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OIA-2024-4945

15 April 2024

Steven Derrick
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Dear Steven Derrick

I refer to your email of 3 March 2024 requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA), the following:

As at 1 March 24 how many members of the NZDF do not have security clearances.

Please break these down into two main groups. Those who have had theirs expire and those who have theirs revoked.

Please report these two main groups into subgroups showing time since they have last had a security clearance as:

0-3 months

3-6 months

6-9 months

9-12 months

12 months and above

The number of personnel in the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF), and their associated National Security Clearances (NSC), fluctuates on a daily basis as new military personnel and civilian staff are enlisted or employed respectively, and others are released from the organisation.

Information on the government's Protective Security Requirements are publicly available at <https://protectivesecurity.govt.nz>.

In accordance with Defence Force Instruction (DFI) 20.5 Personnel Security, a NSC is granted to NZDF personnel and staff following a favourable vetting assessment and recommendation provided by the New Zealand Security and Intelligence Service. As at 1 March 2024, 404 individuals in the NZDF did not hold a current NSC. Of this number:

- 316 were newly enlisted or employed by the NZDF, either as Regular Force personnel or civilian staff. The employment of these individuals is conditional upon them successfully gaining a NSC.
- 24 were re-enlistments into the Regular Force. These individuals may have held a NSC during their previous period of service, but were required to initiate a new security clearance at the time of re-enlistment.

- 63 individuals had time-expired NSCs.
- 1 individual had a suspended (or revoked) NSC.

Of the 63 individuals (or 0.5% of the total number of Regular Force personnel and civilian staff as at 1 March 2024) with time-expired NSCs:

- 46 applications for a NSC renewal were underway.
- 4 NSCs had expired whilst personnel and staff were awaiting release from the NZDF. These individuals had not applied to renew their NSC.
- 13 individuals were yet to submit their application for a renewal.

The breakdown of time elapsed since either the expiry or suspension of NSCs is detailed in the table below.

Months since NSC expiry	NSC Expired	NSC Revoked
0-3 months	27	0
3-6 months	16	0
6-9 months	8	0
9-12 months	0	0
12+ months	12	1
Total	63	1

As per DFI 20.5, decisions regarding access to NZDF information, assets, or Defence Areas are based on the 'need-to-know', 'need-to-share' and 'need-to-hold' principles. As a result, the NZDF must be satisfied that the person has a legitimate need for access to carry out their duties and that each person holds the requisite NSC. Where a NSC has time-expired, personnel and staff may access up to RESTRICTED-level information on the basis of their New Zealand Police Vetting Report. Access to information classified higher than RESTRICTED-level is not authorised until their NSC has been renewed. The individual who had their NSC suspended is not authorised to access RESTRICTED-level (or higher) information for the duration of the suspension.

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.

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.

Yours sincerely

AJ WOODS

Air Commodore

Chief of Staff HQNZDF