



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

Our ref: Fol/Req/19/269

7 October 2019

Dear Mr Hughes,

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

'All correspondence relating to the Irish prisoners overseas held by the Department of Foreign Affairs.

I wish for my request to cover the period from 1/1/2019 – 31/3/2019'

I have identified 10 instances of Irish Citizens imprisoned abroad during the period 1 January 2019 to 31 March 2019, and who have both requested and received consular assistance from this Department. Further, there exists a number of records related held by this Department in relation to each case. An extensive analysis of all correspondence in relation to your request has been undertaken by the Consular Assistance Unit in Dublin. Following this analysis, I have made the decision to refuse the release of all documentation in relation to your request under the following sections:

Section 35 (1) (a) of the Act applies when the record concerned contains information given to the body in confidence and on the understanding that it would be treated as confidential. Its disclosure would be likely to prejudice the giving of further similar information from the same person or other persons and it is of importance to the body that such further similar information as aforesaid should continue to be given to the body. I have considered whether the public interest would be best served by the release of the record you have requested. I have taken into account the benefit to the public to be given access to correspondence in a manner which demonstrates transparency and accountability of the Department. I have weighed this against the right of individuals to have their personal information remain private and have found that there is a clear prerogative to refuse the release.

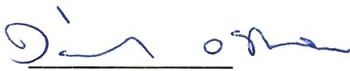
Section 37 (1) applies when the record concerned would involve the disclosure of personal information (including personal information relating to a deceased individual). The public interest arguments in favour of release would be best served by the release of the records you have requested. I have taken into account the benefit to the public to be given access to correspondence in a manner which demonstrates transparency and accountability of the Department. I have weighed this against the right of individuals to have their personal information remain private and have found that there is a clear prerogative to refuse the release.

Right of Appeal

Should you wish to appeal this decision, you may do so in writing to the Freedom of Information Unit, the 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 014082857.

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 staff of this Department.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'David O'Shea', written over a horizontal line.

David O'Shea
Consular Assistance Manager