



An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha agus Trádála Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Our Ref: Fol/Req/19/150

7 May 2019

Dear Mr. Wall,

I refer to the request which you have made under the Freedom of Information Act 2014 for access to records held by this Department, as follows:

- 1. Any correspondence the Department has received from Venezuelan opposition leader Juan Guaido or his representatives during the period January 2018 to present.*
- 2. Any correspondence the Department has received from the Venezuelan Community in Ireland group regarding Juan Guaido during the same period.*
- 3. Any correspondence the Department has received from the US Embassy in Dublin regarding Juan Guaido during the same period.*
- 4. Any correspondence the Department has received from the US Embassy in Dublin regarding Venezuela in general during the period December 2018 to present.*

I refer also to the acknowledgement of your request which was sent to you on 8 April 2019.

I have identified 35 records that fall within the scope of your request. The records are listed in the schedule attached. I have made a decision to refuse release of the 35 records.

These cases of refusal relate to section 33. (2) (b) (i) and (ii) Security, defence and international relations.

Section 33 – Security, defence and international relations

While Section 33. (2) (b) (i) and (ii) Security, defence and international relations, is a mandatory exemption I feel it is warranted that I give reasoning to why it has been used so frequently. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade operates in a complex and diverse international environment. A mutuality of confidence exists in the communication between this Department and our interlocutors. This is particularly the case in respect of diplomatic communications. I have considered the possibility and likelihood that the release of these records could result in negative consequences, and prejudice the ability of this Department to effectively discharge its functions and engage with outside interlocutors and stakeholders. To do otherwise would risk compromising the State's capacity to engage with international partners through

diplomatic and other channels. I have therefore decided that refusals must be made for these reasons and I have applied the exemption as appropriate.

Right of Appeal

Should you wish to appeal this decision, you may do so in writing to the Freedom of Information Unit, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 76-78 Harcourt Street, Dublin 2 or by email to foi@dfa.ie. A fee applies for an appeal for access to non-personal information; the level of this fee has been set at €30. For methods of payment, please contact FOI Unit at foi@dfa.ie, or 01-4082857.

You should make your appeal within 4 weeks (20 working days) from the date of this notification. However, the making of a late appeal may be permitted in appropriate circumstances. The appeal will involve a complete reconsideration of the matter by a more senior member of the staff of this Department.

Yours sincerely,
Niamh Kenny

*Americas Unit
Ireland, UK and Americas Division
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade*