



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

Our Ref: FOI/Req/20/034

Cian McCormack  
Morning Ireland  
Newsroom  
TV Building, RTE,  
Donnybrook, D4

10 March 2020

Dear Mr McCormack,

I refer to the request which you made by email on 12 February 2020 under the Freedom of Information Act 2014 (the FOI Act), as follows:

**In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act, I request access to the following information and records since 2017.**

**Letters, emails or any other correspondence between the charity GOAL and the Department of Foreign Affairs and its Ministers relating to GOAL writing a letter of appreciation to the HTS affiliated Syrian Salvation Government (SSG) for allowing them to continue (re-establish) their bakeries or any other programme.**

**Letters, emails or any other correspondence between the charity GOAL and Irish Aid relating to GOAL writing a letter of appreciation to the HTS affiliated Syrian Salvation Government (SSG) for allowing them to continue (re-establish) their bakeries programme or any other programme.**

**All minutes or records of meetings involving or relating to the Department of Foreign Affairs, its Ministers, Irish Aid and GOAL relating to GOAL writing a letter of appreciation to the HTS affiliated Syrian Salvation Government (SSG) for allowing them to continue (re-establish) their bakeries programme or any other programme.**

**All briefing material relating to GOAL writing a letter of appreciation to the HTS affiliated Syrian Salvation Government (SSG) for allowing them to continue (re-establish) their bakeries programme or any other programme prepared for the Minister/Ministers in the Department or for their private secretaries or special advisors.**

**Letters, emails or any other correspondence between USAID, or any US Government Departments, and the Department of Foreign Affairs and its Ministers relating to GOAL writing a letter of appreciation to the HTS affiliated Syrian Salvation Government (SSG) for allowing them to continue (re-establish) their bakeries programme or any other programme.**

**Letters, emails or any other correspondence between USAID, or any US Government Departments, and Irish Aid relating to GOAL writing a letter of appreciation to the HTS affiliated Syrian Salvation Government (SSG) for allowing them to continue (re-establish) their bakeries programme or any other programme.**

**Also, all minutes or records of meetings involving or relating to the Department of Foreign Affairs, its Ministers, Irish Aid and USAID, or any US Government Departments, relating to GOAL writing a letter of appreciation to the HTS affiliated Syrian Salvation Government (SSG) for allowing them to continue (re-establish) their bakeries programme or any other programme.**

**All briefing material relating to US AID, or any US Government Departments, on the subject of GOAL writing a letter of appreciation to the HTS affiliated Syrian Salvation Government (SSG) for allowing them to continue (re-establish) their bakeries programme, or any other programme, prepared for the Minister/Ministers in the Department or the their private secretaries or special advisors.**

I refer also to the acknowledgement of your request which was sent to you on 19 February 2020.

#### **Determination**

We have identified seven records which fall within the scope of your request and these have been enclosed as five records (three emails are contained in one record) and detailed in the enclosed schedule. You will be aware of the ongoing and evolving conflict in Syria and the high levels of violence and risk in the region. In making this determination I have had to consider the consequences that release of un-redacted records could have for all concerned.

Accordingly, three of these documents have been part-granted. Two redactions have been made under section 33 FOI Act as release of this information could reasonably be expected to affect adversely the international relations of the State. One redaction has been made under section 32(1)(b) FOI Act as in my opinion release of this information could reasonably be expected to endanger the life or safety of people.

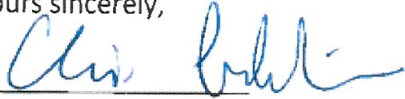
#### **Right of Appeal**

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,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Claire Kerschensteiner', written over a horizontal line.

Claire Kerschensteiner

Civil Society and Development Education Unit, Development Cooperation and Africa Division