

26 November 2024

FOI Ref 17494

**Request - You asked us the following:**

During the 'riots' of 3 August, protestors with English flags started to walk from Hanley, Stoke on-Trent to Cobridge Park as a result of 'false information' of a stabbing. Not once were there mentions of attacking the Kurdish Islamic Center and Masjid Salahuddin. I did not know the name of this place of worship until now and quite surprised by it.

What I would like you to verify as a police force, the instigators of throwing rocks (start of physical violence and seek to harm). Your own officers were getting pelted in the backs and head, by the members outside of the Masjid. The protestors were dodging for their lives and some retaliated by throwing second hand rocks.

I am aware of extensive CCTV, from what I saw from CCTV/Data Gatherer operators was being taken of the protestors getting hit and retaliating. Since then, people from the city have been called all sorts of racist names and have been portrayed as 'Muslim bashers' by Stoke-on-Trent Live.

I think it would be best for you as a police force, to be honest about how the violence broke out. Nothing justifies violence. I believe the members of the Masjid and others with them, sought violence by throwing the rocks from their place of worship, running around the streets with knives and weapons and eventually breaking your police lines and attacking anyone in the protestor group. Simply for the protestors being in their view.

I think it's deeply unfair for people to be referred to in this way and I think it would help the whole community of Stoke on Trent if a clear and simple step by step review of the day was published by the police force.

Honest discussions could then take place to ensure that violence like that doesn't occur again.

We received your request on 21/11/2024 and have processed this under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

Staffordshire Police's response to your enquiry is as follows:

**Staffordshire Police withholds the requested information.**

During the 'riots' of 3 August, protestors with English flags started to walk from Hanley, Stoke on-Trent to Cobridge Park as a result of 'false information' of a stabbing. Not once were there mentions of attacking the Kurdish Islamic Center and Masjid Salahuddin. I did not know the name of this place of worship until now and quite surprised by it.

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**Please note that this investigation is still being investigated. Therefore we are citing Section 30(1)(a)(b) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Investigations conducted by Public Authorities.**

**The following exemptions have been applied:**

In accordance with Section 17(1) of the Freedom of Information Act, this letter represents a refusal notice for this particular request.

- Section 30(1)(a)(b) – Criminal Investigations

Section 30 is qualified and class based and, as such, we are required to apply the public interest test.

**Public Interest Test**

**Factors favouring disclosure under Section 30(1)(a)(b)**

Disclosure of the information would improve the public's knowledge and understanding of the investigatory process and, as all police investigations are publicly funded, would show how public funds are being spent.

**Factors favouring non-disclosure under Section 30(1)(a)(b)**

Disclosure of the requested information would prejudice how investigations are carried out in the future. Staffordshire Police is charged with enforcing the law, preventing and detecting crime and protecting the communities we serve. Any release of information relating to ongoing investigations could prejudice and undermine those investigations. The prevention and detection of such matters could therefore be hindered and therefore risk interference with evidence, which could have detrimental impact on future investigations. In addition, the right to a fair trial could be undermined.

**Balance test**

Disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act is a release of information to the world in general and not an individual applicant. Having considered the public interest factors we are required to determine

whether on balance the factors favouring disclosure outweigh those which are against disclosure. It is our view that the factors favouring disclosure do not outweigh those which favour non-disclosure.

## **Freedom of Information Request Appeals Procedure**

### **1. Who Can Ask for a Review**

Any person who has requested information from Staffordshire 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 within two months of the date of receipt of this email, and should be addressed to:

[foi@staffordshire.police.uk](mailto:foi@staffordshire.police.uk)

Or by Post to:

Central Disclosure Unit  
Staffordshire Police HQ  
PO Box 3167  
Stafford  
ST16 9JZ

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 Central Disclosure Unit within two months of the Force's response to the original FOI request.

### **3. Review Procedure**

Receipt of a request for review will be acknowledged in writing. The review will be conducted by another Decision Maker who is independent from the original Decision Maker. The Central 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 20 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.

### **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:



STAFFORDSHIRE  
**POLICE**

Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF

ICO Website for complaints link: <https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/foi-and-eir-complaints/foi-and-eir-complaints/>

Freedom of Information  
Central Disclosure Unit