



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

Our Ref: Fol/Req/19/328

13 December 2019

Dear Ms Bowers,

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:

*I am requesting the following information under the Freedom of Information Act 2014:*

- *Any correspondence/memos/briefings between this department and any other elected representative regarding the so-called Isis bride Lisa Smith February 2019 and this date.*
- *The minutes of any meetings between this department and any other elected representative regarding the so –called Isis bride Lisa Smith from February 2019 and this date.*

*I am also requesting that this information is delivered in electronic format.*

I refer also to the acknowledgement of your request which was sent to you on 25 November 2019.

Much of the correspondence between the Department and elected representatives on this issue is already on the public record. In particular, I refer you to the responses to Parliamentary Questions from:

- Deputy Mattie McGrath T.D. (2 April, 2019)
- Deputy Peadar Tóibín T.D. (2 April, 2019)
- Deputy Niall Collins T.D. (11 July, 2019)
- Deputy Sean Crowe T.D. (6 September, 2019)
- Deputy Niall Collins T.D. (23 October, 2019)
- Deputy Sean Haughey T.D. (12 November, 2019)

A record of Parliamentary Questions is available online at:

<https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/questions/>

Furthermore, I can advise that, while there is no written correspondence, the Department had telephone correspondence on numerous occasions with Deputy Peter Fitzpatrick T.D. in relation to support for the Smith family.

In addition to the above, I have identified 7 records that fall within the scope of your request. The records are listed in the schedule attached. I have made a decision to part-grant 6 of the records and refuse the release of 1 record.

In relation to the 6 part-granted records, the release of which has been part-granted, personal information has been redacted from all records under Section 37(1). While Section 37(1) Personal Information is a mandatory exemption, I am still obliged to consider whether the public interest would be best served by releasing the records in full. 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. In the main, the information redacted relates to personal contact information and does not affect the substance of the record. I have particularly considered whether releasing the personal information would provide any additional benefit in this regard. 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 for this information to remain private.

1 record has been refused release under Section 35(1) as the records contain information given in confidence and on the understanding that it would be treated as confidential. I believe that the release of this information would prejudice the giving of further similar information to the Department, which would have a major impact on the Department's ability to manage sensitive and complex consular cases. I believe that it is of vital importance to the work of the Department that further similar information should continue to be provided.

1 record has been refused release under Section 37 (1) of the Act, as I believe that their release would involve the disclosure of personal information.

### **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](mailto: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](mailto: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



Ronan Cunniffe  
Consular Directorate