

# Office of the Prime Minister

## Prime Minister

Minister for National Security and Intelligence

Minister for Child Poverty Reduction

Minister Responsible for Ministerial Services

Associate Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage



Sebastian

By email: [fyi-request-15333-8cc8f804@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-15333-8cc8f804@requests.fyi.org.nz)

Ref: NSI OIA 2021-003

Dear Sebastian

### Official Information Act request relating to meetings with listed officials

I refer to your Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) request received on 3 May 2021. You requested:

*“...the number of meetings the Prime Minister held with each of following officials, per month from January 2018 to June 2019:*

- 1) Deputy Chief Executive – National Security Group, DPMC (including under the previous title Deputy Chief Executive - Security and Intelligence)*
- 2) Specialist Coordinator for Counter-Terrorism, DPMC*
- 3) Director, National Assessments Bureau*
- 4) Manager, Combined Threat Assessment Group...”*

I note the time frame for responding to your request was extended under section 15A of the Act by 20 working days to allow for further consultation to be undertaken before a decision could be made on your request. Following this extension, I am now in a position to respond.

Please note that although every endeavour was made to provide an accurate record of the number of meetings as requested, the Prime Minister's calendar and matters in the security space are subject to change. In addition, to answer your request, it was necessary to collate the information manually from records held by this Office together with lists compiled by the relevant agencies from their own records and the memories of officials involved. It is possible that a meeting may have been missed, or meetings included that ultimately did not take place.

The Prime Minister attends regular National Security Briefings with appropriate officials, which can include some of those you specified in your request from the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC), and Combined Threat Assessment Group (CTAG). Other attendees at such meetings can include, but are not limited to, the Chief Executive of DPMC, the Director-General of the Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB), and the Director-General of the New Zealand Security Intelligence Service (NZSIS), as required. On occasion, the Prime Minister may meet with representatives from NZSIS and GCSB without the officials you listed being present.

Meetings known to have been scheduled with security officials, including National Security Briefings, are outlined below. Invited attendees at these meetings were typically not recorded until early March 2019, however it is probable that the Deputy Chief Executive, National Security Group (NSG, formally known as Deputy Chief Executive, Security and Intelligence Group) at DPMC, and frequently the Director, National Assessments Bureau (NAB) at DPMC were invited to the briefings between January 2018 and March 2019. I can confirm that both the Deputy Chief Executive NSG and Director NAB were invited to National Security Briefings between March 2019 and June 2019. Please note that it is possible the Deputy Chief Executive NSG and Director NAB may have been unable to attend meetings on occasion and sent representatives acting on their behalf.

Attendance by other officials, including the Counter-Terrorism Strategic Coordinator and CTAG Manager, would have been agreed on the basis of specific agenda items. Both would have attended to speak to items within their areas as needed, although items relating to Counter-Terrorism were also spoken to by other relevant officials. It is unclear which meetings the then-Counter-Terrorism Coordinator attended. It appears that a Manager from CTAG was only required to attend one meeting during this timeframe, in May 2018.

<b>Month</b>	<b>Meetings per month</b>
January 2018	2
February 2018	4
March 2018	3
April 2018	3
May 2018	4
June 2018	0
July 2018	0
August 2018	2
September 2018	2
October 2018	3
November 2018	0
December 2018	2
January 2019	0
February 2019	1
March 2019	3
April 2019	1
May 2019	2
June 2019	2

In considering the above information, it is conceivable that the officials you specified may have attended meetings and events also attended by the Prime Minister that were not planned as such. Similarly, meetings of the Cabinet External Relations and Security Committee have not been perceived as in scope of your request.

National Security Briefings are one way in which the Prime Minister engages with security matters. The Prime Minister also holds phone conversations regarding security matters, which may have included the officials listed in your request during that timeframe.

In addition to verbal updates, in her roles as the Prime Minister and the Minister for National Security and Intelligence, Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern also receives regular written advice regarding security matters.

You have the right to ask the Ombudsman to investigate and review my decision under section 28(3) of the Act.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Raj Nahna', with a large, stylized flourish extending from the end of the signature.

Raj Nahna  
**Chief of Staff**