



**NEW ZEALAND**  
FOREIGN AFFAIRS & TRADE  
Manatū Aorere



New Zealand Ministry of  
Foreign Affairs and Trade  
Manatū Aorere

9 June 2026

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Requesters name redacted for proactive release

OIA 30882

Tēnā koe Requesters name redacted for  
proactive release

Thank you for your email of 17 April 2026, in which you request the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA):

- *Email from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade on 25 March 2026 to the Minister, the day of the vote in New York, advising of the proposed approach.*
- *The reply from the Ministers office.*
- *The email from MFAT to the Minister the following day, advising the Minister of the result of the vote.*

On 18 May 2026, the timeframes for responding to your request were extended by an additional 15 working days due to the consultations necessary to make a decision on your request (section 15A(1)(b) of the OIA refers).

### **Response to your request**

The information in scope of your request is attached. Some information is withheld 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;
- 6(b)(i): to protect the passing of information from another government on a confidential basis;
- 9(2)(a): to protect individuals' privacy;
- 9(2)(g)(i): to protect the free and frank expression of opinions by departments;
- 9(2)(g)(ii): to protect officers and employees from improper pressure or harassment; and
- 9(2)(h): to maintain legal professional privilege.

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

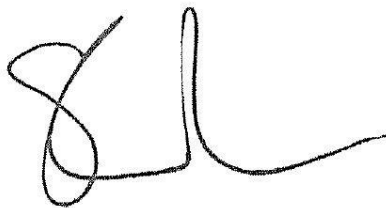
Please note, the attachments on page one are publicly available via the following links. Accordingly, your request for this information is refused under section 18(d) of the OIA.

- Draft NZ EOY – UNGA Res. Declaration of the Trafficking of Enslaved Africans and Racialized Chattel Enslavement of Africans as the Gravest Crime Against Humanity – 2026: [www.mfat.govt.nz/en/media-and-resources/new-zealands-explanation-of-vote-united-nations-general-assembly-resolution-on-the-declaration-of-the-trafficking-of-enslaved-africans-and-racialised-chattel-enslavement-of-africans-as-the-gravest-crime-against-humanity](http://www.mfat.govt.nz/en/media-and-resources/new-zealands-explanation-of-vote-united-nations-general-assembly-resolution-on-the-declaration-of-the-trafficking-of-enslaved-africans-and-racialised-chattel-enslavement-of-africans-as-the-gravest-crime-against-humanity)
- L.48: [digitallibrary.un.org/record/4106660?ln=en](http://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4106660?ln=en)

Please note that it is our policy to proactively release our responses to official information requests where possible. Therefore, our response to your request (with your personal information removed) may be published on the Ministry website: [www.mfat.govt.nz/en/about-us/contact-us/official-information-act-responses/](http://www.mfat.govt.nz/en/about-us/contact-us/official-information-act-responses/)

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

**From:** [HARGEST-SLADE, Charlotte \(UNHC\)](#)  
**To:** s9(2)(g)(ii)  
**Cc:** [APPLETON, Michael \(Inet\)](#); s9(2)(g)(ii); [LAURENSEN, Amy \(UNHC\)](#); [NAM, Christine \(LGL\)](#); [MCGILLIVRAY, Michelle \(UNHC\)](#); [HAWKSWORTH, Allie \(UNHC\)](#); [VREEBURG, Sophie \(LGL\)](#); [ADDIS, Megan \(UNHC\)](#); [ZOHHRAB, Stuart \(ESD\)](#)  
**Subject:** RE: New Zealand's approach to the UN General Assembly resolution concerning transatlantic slavery - occurring overnight in NYK (Wed 25 March) [SEC=RESTRICTED]  
**Date:** Thursday, 26 March 2026 10:25:00 am  
**Attachments:** [Draft NZ FOV - UNGA Res. Declaration of the Trafficking of Enslaved Africans and Racialized Chattel Enslavement of Africans as the Gravest Crime Against Humanity - 2026.docx](#)  
[L\\_48.pdf](#)

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Kia ora s9(2)(g)(ii)

Thank you for confirming. New Zealand abstained along with Australia and delivered an EOv.

Other abstentions were Canada, all EU member states, Iceland, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Japan, UK, Ukraine, and Oman. Most of the Pacific did not vote, Fiji and Palau abstained. USA, Argentina, and Israel voted against. Full voting record attached for information.

See also reporting in Stuff this morning: [UN calls for reparations to remedy the 'historical wrongs' of trafficking enslaved Africans | Stuff](#)

Ngā mihi,

**Charlotte Hargest-Slade** | United Nations, Human Rights and Commonwealth Division | MFAT

s9(2)(a)

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**From:** s9(2)(g)(ii)  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 25 March 2026 3:27 pm  
**To:** HARGEST-SLADE, Charlotte (UNHC) <[Charlotte.Hargest-Slade@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Charlotte.Hargest-Slade@mfat.govt.nz)>  
**Cc:** [APPLETON, Michael \(Inet\)](#) <[Michael.Appleton@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:Michael.Appleton@parliament.govt.nz)>; s9(2)(g)(ii); [LAURENSEN, Amy \(UNHC\)](#) <[Amy.Laurenson@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Amy.Laurenson@mfat.govt.nz)>; [NAM, Christine \(LGL\)](#) <[Christine.Nam@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Christine.Nam@mfat.govt.nz)>; [MCGILLIVRAY, Michelle \(UNHC\)](#) <[Michelle.McGillivray@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Michelle.McGillivray@mfat.govt.nz)>; [HAWKSWORTH, Allie \(UNHC\)](#) <[Allie.Hawksworth@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Allie.Hawksworth@mfat.govt.nz)>; [VREEBURG, Sophie \(LGL\)](#) <[Sophie.Vreeburg@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Sophie.Vreeburg@mfat.govt.nz)>; [ADDIS, Megan \(UNHC\)](#) <[Megan.Addis@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Megan.Addis@mfat.govt.nz)>; [ZOHHRAB, Stuart \(ESD\)](#) <[Stuart.Zohrab@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Stuart.Zohrab@mfat.govt.nz)>  
**Subject:** RE: New Zealand's approach to the UN General Assembly resolution concerning transatlantic slavery - occurring overnight in NYK (Wed 25 March) [SEC=RESTRICTED]

Kia ora Charlotte,

Thank you for laying out this advice.

Confirming comfort with MFAT's proposed approach to 'abstain' with an EOv. s6(a)

Best regards,  
s9(2)(g)(ii), s9(2)(a)

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**From:** HARGEST-SLADE, Charlotte (UNHC) <[Charlotte.Hargest-Slade@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Charlotte.Hargest-Slade@mfat.govt.nz)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 25 March 2026 2:11 pm  
**To:** s9(2)(g)(ii)  
**Cc:** [Michael Appleton](#) <[Michael.Appleton@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:Michael.Appleton@parliament.govt.nz)>; [LAURENSEN, Amy \(UNHC\)](#) <[Amy.Laurenson@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Amy.Laurenson@mfat.govt.nz)>;

NAM, Christine (LGL) <[Christine.Nam@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Christine.Nam@mfat.govt.nz)>; MCGILLIVRAY, Michelle (UNHC) <[Michelle.McGillivray@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Michelle.McGillivray@mfat.govt.nz)>; HAWKSWORTH, Allie (UNHC) <[Allie.Hawksworth@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Allie.Hawksworth@mfat.govt.nz)>; VREEBURG, Sophie (LGL) <[Sophie.Vreeburg@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Sophie.Vreeburg@mfat.govt.nz)>; ADDIS, Megan (UNHC) <[Megan.Addis@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Megan.Addis@mfat.govt.nz)>; ZOHRAB, Stuart (ESD) <[Stuart.Zohrab@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:Stuart.Zohrab@mfat.govt.nz)>

**Subject:** New Zealand's approach to the UN General Assembly resolution concerning transatlantic slavery - occurring overnight in NYK (Wed 25 March) [SEC=RESTRICTED]

[RESTRICTED]

RESTRICTED

Kia ora <sup>s9(2)(g)</sup> <sub>(ii)</sub> Michael,

A resolution will be submitted for action in the General Assembly on Wednesday NYK time concerning transatlantic slavery.

We are seeking MFA approval on New Zealand's vote. **We recommend abstaining on the text and delivering an EOJ** (draft attached for reference).  
s6(a)

s9(2)(g)(i)

we do have the option of voting yes and addressing those in an Explanation of Vote.

As context to how this has come up at short notice, we have been burden-sharing with CANZ (Canada lead) as our team in NYK has had to prioritise other work (namely the mandate review process we lead and engagement on the Iran situation). So we have not been in the negotiations. s6(a), s6(b)(i)

#### What does the resolution do?

- The Resolution is largely very acceptable text which we could support on progressing existing norms and work on educational awareness and remembrance, and the prompt and unhindered restitution of cultural properties, and recognition of the scale, duration and ongoing impact of the transatlantic slave trade.
- However it is notable as:
  - the first to call for member states to engage on the issue of reparations for transatlantic slavery (OP8: 'measures of restitution and compensation')
  - declares the transatlantic slave trade as the gravest crime against humanity.
- It also reaffirms the Durban Declaration, particularly its sections on historic slavery (noting New Zealand did not support the final text due to references that were antisemitic, but did endorse the outcomes on slavery as a crime against humanity which was also reflected in the agreed 2024 CHOGM statement)
- It confuses the mandate of the GA in respect of issues (e.g. reparations) which are more appropriately determined in courts/tribunals among affected states.

#### What are our legal concerns?

- Many countries share the same legal concerns we have:
  - s9(2)(g)(i), s9(2)(h)
  - 
  -

#### Why would we vote yes?

- s9(2)(g)(i) to show that we acknowledge the seriousness of the issue for a number of states and that New Zealand supports them in seeking to
- It aligns with New Zealand's support for the concept of restorative justice
- s9(2)(h)

supporting a call for Member states individually  
ce, restitution measures, compensation (its OP8)

- s6(a)
- s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

#### Why would we abstain?

- It would reflect the fact we did not engage in the negotiations directly and are not prepared at this point to go to the step of supporting the call in the General Assembly for reparations for transatlantic slavery, noting that legal avenues are the more appropriate vehicle to progress such issues.
- It would be a deferral on a position rather than a final position. New Zealand will need to take a position on this issue in future decisions and can do so in a slower more considered manner<sup>s6(e)</sup>
- It could be seen by some as 'being on the wrong side of history', inconsistent with New Zealand's support for the concept of restorative justice. <sup>s6(a)</sup>
- s9(2)(g)(i)

#### What are others doing?

- The company picture is not entirely coherent. <sup>s6(b)(i)</sup>

. This is what we know so far:

- **YES:** <sup>s6(b)(i)</sup>
- **ABSTAIN and all** delivering an EOv: <sup>s6(b)(i)</sup>
- **Awaiting confirmation, likely YES:** <sup>s6(b)(i)</sup>
- **Awaiting confirmation, likely ABSTAIN:** <sup>s6(b)(i)</sup>
- **PIF members:** <sup>s6(b)(i)</sup>

<sup>s6(a), s6(b)(i)</sup>

<sup>s6(a)</sup>

its own EOv on this matter.

We therefore recommend New Zealand delivering

#### Other points of context

- New Zealand has joined consensus resolutions endorsing remembrance events and days for transatlantic slavery.
- New Zealand has never voiced any objections to the characterisation of the transatlantic slavery as a crime against humanity <sup>s9(2)(g)(i)</sup>
- New Zealand does not object to parties pursuing reparations though legal means- i.e. using the relevant tribunal or court to determine the issue
- <sup>s6(a)</sup>

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

- **On balance we recommend abstaining on the text and delivering an EOv.** We propose that our EOv be largely supportive support of the objectives of text, express regret that we cannot vote in favour of such an important issue, and encourage progress among affected states on restorative justice through appropriate channels.

**Comment**

- We had wanted to vote in favour and had we had more time to engage and consider the issues carefully, we would have recommended to vote in favour<sup>s6(a)</sup> However, as we did not engage in the negotiations first-hand (due to competing priorities) we are not in a position to provide comprehensive advice in the short time available.
- s6(a)

Ngā mihi,

**Charlotte Hargest-Slade** | United Nations, Human Rights and Commonwealth Division | MFAT

s9(2)(a)

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[UNCLASSIFIED]

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