



20 May 2026

Ref: OIA-2025/26-0671

Tēnā koe

## Official Information Act request relating to parliament protests

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) request, which was received by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) on 22 April 2026. You requested:

*This request relates to Government awareness, briefing, and oversight concerning the use of Long-Range Acoustic Devices (LRAD) and the policing of the Parliament protest in early 2022.*

*Timeframe: 1 January 2021 – 30 June 2022.*

### 1. LRAD capability and approval

- a. Any briefings, reports, or papers provided to Ministers or Cabinet regarding:
- acquisition or approval of LRAD capability
  - risks or safety considerations associated with LRAD use

### 2. Parliament protest response

- a. Any briefings to the Prime Minister, Cabinet, or relevant Ministers concerning:
- policing strategy for the Parliament protest
  - use of force options available to Police
- b. Any situation reports or updates provided to Ministers during the protest period.

### 3. Post-event reporting

- a. Any Cabinet papers, briefings, or reports reviewing:
- Police response
  - use of force tools (including LRAD)
  - public safety impacts

### 4. Communications

- a. Any communications between:
- DPMC / Ministerial offices
  - New Zealand Police

*relating to LRAD capability or its use.*

*This request is limited to formal documents and briefings. Informal correspondence is excluded at this stage.*

On 28 April 2026 you were advised that your request would normally be transferred to the New Zealand Police (Police) for any information they may hold as it is more closely

connected to their functions. However, Police advised they received two very similar requests under the Act from you on this subject. We also noted the requests sent to Police did not seek copies of Cabinet papers as asked in question 3(a) of this request and therefore transferred part 3(a) of your request to Police. Police will respond to you directly with any information they may hold.

### Information being released

We have undertaken searches of our Information Management Systems for any further information produced by DPMC relevant to your request, which would not be covered by the response you will receive from Police.

One document has been identified that is relevant to your request which I have decided to release to you in full and a copy is attached for you.

Item	Date	Document description	Decision
1	17 February 2022	Briefing note: ODESC Officials' Committee for Domestic and External Security Coordination	Released in full

The following OIA release may also be of interest to you which includes the release of the ODESC minutes: [Response to Official Information Act request OIA-2024/25-0691: Officials Committee for Domestic and External Security Coordination meeting 17 February 2022 - March 2025 - Risk and Systems Governance Group, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.](#)

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 DPMC 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.

Nāku noa, nā



Jeremy Clarke-Watson  
Deputy Chief Executive  
National Security and Resilience



# ODESC

*Officials' Committee for Domestic  
and External Security Coordination*

<b>To</b>	Prime Minister
<b>From</b>	Tony Lynch, Chair of ODESC
<b>Prepared by</b>	Marika Hughes, Director, National Security Systems Directorate
<b>CC</b>	Relevant Ministers
<b>Date</b>	17 February 2022
<b>Subject</b>	Parliament Protest ODESC #1

## Key points

- The National Security System has been activated in support of Police's lead agency role in the response to the ongoing protest at Parliament
- ODESC agreed that the range of options under consideration by Police represent the spectrum of possible responses, and has commissioned work to enable a better understanding of risks and to further inform planning at a system level.
- It is anticipated that another ODESC meeting will be held in the week beginning 21 February 2022, but chief executives will meet sooner if the situation requires.

## Background

1. The first National Security System ODESC meeting was held today (17 February 2022) at the request of the lead agency (Police) to ensure agencies have a consistent understanding of the situation; and to discuss risks and implications related to response options. Chief Executive and senior delegates from 16 agencies attended.<sup>1</sup>
2. ODESC attendees appreciated the update provided by the Police Commissioner and reflected on the complexities of the challenging situation. They were able to share expertise from across the system, acknowledging the purpose of the meeting was not to dictate or determine the operational courses of action for Police to undertake.

## Situation update

- 3 The Police Commissioner provided an overview of the current situation, based on a briefing provided to the Minister of Police on 16 February 2022. He noted the challenge of finding an appropriate intervention that would both be successful and balance the risk of

<sup>1</sup> Department of Internal Affairs, Department of Corrections, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (Chair), Government Communications Security Bureau, Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Transport, Parliamentary Service, New Zealand Customs Service, New Zealand Defence Force, New Zealand Security Intelligence Service, New Zealand Police and Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission. Crown Law will attend future meetings.

a significant escalation of unlawful behaviour causing harm. Some of the significant constraints the Police are facing in seeking to minimise disruption, clear blocked roads, etc include:

- The sophisticated tactics the protesters are using when confronted with Police action – there is “a readiness to obstruct Police activity” at play.
  - The wider support base (financial, logistical and physical), not only enabling protesters to remain onsite, but providing surge capacity through calls on social media (growing numbers from 300 plus into a much larger crowd at short notice. When the crowd swells, it can quickly exceed Police capacity to manage.
  - The limited ability to detain people for lengthy periods given that they are only arrestable for bailable offences (meaning they return to the community/back to the protest within a short timeframe).
4. The Police Commissioner noted that they are engaging with some of the protest leaders, although there is not one coherent voice. The protesters are mainly united by anti-mandate sentiment, and are looking for engagement from Government, although it is unclear what conditions they would accept as a pre-requisite for dispersal (other than an end to the mandates).
5. The Chief Executive, Parliamentary Service, noted the significant damage that has been done to the Parliamentary complex, and the flow-on effects the protest is having related to the safety and security of MPs, both in Wellington and at their constituency offices.

### Key risks and implications

6. ODESC canvassed several risks and implications arising from the continued protest activity:
- Loss of public trust and confidence for perceived inaction in ending the disruption; and limited resources to maintain enforcement in relation to protests in other parts of New Zealand should the protests expand or new ones emerge.
  - The risk of escalation of current protest activity to target critical infrastructure, including critical transport routes, as has been observed in other jurisdictions.
  - While the Wellington protesters have been showing some willingness to clean up (both their aggressive behaviour and physically at the location) in reaction to public sentiment, it is a volatile situation. As it continues, protesters could become more disruptive again, with little notice.

There are also risks associated with an extended duration including from fire or other emergencies on site, with limited abilities for emergency services to respond because of blocked access.

- The Chief Executive, Ministry of Justice, asked ODESC to specifically note the significant impact the protest activity is having on the judicial system, with trials needing to be cancelled because of the lack of safe access to the courts. This could be perceived as a breakdown of civil society.
- The impact on surrounding business owners was noted as a significant factor. MBIE is considering options for possible relief for those impacted, although there is no neat solution.

## Response options

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7. The Police Commissioner outlined the four options under consideration:
  - Maintaining the status quo;
  - Minor escalation;
  - Cordon and contain; and
  - Large-scale intervention.
8. ODESC noted the risks identified for each option, ranging from the potential for gradual deterioration of crowd behaviour and the potential for counter-protest associated with the status quo option, to the potential for large-scale escalation and risk of extreme action associated with a large-scale intervention.
9. To further inform planning, DPMC will convene inter-agency work with Police and other relevant agencies to identify wider strategic considerations, and risks associated with the options identified, using a range of scenarios. Work will also be undertaken to understand legal thresholds and pathways regarding accessing emergency powers and additional resources.

## Discussion

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10. Chief Executives from Corrections and Customs (previous Deputy Chief Executive at Corrections) shared their experiences from responding to prison riots and associated protests. They agreed that the response options outlined by the Police Commissioner appear to be the “right” ones, and also discussed the effectiveness of engaging the local community, and iwi/Maori leadership in the discussions regarding pathways to an effective resolution.
11. ODESC agreed that positive engagement with the protesters is the key to maintaining stability while the protest continues, but that there may be a limited window in which this engagement can occur to result in effective de-escalation, given the lack of coherent voice which may fracture quickly.
12. ODESC also briefly discussed what other countries are doing to manage similar protest situations, such as Canada’s use of emergency powers. Police are in regular contact with their international counterparts, and the Ministry of Foreign and Trade (MFAT) will reach out via their posts to seek any additional advice on what effective measures are being utilised.

## Next Steps

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13. A further ODESC meeting will be held next week if the protest remains unchanged, and would come together sooner should the Police Commissioner request a meeting. Consideration will also be given to convening if:
  - There is major escalation in protest activity and/or behaviour.
  - There are further copycat protests in New Zealand.
14. We will keep you apprised of any further significant risks or complications if they arise.

Proactively Released