



Headquarters
New Zealand Defence Force
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Wellington Mail Centre
Lower Hutt 5045
New Zealand

OIA-2025-5463

S/Sr.

July 2025

Dear [REDACTED]

I refer to your email of 7 July 2025 requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA), the following information:

I wish to make an OIA request. Putting aside, I suppose, for a moment:

- * Whether NZDF checked the need before going;*
- * Whether personnel were placed at unnecessary risk;*
- * The impact on their families at home;*
- * The recent billions thrown at NZDF;*

I refer the OIA team to:

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/566201/nzdf-hercules-not-needed-to-assist-nzders-stranded-in-iran-and-israel>

People here are barely eating food, and NZDF is doing stuff like this. I understand hindsight is 20/20 but something is wrong here.

Surely with an estimated 20 hour flight time, NZDF could confirm absolute need before flying out and still respond to evacuation timelines?

The core of this OIA request is: How much did this operation cost?

Using an AI tool that holds the aggregate of human knowledge, it estimated \$1.5M at least.

The cost to the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) to assist the civil power to evacuate persons from high-risk environments forms part of its operational budget under Output 3 – Air Force Capabilities Prepared for Joint Operations and Other Tasks. No additional funding is required for these missions as they are expected to be absorbed within already funded operational baselines. Further information concerning Output 3 is publicly available on the NZDF website¹.

The estimated short term tasking cost for the return flights from Whenuapai to the Middle East is \$287,303. Short term tasking costs include marginal personnel costs, fuel, airport

¹ <https://www.nzdf.mil.nz/assets/Uploads/DocumentLibrary/NZDF-Annual-Report-2024-Web-version.pdf>

charges and other associate costs in relation to the flight. It does not include workshop maintenance costs, personnel salaries, depreciation and capital charge.

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, with your personal information removed.

Yours sincerely

GA Motley

Brigadier

Chief of Staff HQNZDF