

18 July 2022

Personal details removed for proactive release

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OIA 28102

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Tēnā koe

I refer to your email of 29 May 2022 in which you request the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA):

*Please provide all documents you hold that discuss to Agenda item 25 of the 75th WHO Assembly.*

*This includes the decision-making process around voting for resolution A74/B/CONF./3 that singled out Israel from all nations and so politicises the WHO and undermines rhetoric of NZ taking a "fair and balanced" approach to Israel.*

On 28 June 2022, due to further consultation being required before a decision could be made on your request, the timeframe for responding to your request was extended by 15 working days, to 19 July 2022. Thank you for your patience while this process was concluded.

The information requested has been made available by providing a summary of the contents of the documentation (section 16(1)(e) of the OIA refers).

We have withheld some information from the summary under the following sections of the OIA:

- 6(a): to avoid prejudicing the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the New Zealand Government;
- 9(2)(a): to protect individuals' privacy;
- 9(2)(g)(i): to protect the free and frank expression of opinions by departments; and
- 9(2)(g)(ii): to protect officers and employees from improper pressure or harassment.

Where the information has been withheld under section 9 of the OIA, we have identified no public interest in releasing the information that would override the reasons for withholding it.

Decisions taken by this Government on New Zealand support for particular initiatives, resolutions, and decisions relating to Israeli/Palestinian issues are considered carefully, with all necessary consultation having been carried out. In all cases, the Government remains committed to supporting a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Since 2018, New Zealand has consistently voted in favour of the World Health Assembly decision "Health conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory, including east Jerusalem, and the occupied Syrian Golan".

This year New Zealand maintained its vote in support of that decision to ensure that the World Health Organisation (WHO) continues to report on the significant health issues affecting Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank.

Our vote was based on an objective assessment of the merits of the decision text. The Government is committed to building a closer relationship with Israel, and with the Palestinians.

Given past precedent was followed, and the 2022 Draft Decision contained only minor amendments from the same Decision passed in 2021 (i.e. it was consistent with our Government's policy), the decision on New Zealand's voting intention required no intervention nor additional instruction from the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Please note that we may publish this letter (with your personal details redacted) on the Ministry's website.

If you have any questions about this decision, you can contact us by email at: [DM-ESD@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:DM-ESD@mfat.govt.nz). You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision by contacting [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

Nāku noa, nā



Sarah Corbett  
for Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade