

Our Ref: FoI/Req/2016/073

Ruadhán Mac Cormaic
The Irish Times
24-26 Tara Street
Dublin 2

27th June 2016

Dear Mr Mac Cormaic,

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. A copy of the report given to the Department/Irish Aid by the aid agency GOAL in relation to the decision by USAID to partially suspend GOAL funding for projects in Syria (April-May 2016).**
- 2. All internal departmental/Irish Aid correspondence on the report furnished by GOAL and on the wider issue of the funding suspension by USAID.**

I refer also to the acknowledgement of your request which was sent to you on 13th June 2016.

I have identified 25 records that fall within the scope of your request. The records are listed in the schedule attached. I have made a decision to grant 16, part-grant 7 and refuse 2 of the records.

Where access has been refused or part-granted, the records are exempt from release under sections 32 and 33 of the Freedom of Information Act 2014. As you are aware, an investigation is underway by the US Office of the Inspector General (OIG) into an international case in a very complex and difficult operating context. The Department has a responsibility to ensure that we do not jeopardise the investigation or the work of our partner.

I have therefore made the decision to refuse to release an internal memo which was shared by GOAL with the Department. This is a third party memo which was shared in confidence and includes sensitive information that may be prejudicial to the ongoing investigation [Section 32 (1) (a)]. It also refers to individuals under investigation which could endanger the life or safety of any person [Section 32 (1) (b)]. In addition, I have decided to refuse release of correspondence between Irish Aid and USAID on the grounds that it contains information communicated in confidence which could reasonably be expected to affect adversely the international relations of the State [Section 33 (1) (d)] while also potentially prejudicing the ongoing investigation [Section 32 (1) (a)].

In the case of the seven documents which have been part-granted, I decided to redact any sensitive and confidential elements of the text which could reasonably be expected to prejudice or impair the investigation of offences which is underway [Section 32 (a)]. In some cases, some of the text refers to individuals under investigation and has been redacted on the

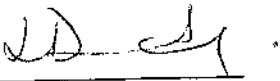
grounds that it could endanger the life or safety of any person [Section 32 (b)]. Any other text which has been redacted falls outside the scope of the request.

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@dfat.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@dfat.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



Lisa Doherty
Deputy Director
Humanitarian Unit
Irish Aid