



Headquarters
New Zealand Defence Force
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Wellington Mail Centre
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New Zealand

OIA-2025-5245

12th February 2025

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]@nzme.co.nz

Dear [REDACTED]

I refer to your email of 4 January 2025 requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA), *all communications to relevant ministers and staff in relation to New Zealand's deployment to the Red Sea. Please also include all documents, including internal documents, around this. In addition, please include advice from the Minister and other Government departments prior to the decision. Please also include information on how many staff are deployed.*

A search of the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) email archive system produced over four thousand results using the terms "Houthi" and "Red Sea". Your request for all communications is therefore declined in accordance with section 18(f) of the OIA as the information you requested cannot be made available without a substantial collation and research effort to remove false positives. As this was an operation involving our international partners, retrieving and reviewing operational communications would also require a substantial research effort given the nature of the information. Consulting you on a possible refinement of your request was considered, however, it is believed this would not change the decision in this instance.

The Cabinet Papers that contain the substantive advice to Ministers on the decision to deploy NZDF personnel are publicly available on the Ministry of Defence website¹. They also contain the number of NZDF personnel deployed. The Minister of Defence's press release² and Ministerial Statement³ are also publicly available. This part of your request is therefore declined in accordance with section 18(d) of the OIA as the information you requested is publicly available.

You have the right, under section 28(3) of the OIA, to ask an Ombudsman to review this response to your request. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

¹ https://defence.govt.nz/publications/doSearch/?Search=houthi&Sort=date_desc#Results

² <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/new-zealand-deploying-nzdf-team-protect-red-sea-shipping>
<https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/nzdf-s-red-sea-deployment-extended>

³ https://www.parliament.nz/en/pb/hansard-debates/rhr/document/HansS_20240130_050880000/collins-judith

Please note that responses to official information requests are proactively released where possible. This response to your request will be published shortly on the NZDF website, with your personal information removed.

Yours sincerely

GA Motley

Brigadier

Chief of Staff HQNZDF