



TOTAL POLICING

Freedom of Information Request Reference No:

I note you seek access to the following information:

- The total financial cost of the police surveillance and guard outside the Ecuadorian embassy since Julian Assange entered the building in June 2012.
- A description of any changes in procedure that took place between then and today, other than the widely publicised ending of 24-hour surveillance in October 2015.
- The estimated daily budget of the reduced resourcing which will commence now that the European Arrest Warrant has been lifted.

DECISION

I have today decided to disclose information relating to the first part of your query. With regards to the second and third part of your request, this information has been withheld as it is exempt from disclosure and therefore this response serves as a Refusal Notice under Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act).

REASONS FOR DECISION

Disclosure would identify our operational tactics and capabilities and provide those whose intention it is to cause harm with valuable intelligence on how the police operate which would could compromise our law enforcement functions by hindering our ability to detect crime and apprehend an offender. In addition, disclosure would have an adverse effect on national security and render security measures less effective. As such sections 31(1)(a)(b) and 24(1) of the Act are engaged.

Section 24 - National Security **Section 31 - Law Enforcement**

The security of the country is of paramount importance and the Police Service will not divulge information if to do so would place the safety of the public at risk, undermine National Security or law enforcement. Whilst there is a public interest in the transparency of policing, and in this case providing assurance that the police service is appropriately and effectively engaging with the threat posed by criminal activity, there is a very strong public interest in safeguarding the integrity of police operations in the

highly sensitive area of crime and terrorism prevention.

As much as there is a public interest in knowing that policing activity is appropriate and balanced this will only be overridden in exceptional circumstances. Any disclosure of information which identifies the MPS's operational techniques used such as the modus operandi employed, which includes the deployment of resources as well as budgetary costs would prejudice our ability to conduct similar operations. This is sensitive information of intelligence value to a criminal or terrorist. Therefore, it is our opinion that for this reason the balancing test favours non-disclosure of the requested information.

DISCLOSURE

In relation to the first part of your request for the total financial cost to guard the Embassy since Julian Assange entered the building, in June 2016 the MPS issued the following press statement:

The estimated cost of policing the Ecuadorian Embassy between June 2012 and October 2015 is £13.2m, of which £7.2m is opportunity costs (police officer pay costs that would be incurred in normal duties) and £3.8m additional costs (estimated additional police overtime as a direct result of the deployments at the Ecuadorian Embassy). Indirect costs (e.g. covering support departments and administration overheads) amounted to £2.2m.

The costs provided are an estimate based on averages, as actual salary and overtime costs will vary daily.

The MPS withdrew the physical presence of officers from outside the Embassy on 12 October 2015.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your interest in the Metropolitan Police Service.

Information Rights Unit