

WILTSHIRE POLICE



Via Email



Police Headquarters

London Road
DEVIZES
Wiltshire
SN10 2DN

Date 02/10/2026

Our ref **FOI 2026/ 779**

Reply contact name is: XXXX

Dear XXXX

I write in connection with your request for information, dated 24/08/2026, concerning threat to life warnings.

I am required by the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to handle all requests in a manner that is blind as to the identity and motives of the requestor. Any information released as a response to a request is regarded as being published and therefore in the public domain without caveat.

Following receipt of your request, searches were conducted with the policies and intelligence contacts of Wiltshire Police.

Your request for information has now been considered and it is not possible to meet your requirements in full.

You wrote with [Our response:](#)

For each of the three calendar years 2023, 2024 and 2025:

- 1) The total number of threat-to-life warnings (also known as Osman warnings, TTL warnings or warning notices) issued by your force:
[zero for 2023, 5 for 2024 and 4 for 2025.](#)

- 2) Of that total, the number in which the assessed threat was recorded as originating from, or being carried out on behalf of, a foreign state.

[Please see exemptions:](#)

[NCND S23\(5\), S24\(2\), S27\(4\), S31\(3\), S38\(2\), S40\(5B\)](#)

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3) A breakdown of the figure at Q2 by the state recorded.

Please see exemptions:

NCND S23(5), S24(2), S27(4), S31(3), S38(2), S40(5B)

4) Whether your force operates any flag, marker, qualifier or category on its crime or intelligence recording systems for transnational repression (or an equivalent term, such as foreign state-directed harassment, intimidation or interference against individuals in the UK). If so, please state the term used and the date it was introduced.

Please see exemptions:

S24(1) and S31(1)(a)(b)

5) If such a flag or marker exists, the number of records carrying it in each of the three years above.

Please see exemptions:

to NCND S24(2) and S31(3)

6) A copy of, or link to, any policy, guidance or training material your force holds on transnational repression.

No information held

Section 23 Information supplied by, or relating to bodies dealing with security matters.
Section 24 National Security
Section 27 International Relations
Section 30 Investigations and proceedings conducted by Public Authorities
Section 30 Health and Safety
Section 40 Personal Information

Sections 24, 31 and 38 are prejudice-based, qualified exemptions and both evidence of harm and a public interest test must be carried out.

Sections 23 and 40 are class-based, absolute exemptions so the harm has already been identified in the legislation, and there is no requirement to undertake a public interest test.

Sections 27 and 30 are class-based, qualified exemptions and a public interest test is required.

[Questions 2 and 3]

Harm

Every effort should be made to release information under Freedom of Information. However, to divulge specific information such as intelligence which has resulted in an Osman warning being issued as part of an investigation could potentially compromise the evidence gathering process. Instances where an Osman Warning may have been issued to an individual following a threat made by a foreign government are incredibly sensitive and releasing anything under FOI, including confirming or denying information is held, could add to public speculation and rumour which would jeopardise future trial proceedings and risk the safety of the individual subject to the warning. To confirm or deny any information is held in respect of threats made by a foreign government to a specific individual in the UK would strongly undermine many of the policing actions around investigations, reveal police intelligence, and risk the identification of individuals. Given the nature of the subject matter,

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there is also significant risk of undermining National Security, damaging international relations between the UK and other states.

Confirming information was held would release highly sensitive intelligence regarding the Force's investigative activities in this area. Releasing this information to the world at large would afford those who make such threats awareness of what the police may or may not have intelligence on. It could either lead to the identification of specific cases or in providing this level of information at force level would result in presenting a real risk of identifying the resources available in monitoring those committing offences, compromising on-going operations and investigations, many of which may be covert, and therefore undermining the effective delivery of operational law enforcement by revealing capabilities of Wiltshire Police. Equally denying information was held would highlight that the force were not aware of any such threats being made and thus no individuals were currently subject to an Osman Warning. If it was the case that such threats had been made that the police inadvertently confirmed they did not know about, this would significantly undermine the police's primary role of preventing and detecting crime and apprehending offenders and place those individuals at further risk of harm.

The prevention and detection of crime is the foundation upon which policing is built. The Police Service has a clear responsibility to protect the public, prevent crime and arrest those responsible for crime or those that plan to commit crime. By confirming whether or not any information is held relevant to this request could directly influence the effective delivery of operational law enforcement.

If a foreign government was to become aware that someone had been given a TTL warning as a result of a state threat, then they will become aware that there is intelligence available and this could therefore place that individual at risk. The slightest indication or evidence confirming their suspicions would be enough for them to justify taking unlawful action against those they 'suspect' have provided the police with intelligence. Confirming or denying information is held in respect of such low level detail as Osman warnings issued as a result of state threats by a foreign government could ultimately lead to further threats, intimidation and death. Such harm might not be just to the recipient, but given the source of the threat being identified as a foreign government, would further present a risk to the UK's national security.

Threats to the UK's national security cannot be ignored and it is generally recognised that the international security landscape is increasingly complex and unpredictable. The current UK threat level, based on intelligence, is Severe, which means that a terrorist attack is highly likely, see below link:

[Terrorism and national emergencies: Terrorism threat levels - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/terrorism-threat-levels-remain-severe)

In order to counter this behaviour it is vital that the police have the ability to work collaboratively to obtain intelligence within current legislative frameworks to assist in the investigative process and ensure the successful arrest and prosecution of anyone who commits or plan to commit acts which threaten the safety and security of the UK.

To achieve this goal, it is vitally important that information sharing takes place between police officers and members of the public. This information sharing supports counter measures in the fight to deprive those outside of the UK of the ability to commit crime.

To confirm or deny whether information is held relevant to this case would be extremely useful to those wishing to threaten individuals within the UK from foreign states as it would enable them to identify whether Police techniques are being used to counter their activity. In addition, any disclosure no matter how generic, which may assist a criminal, an organisation or a foreign party including governments in carrying out illegal acts will adversely affect public safety. Information that undermines the operational integrity of police investigations and intelligence gathering will adversely affect public safety and have a negative impact on both national security and law enforcement.

Public Interest Considerations

Section 24(2) National Security

Factors favouring complying with Section 1(1) (a) confirming that information is held

The public are entitled to know how public funds are spent and how resources are distributed within an area of policing. To confirm whether any other information is held in respect of state threats to individuals in the UK which have resulted in an Osman warning being issued would enable the general public to hold Wiltshire Police to account where investigations are concerned, ensuring all such threats are recorded and investigated appropriately. This would enable improved public debate and give further reassurance to the public that the police are using public money wisely to provide protection to the UK public at large.

Factors against complying with Section 1(1) (a) confirming or denying that information is held

Security measures are put in place to protect the community we serve. As evidenced within the harm to confirm information is held would highlight intelligence has been gathered about threats being made specifically by foreign states to a UK national. Taking into account the current security climate within the United Kingdom, no information (such as the citing of an exemption which confirms state threats have been made or conversely, stating no information is held) which may aid criminal activity should be disclosed. To what extent this information may aid others is unknown, but it is clear that it will have an impact on a force's ability to monitor such activity.

Irrespective of what information is or isn't held, the public entrust the Police Service to make appropriate decisions with regard to their safety and protection and the only way of reducing risk is to be cautious with what is placed into the public domain.

The cumulative effect of revealing information from various forces nationally would be even more impactful when linked to other information gathered from external sources. The more information disclosed over time will give a more detailed account of investigative activity and intelligence, not only a force area but also the country as a whole.

Any incident that results from such a disclosure would, by default, affect National Security.

To confirm or deny whether the Force hold information would allow inferences to be made about the nature and extent of national security related activities which may or may not take place in a given area. This could enable group(s) to take steps to avoid detection, and as such, confirmation or denial would be damaging to National Security.

By confirming or denying any policing arrangements of this nature would render national security measures less effective. This would lead to the compromise of ongoing or future operations to protect the security or infra-structure of the UK and increase the risk of harm to the public.

Section 27(4) – International Relations

Factors favouring complying with Section 1(1)(a) confirming that information is held

There is a clear public interest in making appropriate information available to the public. The release of such information would act to reinforce the commitment of the police service to investigate, as an open and transparent organisation, serving to maintain public confidence in the Police service.

Factors against complying with Section 1(1)(a) confirming or denying that information is held

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To confirm whether or not information is held relating to the request is very likely to prejudice relations between the United Kingdom and any other states around the world. Disclosure of the requested information would be very likely to be seen as a breach by the UK of the trust and confidence fundamental to such international relations, which would in turn compromise the ability of the UK to promote and protect its interests abroad whilst also undermining the ability of the UK to effectively engage with nations in order to investigate offences that have been committed abroad.

Section 30(3) Investigations

Factors favouring complying with Section 1(1) (a) confirming that information is held

Confirming or denying whether information exists relevant to state threats made by a foreign government to an individual which has resulted in an Osman warning being issued would lead to a better informed general public identifying that Wiltshire Police robustly investigate offences which may encourage individuals to provide intelligence in order to assist with investigations and reduce crime. This would further promote public trust in providing transparency and demonstrating openness and accountability into where the police are currently focusing their investigations. The public are entitled to know how public funds are spent, particularly in the current economic climate.

The issue of threats to life made against individuals, especially by foreign sources is a highly emotive subject area often attracts high profile media. Confirming or denying that information exists could provide reassurance to the general public.

Factors against complying with Section 1(1) (a) neither confirming nor denying that information exists

Modern-day policing is intelligence led and Wiltshire Police share information with other law enforcement agencies as part of their investigative process. To confirm or not whether specific intelligence is held, some of which may have been as a result of covert investigations would hinder the prevention and detection of crime as well as undermine the partnership approach to investigations and law enforcement.

Should those subject to investigation by Wiltshire Police take evasive action to avoid detection police resources may well be diverted from frontline duties and other areas of policing to locate and apprehend these individuals. In addition, the safety of individuals and victims would be compromised.

Section 31(3) Law Enforcement

Factors favouring complying with Section 1(1) (a) confirming that any other information is held

Confirming that any other information exists relating to Osman warnings resulting from state threats would lead to a better informed public which may encourage individuals to provide intelligence in order to reduce offences.

Factors against complying with Section 1(1) (a) neither confirm nor denying that any other information is held.

Confirmation or denial that information relating to Osman warnings resulting from state threats is held in this case would suggest Wiltshire Police take their responsibility to protect information dismissively and inappropriately.

Wiltshire Police has a duty of care to the community at large and public safety is of paramount importance. If an FOI disclosure revealed information to the world that would undermine the security of the national infrastructure or alert foreign threats to the actions of Keeping Wiltshire Safe

UK police forces' investigative activities, they could use this to their advantage which would compromise public safety and more worryingly encourage further crimes.

By its very nature, information relating to whether or not Osman warnings have been issued as a result of state threats within a specific force area undoubtedly undermines the effective delivery of operational law enforcement. Under FOI there is a requirement to comply with Section 1(1) (a) and confirm what information is held. In some cases it is that confirmation, or not, which could disclose facts harmful to members of the public, police officers, other law enforcement agencies and their employees.

Section 38(2) – Health & Safety

Factors favouring complying with Section 1(1)(a) confirming information is held

Confirmation of whether information is or isn't held would provide reassurance to the general public that information is shared between different agencies who have a duty to protect individuals. This awareness could be used to improve any public consultations/debates in relation to this subject.

Factors against complying with Section 1(1)(a) confirming or denying that information is held

Confirming or denying this information exists could lead to the loss of public confidence in the Force's ability to protect the wellbeing of the community.

Disclosure of this information would not only lead to individuals being targeted and caused physical harm but also other members of the public in the vicinity, or police officers trying to protect people. Also, information that causes speculation has in the past caused innocent people to be targeted following rumour and speculation. Equally providing a confirmation that no such information is held would risk the safety of an individual who may well be a target of a state threat as it would highlight the police are unaware of the threat which has been made. As a result the safety of that individual is placed at greater risk of further threats to their life.

Balance Test

The points above highlight the merits of confirming or denying whether information pertinent to this request exists. The security of the country is of paramount importance and the Police Service is charged with enforcing the law, preventing and detecting crime and protecting the communities we serve. As part of that policing purpose, various policing tactics including covert operations may or may not be used. The Police Service will not divulge whether any information is or is not held if to do so would place the safety of an individual at risk or undermine National Security.

Whilst there is a public interest in the transparency of policing operations and investigations, providing assurance that the Police Service is appropriately and effectively engaging with the threat from criminals, organisations and foreign powers, there is a very strong public interest in safeguarding both National Security and the integrity of policing tactics. As much as there is public interest in knowing that policing activity is appropriate and balanced in matters of National Security, this will only be overridden in exceptional circumstances.

Any disclosure by Wiltshire Police that places the security of the country at risk, no matter how generic, would undermine any trust or confidence individuals have in us. Therefore, at this moment in time, it is our opinion that for these issues the balance test favours neither confirming nor denying that any other information exists.

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No inference can be drawn from this refusal that information is or isn't held.

Question 5]

Harm

Releasing information in respect to any form of threats made by foreign governments against specific individuals would be detrimental to the safety of those individuals and the UK as a whole. To confirm or deny the information is held could increase public speculation against foreign governments and as such could impact the safety of not only of the targeted individuals but could also lead to an increase in crimes against foreign nationals, whether legal or illegal. In addition, it would undermine police investigations, reveal intelligence sources, and risk the identification of individuals, as well as undermine national security. There is also the high risk of damaging international relations, particularly in these complex and sensitive times. Further, to confirm or deny information is held, has the potential to highlight areas where the police were not aware of a threat, or where there is a significant threat, and allow hostile agents with sophisticated tools to 'map' and exploit those areas of weakness, which would jeopardise the primary role of the police in the prevention and detection of crime, and lead to an increased risk of harm to targeted individuals.

In addition, any disclosure, no matter how generic, which may assist a criminal, an organisation or a foreign party including governments in carrying out illegal acts will have an adverse effect. Information that undermines the operational integrity of police investigations and intelligence gathering will adversely affect public safety and have a negative impact on both national security and law enforcement.

Public Interest Considerations:

S24(2) National Security

Factors in favour of disclosure

Disclosing information provides assurance for the public that national security is being addressed, and that their safety is considered of high importance.

Factors in favour of non-disclosure

Whilst there is strong public interest in the work being carried out for the benefit of national security, releasing even low level detail linked to state threats by foreign governments could cause increased threats, intimidation and, potentially, lead to the death of a targeted individual.

S31(3) Law Enforcement

Factors in favour of disclosure

Confirming or denying information exists relating to transnational repression would lead to a better informed public and has the potential to encourage individuals to provide intelligence that would assist policing in the prevention and detection of crime. In addition, it provides assurances and reassurances that there are processes in place to mitigate threats from foreign governments.

Factors in favour of non-disclosure

Interest in policing activities remains strong but if, as a result of confirming or denying information is held, it impacts on their safety and the safety of targeted individuals, the public's confidence in the Police being able to carry out the duties effectively would be damaged.

Balance Test:

Whilst there is a public interest in the Police being able to appropriately and effectively engage with threats from hostile agents, there is a very strong public interest in safeguarding National Security. As much as there is a public interest in knowing that policing activity is Keeping Wiltshire Safe

appropriate and balanced in these areas, the Force considers that the potential prejudice arising from confirmation or denial would outweigh the benefits of increased transparency and, accordingly, the balance of the public interest favours maintaining the neither confirm nor deny position.

No inference can be drawn from this refusal that information is or isn't held.

[Questions 4 & 6]

Harm

Whilst there is no harm in confirming or denying information is held, releasing material that details policing tactics in respect to transnational repression effectively gives hostile agents a 'handbook' of policing methods that will be used to the detriment of targeted individuals and national security. The Police need to retain all information that enables them to carrying out their policing duties and protect the public and the nation at large.

Public Interest Considerations:

S24(1) National Security

Factors in favour of disclosure

Disclosing the information would strengthen accountability to the wider Public, and provide reassurance that there are procedures and methods in place in respect to transnational repression that effectively safeguard national security and individual citizens.

Factors in favour of non-disclosure

Whilst there is an interest from the Public in national security and how threats are managed from outside the UK borders, disclosure would release information into the public domain that provides hostile agents with the tools to access policing systems and effectively handing them easy access to vulnerable individuals. This is a fast moving environment and those involved in securing the UK's safety must be supported by protecting how this work is undertaken.

S31(1)(a)(b) Law Enforcement

Factors in favour of disclosure

Disclosure would promote Public trust in providing transparency and demonstrating openness and accountability into where the police are currently focusing their investigations. The public are entitled to know how public funds are spent, particularly in the current economic climate; and disclosure would show that consideration of the threats from outside the UK borders with the potential to the safety of the UK and its' citizens is of paramount important to policing.

Factors in favour of non-disclosure

Disclosure would provide hostile agents with the methods and tools used by the Police to ensure public safety. The Public understands that some intelligence is part of a wider picture and needs to be withheld to enable investigations to proceed in order to protect citizens and the safety of the UK. Disclosure of information will allow hostile agents to increase their criminal activities. Releasing information that details actions taken and policing tactics used to protect vulnerable individuals (and the wider public) puts everyone, including police personnel, at risk.

Balance Test

The points above highlight the merits of disclosure or non-disclosure. It is of paramount importance that the procedures and tactics used in respect to transnational repression are protected to ensure the security of the UK and its' citizens.

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There is public interest in the transparency of policing operations and investigations, and in providing the Public with assurances the Police Service is appropriately and effectively engaging with the threat from criminals, organisations and foreign powers. However, there is also strong public interest in safeguarding both National Security and the integrity of policing tactics to ensure their safety. As much as there is public interest in knowing that policing activity is appropriate and balanced in matters of law enforcement, this can only be overridden in exceptional circumstances, and any disclosure that challenges the safety of the UK and its' citizens, would undermine the trust and confidence in the Police Force.

Therefore, whilst we can confirm or deny information is held, it is our opinion that for these issues the balance test favours the non-disclosure of any detailed information.

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires Wiltshire Police, when refusing to provide information (because the information is exempt) to provide you the applicant with a notice which: (a) states that fact, (b) specifies the exemption in question and (c) states (if that would not otherwise be apparent) why the exemption applies. In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 this letter acts as a Refusal Notice for those aspects of your request.

Exemption applied:

Section 23 Information supplied by, or relating to bodies dealing with security matters.

Section 24 National Security

Section 27 International Relations

Section 30 Investigations and proceedings conducted by Public Authorities

Section 30 Health and Safety

Section 40 Personal Information

Wiltshire Police would like to thank you for the interest that you have shown in the Force.

Yours sincerely,

Force Disclosure Decision Maker

Wiltshire Police offers a re-examination of your case under its review procedure.



Force Disclosure Unit

Wiltshire Police HQ, London Road, Devizes, Wiltshire SN10 2DN



Freedom of Information Request Appeals Procedure

1. Who Can Ask for a Review

Any person who has requested information from Wiltshire Police, which has been dealt with under the Freedom of Information Act, is entitled to complain and request an internal review, if they are dissatisfied with the response they received.

2. How to Request a Review

Requests for review of a Freedom of Information request must be made in writing to the:

Force Disclosure Unit
Wiltshire Police Headquarters,
London Road, Devizes,
Wiltshire,
SN10 2DN

Email at disclosure@wiltshire.police.uk.

The reference number, date of the request and details of why the review is being requested must be included. Requests for review should be brought to the attention of the Force Disclosure Unit within 20 working days of the Force's response to the original Fol request.

3. Review Procedure

Receipt of a request for review will be acknowledged in writing to include confirmation of the reasons for the review. The review will be conducted by another Decision Maker, who is independent from the original Decision Maker. The Force Disclosure Unit will set a target date for a response. The response will be made as soon as is practicable with the intention to complete the review within twenty working days. In more complex cases the review may take up to 40 working days.

The Independent Decision Maker will conduct a review of the handling of the request for information and of decisions taken, including decisions taken about where the public interest lies in respect of exempt information where applicable. The review enables a re-evaluation of the case, taking into account the matters raised by the complaint.

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4. Conclusion of the Appeal

On completion of the review the Independent Decision Maker will reply to the complainant with the result of the review. If the complainant is still dissatisfied following the review they should contact the Information Commissioner to make an appeal. The Information Commissioner can be contacted via the following details:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF
Tel: 01625 545 700
Fax: 01625 524 510
Email: mail@ico.gsi.gov.uk

Please note that the ICO's offices will be closed for the foreseeable future and are therefore unable to receive correspondence via post.

If you should wish you contact them, please visit <https://ico.org.uk/global/contact-us/>