



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2012-02774

Keyword: Organisational Information/Governance

Subject: Terrorist/Conflict Related Incidents

Request and Answer:

Question 1

Firstly, I wish to gain information on the number of officers who had to leave their employment as a consequence of a terrorist/conflict related incident during the Troubles. I also wish to gain information on the nature of some of the serious injuries that officers sustained and which impacted upon their operational ability. The timeframe required is 1969 to 1998.

Question 2

Secondly, I wish to gain information/statistics with regards to the number of extradition warrants the RUC issued vis-à-vis the USA and the Republic of Ireland during the Northern Ireland conflict and concerning people lawfully convicted in Northern Ireland but who may have escaped to the USA or the Republic from prison breaks or breaching bail conditions. I would also need information regarding the outcome of these warrants. The timeframe required is 1969 to 1998.

Answer

Section 17(5) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires the Police Service of Northern Ireland, when refusing to provide such information (because the cost of compliance exceeds the appropriate limit) to provide you the applicant with a notice which states that fact.

It is estimated that the cost of complying with your request for information would exceed the "appropriate costs limit" under Section 12(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, which is currently set by the Secretary of State at £450 (18 hours).

The information you have requested in question 1 with regards the serious injuries sustained by Police Officers which impacted on their operational ability is held (for the years post 1985 only) within 183 files which would require to be individually searched. Allowing 15 minutes per file would equate to 45.75 hours retrieval time for this part of your request alone.

In addition to this, the information requested in question 2 is not held in a readily retrievable electronic format and would require a manual examination of hundreds of hard copy Historic Extradition Files on a case by case basis. This task has also been estimated to take well in excess of the 18 hour cost threshold.

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, this letter should be considered as a Refusal Notice, and the request has therefore been closed.

You may wish to submit a refined request in order that the cost of complying with your request may be facilitated within the 'appropriate limit'. In compliance with Section 16 of the Act, I have considered how your request may be refined to bring it under the appropriate limit.

In relation to question 1 I can advise that, subject to any exemptions that may apply, it may be possible to provide the number of officers who died as a consequence of terrorist related incidents both on and off duty between 1985 and 1998 and also the number of officers who had to take medical retirement as a consequence of terrorist incidents both on and off duty between 1985 and 1998. This information may or may not include all relevant personnel or their leaving reason.

For question 2, PSNI are in a position to provide, subject to any applicable exemptions, information on the number of extradition requests per year to the Republic of Ireland during the requested period. Specific detail of each case, e.g, escapee, lawfully convicted in Northern Ireland or the outcome in each particular case would not be possible within the 18 hour limit.

Submission of a refined request would be treated as a new request, and considered in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, including consideration of relevant Part II exemptions.

If you have any queries regarding your request or this decision please do not hesitate to contact me on 028 9070 0164. When contacting the Freedom of Information Team, please quote the reference number listed at the beginning of this letter.

If you are dissatisfied in any way with the handling of your request, you have the right to request a review. You should do this as soon as possible, or in any case within two months of the date of issue of this letter. In the event that you require a review to be undertaken, you can do so by writing to the Head of Freedom of Information, PSNI Headquarters, 65 Knock Road, Belfast, BT5 6LE or by emailing foi@psni.pnn.police.uk.

If following an internal review, carried out by an independent decision maker, you were to remain dissatisfied in any way with the handling of the request you may make a complaint, under Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act, to the Information Commissioner's Office and ask that they investigate whether the PSNI has complied with the terms of the Freedom of Information Act. You can write to the Information Commissioner at Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. In most circumstances the Information Commissioner will not investigate a complaint unless an internal review procedure has been carried out, however the Commissioner has the option to investigate the matter at his discretion.

Please be advised that PSNI replies under Freedom of Information may be released into the public domain via our website @ www.psni.police.uk

Personal details in respect of your request have, where applicable, been removed to protect confidentiality.