



17 July 2025



Ref: OIA-2024/25-1003

Dear 

Official Information Act request relating to information regarding Israel-Palestine conflict

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) request received on 24 June 2025 which was partially transferred from the Ministry of Education. You requested:

1. *All internal or external communications (emails, memos, briefings, guidance) to or from Ministry of Education staff or leadership that reference:*
 - a) *The Palestinian and/or Muslim communities in New Zealand;*
 - b) *The Israel-Palestine conflict, war, or humanitarian situation.*
2. *All communications (as above) referencing:*
 - a) *The Jewish and/or Israeli communities in New Zealand;*
 - b) *The Israel-Palestine conflict in the context of community wellbeing, school engagement, or staff messaging*
3. *All correspondence between the Ministry and the Holocaust Centre of New Zealand, the NZ Jewish Council, or Israeli/Jewish community organisations, including references to the conflict, support measures, or community engagement.*
4. *Any outcomes or decisions resulting from the above communications.*

On the 13 May 2025, you refined your request with the Ministry of Education as follows:

Timeframe:

Please limit the search to the period 7 October 2023 to 30 April 2024.

Scope of Communications:

Please restrict the request to:

- *Formal internal documents such as memos, briefings, or official guidance documents.*
- *External communications (emails or letters) to or from the following:*
 - *The Holocaust Centre of New Zealand*
 - *The New Zealand Jewish Council*
 - *The Federation of Islamic Associations of New Zealand (FIANZ)*
 - *Other religious, cultural, or community groups specifically identified as Jewish, Israeli, Palestinian, or Muslim in the correspondence.*

Subject Matter:

I am particularly interested in:

Guidance or messaging to schools relating to:

- *The Israel-Gaza conflict and its impact on student wellbeing, staff conduct, or classroom discussions.*
- *Issues of discrimination, racism, or community tensions linked to this conflict.*

Communications referencing support, wellbeing, or engagement with:

- *Muslim, Palestinian, Jewish, or Israeli communities in the context of the Israel-Palestine conflict.*

Information being released

The Ministry of Education transferred your request as it related to the document titled '*Messaging for communities: Response to Hamas/Israel conflict 2023*'. A copy of this document is attached for you. Please note some information is withheld under the following sections of the Act:

- s9(2)(g)(i), to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinion
- s9(2)(h), to maintain legal professional privilege.

In making my decision, I have considered the public interest considerations in section 9(1) of the Act. No public interest has been identified that would be sufficient to outweigh the reasons for withholding that information.

You have the right to ask the Ombudsman to investigate and review my decision under section 28(3) of the Act.

This response will be published on the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet's website during our regular publication cycle. Typically, information is released monthly, or as otherwise determined. Your personal information including name and contact details will be removed for publication.

Yours sincerely



Sean Bolton
Executive Director
Risk and Systems Governance Group and National Security Group



Messaging for communities: Response to Hamas/Israel conflict 2023

s9(2)(g)(i)

This document intends to:

1. Provide understanding on New Zealand's international response
2. Provide understanding on our domestic response
3. Promote social cohesion in New Zealand

Approvals for public statements

- Please note that while these messages can be drawn on for community engagement, any public comment on New Zealand's international positions on the conflict, (for example, any statement about the international situation published in a press release, website, or social media) requires sign off by MFAT.
- Requests for approval should be sent to Media@mfat.govt.nz, with the subject line REQUEST FOR APPROVAL ISRAEL-GAZA

s9(2)(g)(i)

Released under the Official Information Act 1982



Overarching messaging on the international conflict

- New Zealand condemns unequivocally Hamas' terrorist attacks on Israel.
- We are appalled by their targeting of civilians, and the taking of hostages s9(2)(h)
- We call for the immediate release of all hostages held in Gaza.
- New Zealand supports Israel's right to defend itself in full compliance with international law including in respect of any actions taken in Gaza.
- The protection of civilians, and delivery of urgent humanitarian assistance must remain a critical priority.
- We expect and urge Israel and Hamas to act in accordance with international humanitarian law, which imposes obligations upon all those engaged in armed conflict.
- We welcome the announcement of an agreement to move humanitarian aid through the Rafah crossing. New Zealand continues to urge all parties including Israel and Egypt to facilitate full unimpeded access to deliver urgent humanitarian assistance to civilians in Gaza.
- New Zealand has announced a \$5 million humanitarian contribution following appeals to address urgent humanitarian needs in Israel, Gaza and the West Bank.

Social cohesion

- We know that New Zealand families are understandably worried about their loved ones overseas.
- We know many New Zealand families have already been impacted by this conflict and our thoughts go out to them and their communities.
- We all want New Zealand to be a peaceful, inclusive country.
- Everyone in Aotearoa has a role to play in continuing to ensure New Zealand is a peaceful nation.
- We ask that all communities as New Zealanders to remain respectful and empathetic towards each other at this time, including being mindful of language both online and in person.
- We will only thrive as a nation if we can share and discuss sometimes quite different points of view in a constructive and respectful way.
- We recognise that some of the media and social media content coming from the conflict is incredibly confronting and upsetting and that the conflict may be distressing for our communities.
- Some individuals may have directly affected family, friends and wider community members. We encourage those affected to prioritise your mental health and wellbeing during these challenging times. You can find more about available support from community service providers by visiting the Ministry for Ethnic Communities' website: [Mental health and wellbeing support | Ministry for Ethnic Communities](#)



- Government agencies, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Ministry for Ethnic Communities, NZ Police, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, and our intelligence agencies are maintaining an ongoing dialogue with various community leaders.
- These discussions provide a platform for community leaders to express their communities' concerns, collaborate on addressing these issues, and ensure their views and concerns are shared with relevant government agencies.

Community reassurance

- As the events continue over the coming days or weeks, Police will continue to reassure and support the safe gathering of communities.
- Police's response includes providing reassurance patrols around places of worship, schools and facilities. This will vary between districts across the country based on local need.
- Police continue to work alongside community representatives from these respective groups to provide reassurance and if there are concerns about safety we urge them to contact Police via the 111-emergency line or report incidents that have already happened using 105.
- It would be good to familiarise yourself with advice the New Zealand Government has developed around Protecting our Crowded Places from Attack: [Crowded places strategy](#) | [New Zealand Police](#)

New Zealanders in the region

- New Zealanders in the region are encouraged to register on SafeTravel for the most up to date information.
- Anyone that wants to leave Israel or the Occupied Palestinian Territories but can't, should contact the New Zealand 24/7 Consular Emergency Line on +64 99 20 20 20.

Responding to hate crimes and incidents

- If you, your friends or whānau have experienced abuse, violence, threats, or intimidation motivated by hostility or prejudice, it is extremely important that you report it.
- You can report a hate crime or incident online using 105 non-emergency report or by calling 105. To report anonymously, use [Crime Stoppers](#) or you can make a complaint to the [Human Rights Commission](#).

Report to Police

- If someone is in danger or an incident is happening now, call 111 immediately.
- If an incident has already happened and no one is in immediate danger, report it online by visiting: 105.police.govt.nz. This will ensure the matter is logged and appropriately assigned. Once a report is received a case number will be issued and this can be referenced for monitoring the progress of a complaint.



Additional information on reporting hate crimes, online violent extremism and harmful digital content

The following link provides guidance on reporting Hate Crimes, online Violent Extremism and harmful digital content. <https://www.police.govt.nz/advice-services/advice-victims/hate-crime>.

The attached a PDF resource that can also be shared to guide the community on reporting.

Reporting Online Violent Extremist Material

- The Digital Safety team at Te Tari Taiwhenua, Department of Internal Affairs, investigates content that relates to violent extremism.
- It is important to report online terrorism and violent extremism so that we can investigate it.
- Content that should be reported:
 - Images, speeches, or videos that promote or encourage terrorism or violent extremism should be reported.
 - Websites made by terrorist or extremist organisations.
 - Videos of terrorist attacks, and any other content that promote violent extremism.
- If you know someone is in immediate danger, call 111.
- If you have seen something that may be objectionable, you can [report online violent extremist material on our website](#)
- To access Factsheets, or for more info, visit dia.govt.nz - [Online Violent Extremist Material](#)

Terrorist designations

Why hasn't New Zealand designated the political wing of Hamas as a terrorist organisation?

- New Zealand has designated the military wing of Hamas as a terrorist organisation since 2010. Designations are made under our Terrorism Suppression Act.
- Like other countries, New Zealand designates entities in accordance with UN Security Council Resolutions and in accordance with domestic legislation. New Zealand has discretion as to how further designations are made, as long as TSA criteria are met.
- While our designations reflect our independent foreign policy, we do consider the views of others. Designation of Hamas' military wing was last considered and renewed in 2022.
- The Terrorist Designations Working Group has started work on advice on the designation of the political wing of Hamas, as requested by Prime Minister Hipkins.



General social cohesion messaging

- In a socially cohesive society, all people, whānau and communities connect and feel a sense of belonging, are able to participate, are recognised and respected, are equitably included and have trust in others and institutions.
- Everyone can make a contribution to social cohesion. We can work to achieve social cohesion through encouraging positive interactions within and across diverse groups, fostering inclusive values, valuing diverse contributions, supporting participation, working to protect our society and environment for future generations, tackling discrimination and promoting equitable economic and social inclusion.
- [Te Korowai Whetū Social Cohesion package of tools and resources](#) can be used by individuals and communities to strengthen social cohesion through their own mahi. This package includes helpful information sheets for individuals and communities which provide practical tips for strengthening social cohesion.

Released under the Official Information Act 1982