



An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha agus Trádála
Baile Átha Cliath 2

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Dublin 2

5th May 2016

Ciarán D'Arcy
The Irish Times

Our Ref: FoI/Req/16/ 041

Dear Mr. D'Arcy,

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:

Correspondence between the Minister and/or departmental officials and Egyptian authorities/ consular staff in relation to the continued detention of Irish citizen Ibrahim Halawa demonstrating the State's efforts to secure his release. The records requested are for the period 01/08/2013 to 30/03/2016.

I refer also to the acknowledgement of your request which was sent to you on 11 April 2016.

I have identified 98 records that fall within the scope of your request. The records are listed in the schedule attached. I have made a decision to grant 2 of the records and to refuse 96 of the records.

Where access has been refused, the records are exempt from release under section 33(2)(b)(i) of the Act. This is a mandatory exemption and I must refuse access to the records.

International relations is the cornerstone of the work of this Department. Our ability to conduct business with any government and/or their representatives in confidence in respect to sensitive matters is fundamental to the conduct of international relations between States. The release of these records – which pertain to a highly sensitive case – would adversely affect the international relations of the State, in respect of its bilateral relations with Egypt and the State's ability to engage with international partners in future sensitive cases with a view to resolving them through diplomatic channels.

Regarding the two records being released:

- Record reference no. 86 relates to correspondence between the Department and the Embassy of Egypt regarding a visa for an official to visit Egypt and access to visit Mr. Halawa in prison. Please note that the official's passport details have been redacted.

- Record reference no. 95 relates to a Third Party Note (TPN) from the Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt enclosing a press release issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs which is already in the public domain.

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



Edwina Love
Consular Division