New Zealand has a long-standing policy of not making statements of recognition of governments.

Attached are the documents relevant to your request. Some portions of the document are withheld under the following sections of the OIA:

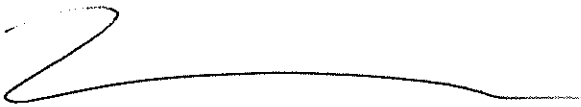
- 6(a): to avoid prejudicing the international relations of the New Zealand Government;
- 6(b)(i): to prejudice the entrusting of information to the Government of New Zealand on a basis of confidence by the Government of any other country or any agency of such a Government;
- 9(2)(a): to protect individuals' privacy;
- 9(2)(b)(ii): to avoid prejudice to the commercial position of another party; and
- 9(2)(g)(i): to protect the free and frank expression of opinions by departments.

Where the information has been withheld under section 9 of the OIA, no public interest in releasing the information has been identified that would be sufficient to override the reasons for withholding it.

Please note that this letter (with your personal details redacted) and enclosed documents may be published on the Ministry's website.

You have the right under section 28(3) of the OIA to seek a review of this response by the Ombudsman.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Wendy Adams', written in a cursive style.

Wendy Adams
for Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade