

14 August 2023

Requesters name redacted for proactive release

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OIA 28742

Tēnā koe Requesters name redacted for  
proactive release

I refer to your email of 21 July 2023 in which you request the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA):

*'New Zealand officials frequently refer to the "international rules-based system" as distinct from a system based on the United Nations Charter and international law. What rules does the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade consider to underpin the former, and how does it differ from the latter?'*

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (the Ministry) considers that the rules-based international system is the framework of rules, norms, and institutions that has governed relations between states since the end of World War II. The United Nations system, the World Trade Organisation, and the Bretton Woods Institutions are the most prominent examples of multilateral institutions that form part of this system, underpinned by their respective treaties, instruments and international law.

The rules based-international system includes the United Nations Charter and international law which are fundamental to it. But it is broader and also includes other institutions, rules and norms as described above.

Further information on the Ministry's assessment of the rules-based international system is contained in "2023 Strategic Foreign Policy Assessment; 'Navigating a shifting world – Te whakatere i tētahi ao hurihuri', which is available on the Ministry's website:

[www.mfat.govt.nz/en/media-and-resources/release-of-mfats-2023-strategic-foreign-policy-assessment-navigating-a-shifting-world-te-whakatere-i-tetahi-ao-hurihuri/?m=187750#search:Zm9yZWlnbiBwb2xpY3kgYXNzZXNzbWVudA](http://www.mfat.govt.nz/en/media-and-resources/release-of-mfats-2023-strategic-foreign-policy-assessment-navigating-a-shifting-world-te-whakatere-i-tetahi-ao-hurihuri/?m=187750#search:Zm9yZWlnbiBwb2xpY3kgYXNzZXNzbWVudA)

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'SC', written in a cursive style.

Sarah Corbett  
for Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade