

**Our ref:** MGLA020215-8074

**Date:** 4 March 2015

Dear [REDACTED]

**Freedom of Information request**

Thank you for your email of 1 February. You asked:

*1) Which organization, individual and/or department funded Mayor Boris Johnson's January 2015 visit to the Kurdistan region of Iraq?*

The Mayor of London visited Erbil in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq from 21-23 January. The visit came in response to a formal invitation from the Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Regional Government and was an excellent opportunity to further strengthen the commercial and business links between the UK and the KRG and promote London as an investment destination in what is a rapidly growing regional economy.

The GLA incurred a cost of £1,500 for security training, but all travel expenses (flights and on the ground transport) were paid for by the Kurdistan Regional Government. The Mayor, Sir Edward Lister, Chief of Staff and Deputy Mayor, Policy and Planning, and Will Walden, Director of Communications and External Affairs, travelled under the FCO's duty of care whilst in country. This included staying in Consulate General accommodation and being looked after by the Consulate General's security team. Both accommodation and security costs for HMG's staff in Erbil are fixed. As the Mayor's visit contributed to the Consulate General's commercial objectives, the FCO covered these costs.

*2) What was the total cost of Mayor Boris Johnson's January 2015 visit to the Kurdistan region of Iraq?*

Further to the above, the GLA did not incur the cost for flights, accommodation and ground transportation.

*3) A complete list of individuals who accompanied Mayor Boris Johnson on his January 2015 visit to the Kurdistan region of Iraq?*

The Mayor was accompanied by:

- Sir Edward Lister (Chief of Staff and Deputy Mayor, Policy and Planning);
- Will Walden (Director of Communications and External Affairs);
- Angus McKee (British Consul General to Kurdistan Region and Northern Iraq); and
- Nadhim Zahawi (MP for Stratford on Avon).

*4) A complete list of individuals and/or groups who Mayor Boris Johnson met with during his January 2015 visit to the Kurdistan region of Iraq.*

The Mayor met the Kurdish Peshmerga forces and their British trainers; met with the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister and other Cabinet Ministers; spoke at a Kurdish and UK business forum entitled "From London to Erbil: the UK's partnership with the Kurdistan Region"; and undertook a tour of Erbil International Airport. The Mayor had a lunch meeting with the Governors of Erbil, Duhok and Sulemani, and the Mayor of Erbil about developing cities and regions; he met with members of the newly formed British business group Kurdistan; visited the Baharka internally-displaced-people's camp (where the UK Department for International Development) is funding health facilities; and took a tour of the citadel hosted by the Governor of Erbil.

*5) All internal correspondence between Mayor Johnson's Office and Westminster regarding Boris Johnson's January 2015 visit to the Kurdistan region of Iraq. Please include letters, emails and any summaries of phone conversations and meetings.*

The GLA has no correspondence between the Mayor's Office and the City of Westminster about the Mayor's visit to the Kurdistan region.

If you have any further questions relating to this matter, please contact me, ensuring that you quote the reference at the top of this letter.

Yours sincerely

**Meena Shah**

Information Governance Officer

If you are unhappy with the way the GLA has handled your request, you may complain using the complaints procedure, available at: <http://www.london.gov.uk/mayor-assembly/gla/governing-organisation/freedom-information>.