



HM Passport
Office

Parliamentary Correspondence Unit
2nd Floor, Peel, NE
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Email foi@hmpo.gsi.gov.uk
Website www.gov.uk/hm-passport-office

Kasia Narkowicz
kasia.narkowicz@york.ac.uk

Reference: FOICR 39699/16

Date: 7 June 2016

Dear Dr Narkowicz,

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST

Thank you for your email of 17 May, in which you ask for information on the use of the Royal Prerogative. Your request has been handled as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI Act).

Your information request and Her Majesty's Passport Office (HM Passport Office) response are set out below.

How many people have had their passports removed or withdrawn under the public interest criteria in 2015?

I can confirm that HM Passport Office holds the information regarding the use of the Royal Prerogative in 2015, however after careful consideration we have decided that the information is exempt from disclosure under section 22 of the Freedom of Information Act. This provides that information can be withheld if it is intended for future publication and the public interest falls in favour of maintaining the exemption.

Public interest test in relation to section 22 (Information intended for future publication)

Some of the exemptions in the FOI Act, referred to as 'qualified exemptions', are subject to a public interest test (PIT). This test is used to balance the public interest in disclosure against the public interest in maintaining the exemption. We must carry out a PIT where

we are considering using any of the qualified exemptions in response to a request for information.

The 'public interest' is not the same as what interests the public. In carrying out a PIT we consider the greater good or benefit to the community as a whole if the information is released or not. Transparency and the 'right to know' must be balanced against the need to enable effective government and to serve the best interests of the public.

The FOI Act is 'applicant blind'. This means that we cannot, and do not, ask about the motives of anyone who asks for information. In providing a response to one person, we are expressing a willingness to provide the same response to anyone, including those who might represent a threat to the UK.

Considerations in favour of disclosing the information

We recognise that there is public interest in openness and transparency in all aspects of government and that there is a public interest in information relating to the use of the Royal Prerogative.

Considerations in favour of maintaining the exemption

We consider it reasonable to wait for the publication of the information as we intend it to be published soon. There is a public interest in allowing HM Passport Office to allow the publication of this information in a manner and form of its own choosing, which would be undermined by immediate disclosure. Disclosure in advance of publication would also undermine HM Passport Office established pre-publication procedures, including checking the accuracy of the information that is due to be published.

We conclude that the balance of the public interest lies in maintaining the exemption and withholding the information.

If you are dissatisfied with this response you may request an independent internal review of our handling of your request by submitting a complaint within two months to the address below, quoting reference FOICR 39699/16. If you ask for an internal review, it would be helpful if you could say why you are dissatisfied with the response.

Information Rights Team
Home Office
Third Floor, Peel Building
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF
e-mail: foirequests@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

As part of any internal review the Department's handling of your information request will be reassessed by staff who were not involved in providing you with this response. If you remain dissatisfied after this internal review, you would have a right of complaint to the Information Commissioner as established by section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act

Yours sincerely

P. Feakins
Parliamentary Correspondence Unit

Passport Adviceline: 0300 222 0000
Email us at foi@hmpo.gsi.gov.uk
Visit our website at www.gov.uk

