



21 July 2021



Reference: OIA-2020/21-0583

Dear 

Official Information Act request relating to right wing extremism

I refer to your request made under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), received by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) on 11 May 2021. You requested:

"...- Any documents, briefings, reports or analyses produced jointly or individually by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet regarding domestic, far-right, right-wing, white supremacist, alt-right or white nationalist extremism, including associated terror/criminal threats between January 1, 2015 and March 14, 2019. This request excludes emails and other correspondence.

- Any documents, briefings, reports or analyses produced jointly or individually by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet regarding domestic, far-right, right-wing, white supremacist, alt-right or white nationalist extremism, including associated terror/criminal threats on or after March 15, 2019. This request excludes emails and other correspondence.

- Where a document that falls under scope of this request cannot be released, please supply a summary of that document's contents.

- Where any document falls under the scope of this request, please release it in full, including sections which might otherwise be considered out of scope.

- Please release these documents in a staged release. I.e, If some are able to be released by the deadline but others required further consultation, release those that you can..."

I note DPMC last wrote to you on 9 June 2021, providing a link to a response for a similar request published at: <https://dpmc.govt.nz/publications/response-official-information-act-request-oia-202021-0430-request-relating-right-wing>. I note the response published at this link captures information prepared on or after 15 March 2019 to 8 March 2021.

I further note that DPMC's letter to you of 9 June 2021 explained that as information prepared by the National Assessments Bureau (NAB) between timeframes 1 January 2015 – 14 March 2019, and 15 March 2019 – 4 March 2021 had previously been addressed in previous responses to you, information prepared 1 January 2015 – 4 March 2021 has been excluded on the basis this information has already been addressed.

I also understand that the timeframe for responding to the remainder of your request was extended by 30 working days. Following this, I am now in a position to respond further, namely regarding relevant information held by DPMC for timeframe 1 January 2015 – 14 March 2019, and 8 March 2021 – 11 May 2021.

Please find the relevant parts of *Australia-New Zealand National Security Dialogue: Briefing Pack* (12 March 2021) enclosed. Some information has been withheld in this material under the following sections of the Act:

- section 6(a), as the making available of that information would be likely to prejudice the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the Government of New Zealand,
- section 6(b), as the making available of that information would be likely to prejudice the entrusting of information to the Government of New Zealand on a basis of confidence by the Government of any other country or any agency of such a Government or any international organisation, and
- section 9(2)(f)(iv), to maintain the constitutional conventions for the time being which protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials.

Some further items have been identified as in scope. I have decided to withhold these in full under section 6(a) of the Act, as outlined above. One of these items needs to be additionally withheld under section 6(b)(i) of the Act, as the making available of that information would be likely to prejudice the entrusting of information to the Government of New Zealand on a basis of confidence by the Government of any other country or any agency of such a Government.

In making my decision, I have taken the public interest considerations in section 9(1) of the Act into account.

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 DPMC's 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.

Yours sincerely



Tony Lynch
**Deputy Chief Executive
National Security Group**

Opportunities to combat terrorism in the region including the global, and growing, threat posed by the extreme right-wing (XRW).

Note: *XRW is a threat within both Australia and New Zealand, but is not considered to be of significant concern in the wider region where Australia and New Zealand already cooperate closely on counter-terrorism efforts. As such, the focus of the material below is largely on domestically focused XRW CT efforts, regional CT cooperation in South East Asia, and cooperation through the ANZCTC.*

Talking points

New Zealand's domestic response to terrorism (NZ Police)

- New Zealand Police is the lead agency for responding to a terrorism or violent extremism event that is underway or an imminent threat. It also collects intelligence on and investigates potential terrorist or violent extremist threats, and undertakes prosecutions or other interventions. Police work in partnership with communities, business and other public sector agencies, Australian counterparts, Five Eyes and other international partners to detect and prevent potential national security threats.
- Police has worked over several years with other agencies on amendments to the Terrorism Suppression Act and Terrorism Suppression Control Orders Act. Police are establishing a programme "Te Raranga, The Weave", to make improvements in identification, recording and management of hate crime, to deliver a service that is more responsive to victims. Police is also undertaking an internal awareness programme to assist frontline to recognise symbology and imagery associated with XRW ideologies.
- A Police-led Multi-agency Coordination and Intervention Programme (MACIP) coordinates multi-agency wrap-around support for individuals who show early signs of harmful behaviour or radicalisation, regardless of any ideological, political or religious motivation. MACIP's purpose is to disengage individuals displaying concerning behaviour and direct their behaviour away from terrorism, violent extremism, and violent acts of hate.

New Zealand's domestic response to terrorism (NZSIS)

- NZSIS has been working on a communications approach to provide regular public updates on New Zealand's terrorism threat environment, including the threat level. This is in line with the Royal Commission of Inquiry's report which emphasised the importance of raising public awareness about national security. The reference to the threat level on the NZSIS website will be updated to show it has been reviewed recently, and the threat review will be referenced in the Director General of Security's speech to the Intelligence and Security Committee later this month.
- NZSIS has been working to proactively identify unknown terrorism threats to New Zealand. We are using indicators of terrorist behaviour to detect previously unknown threats and new intelligence in relation to known threats. We have focussed on collaborating with other government agencies and international partners to further this work.

- NZSIS has been working with other agencies on a range of initiatives to combat terrorism, such as the:
 - amendments to the Terrorism Suppression Control Orders and Terrorism Suppression Act, including a range of new terrorism offences;
 - Public Information Action Plan (published on DPMC's website); and
 - Protecting Our Crowded Places from Attack strategy and guidelines (led by New Zealand Police).
- The upcoming review of the Intelligence and Security Act will also look at the effect of certain provisions on our counter-terrorism efforts.
- GCSB and NZSIS received some funding through Budgets 2019 and 2020 which was used for counter-terrorism initiatives. ^{6(a)}
^{9(2)(f)(iv)} [REDACTED]
- Discovery is NZSIS's first strategic priority. It is about increasing our access to information, including the provision of data related to terrorism, through engagement with communities, the wider public and other government agencies.

Terrorism in South East Asia

- Terrorism in South East Asia continues to evolve and poses an ongoing threat in the region, including to Australian and New Zealand interests. New Zealand seeks to reduce the risk of South East Asia becoming a target for or source of terrorism by helping invigorate mechanisms that promote coherence and coordination of CT practice and policy across the region.
- Drivers of terrorist activity include the spread of global extremist ideology (especially through social media) and social and religious tensions within South East Asian states. A number of groups operating in the region maintain connections well beyond South East Asia, including to the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS).

6(a), 6(b)

[REDACTED]

New Zealand's contribution to global efforts against ISIL

- New Zealand, ^{6(a)} [REDACTED] works closely with the United States and the United Kingdom in support of the defeat-ISIL campaign. ^{6(a), 6(b)} [REDACTED]

6(a), 6(b)

- This activity underwrites New Zealand's contribution to the international effort in relation to countering terrorism.

6(a), 9(2)(f)(iv)

Background

Australia-New Zealand Counter-Terrorism Committee ANZCTC

1. New Zealand has been a member of the Australia-New Zealand Counter-Terrorism Committee (ANZCTC) since September 2012, alongside Australian Commonwealth, State and Territory governments. Previously New Zealand had observer status on Australia's National Counter-Terrorism Committee (NCTC).
2. The purpose of the ANZCTC is to contribute to the security of both countries:
 - Through the coordination of a cooperative framework to counter terrorism and its consequences;
 - By enhancing the existing relationship between Australia and New Zealand specifically in relation to counter-terrorism.
3. The ANZCTC is based on strong trans-Tasman cooperation and it has established capabilities in areas such as crisis management, command and control, intelligence and investigation, and media cooperation. New Zealand agencies, most notably NZ Police, benefit from access to a significant amount of counter-terrorism joint training with Australian counterparts, facilitated via the ANZCTC. New Zealand has access to, but is not bound by, strategies, policies and Ministerial advice developed by the ANZCTC for the Commonwealth of Australia, States and Territories.
4. New Zealand participation in the ANZCTC is led by DPMC, with senior representation from the NZ Police and NZSIS. The DPMC Strategic Coordinator is currently co-chair of the ANZCTC for 2020/21, together with Australia's Commonwealth Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, who is the standing co-chair.

6(a), 6(b)

6(a), 6(b)

New Zealand's terrorism threat environment

8. In New Zealand, CTAG assesses white identity extremism (a subset of right-wing extremism) is also likely to increase in over the coming 12 months, with the Christchurch attacks continuing to influence violent extremism locally as well as globally. 6(a)
6(a) international politics and events 6(a) continue to shape the New Zealand terrorism threat environment.
9. New Zealand's terrorism threat level remains at "Medium" meaning a terrorist attack is assessed as feasible and could well occur. There has been no significant change to our threat environment over the past year.
10. Individuals inspired by either Identity-Motivated Violent Extremism or Faith-Motivated Violent Extremism currently represent the most likely terrorist threat to New Zealand. In the second half of 2020, approximately 40 percent of NZSIS counter- terrorism investigations focussed on individuals whose primary ideology was identity-motivated, and approximately 60 percent on individuals whose primarily ideology was faith-motivated.
11. The most likely terrorism scenario in New Zealand is an attack carried out by a lone actor, adhering to any ideology, using readily available weapons, and with little or no warning.
12. We are seeing the broad range of extremist ideologies in New Zealand becoming increasingly diverse. New subsets are emerging and individuals are increasingly identifying with multiple ideologies and views.
13. The terrorist attack on Christchurch mosques continues to influence the nature of violent extremism in New Zealand. Propaganda and material relating to the attacks are still being shared online and have the potential to inspire or influence violence in other individuals (*also see following section*).

14. It is possible COVID-19 will influence extremist ideologies in New Zealand and increase the rate of radicalisation in a small number of New Zealanders with extremist ideologies.
15. A small number of Identity-Motivated Violent Extremists have access to firearms. While the firearms law reform has affected the supply and lethality of legal weapons, it has not significantly impacted the ability to access firearms, either legally or illegally. Some known Identity-Motivated Violent Extremists have recently applied for firearms licences and others may have access to firearms through family, friends or associates.
16. We are concerned about the potential threat posed by individuals with a violent extremist ideology serving in, or being trained by, security forces. We are aware of a small number of Identity-Motivated Violent Extremist persons of interest who have received military training, including firearms training, within the New Zealand Defence Force.
17. We are also concerned about the online environment supporting and driving violent extremist narratives, including the increasing use of encryption and fast pace of technological change.

Released under the Official Information Act 1982