



Date: 11/06/2026
Our ref: 01/FOI/26/016734/W

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: 01/FOI/26/016734/W

I write in connection with your request for information dated 12/05/2026, received by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) for the following information:

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, please provide statistical data regarding suspected core international crimes (War Crimes, Crimes Against Humanity, Genocide, and Torture) referred by GMP to the Metropolitan Police's SO15 War Crimes Team between Jan 1, 2021, and Dec 31, 2025.

Please provide:

Total Referrals: The total number of referrals sent to SO15 (inclusive of both public reports and internally generated GMP intelligence).

Annual Breakdown: The total broken down by calendar year.

Offence Breakdown: The total broken down by specific crime category.

Geographical Breakdown: The total broken down by the country/region of the alleged conflict.

Source Breakdown: The total broken down by source (reactive public reports vs. proactive GMP intelligence/operations).

Section 16 Mitigation:

I seek administrative statistics, not operational specifics. If granular data (e.g., naming specific countries in Q4) triggers Section 30, 31, or 40 exemptions due to low numbers, please do not refuse the entire request. Under your Section 16 duty to assist, please fulfill the high-level totals for the other questions and apply statistical aggregation to the sensitive subsets (e.g., grouping them under "Other" or "fewer than 5").

Result of Searches

Greater Manchester Police (GMP) can neither confirm nor deny, that it holds the information you have requested by virtue of the following exemptions:

S23(5) – Information Supplied by or Concerning Certain Security Bodies

S24(2) – National Security

S27(4) – International Relations

S30(3) – Investigations and Proceedings Conducted by Public Authorities

S31(3) – Law Enforcement

Confirming or denying whether information is held at force level about referrals from Metropolitan Police's SO15 War Crimes Team would be likely to cause **real, significant, and foreseeable harm** across several sensitive areas of policing, national security, and international cooperation.

The effective conduct of international relations relies on maintaining trust and confidence between states and international organisations. A loss of such confidence would significantly undermine the UK's ability to protect and promote its interests internationally. In this context, confirming or denying whether the UK holds information about any countries that may have liaised with security bodies regarding alleged core international crimes would be likely to breach that trust. Such a breach would have wider implications for both international relations and national security.

Similarly, confirming or denying at force level whether information is held about alleged criminal activity involving any individuals would be likely to prejudice the prevention and detection of crime, as well as the apprehension and prosecution of offenders. Providing confirmation or denial responses in relation to unconfirmed allegations would allow the public to build a picture of who may have been subject to allegations or arrests. This would undermine policing functions, deter victims and witnesses from coming forward, and create a mosaic effect that reveals where investigations have taken place or where potential offending may have gone unreported.

Public Interest Considerations:

Factors favouring confirmation or denial information is held - s24 National Security:

We appreciate the importance of the public being informed on how public money is being spent and how public authorities conduct their activities and generate their income. Confirming whether any information regarding policing both to other international states and vice versa is held would increase public confidence and allow for better informed public debate.

Factors favouring not confirming or denying information is held - s24 National Security:

To confirm or deny whether any other information is held risks prejudicing national security. Core international crimes frequently involve organised criminality operating across borders, often engaging with networks whose activities intersect with national security interests. Any confirmation or denial of whether GMP holds information relating to SO14 referrals could indicate where UK policing or intelligence partners are (or are not) active in monitoring specific groups or individuals, reveal patterns that could be exploited by criminals to avoid scrutiny or adapt their methods and undermine the consistent NCND position required to prevent

offenders identifying capability gaps through “mosaic” analysis. This would compromise the effectiveness of security arrangements designed to protect vulnerable individuals from exploitation and prevent the UK from becoming a location exploited by transnational criminal networks.

It is not in the public interest to compromise ongoing or future operations which protect the security or infrastructure of the UK by undermining the need to use the NCND approach to such requests consistently.

Factors favouring confirmation or denial information is held - s27 International Relations:

There is a clear public interest in making appropriate information available to the public. Confirmation or denial information is held would act to reinforce the commitment of GMP as an open and transparent organisation, serving to maintain public confidence in the force and the wider policing service as a whole. Moreover, use of public money, as well as the income generated by public bodies is also a matter of strong public interest.

Factors favouring not confirming or denying information is held - s27 International Relations:

Confirming or denying information is held in this case is very likely to compromise the ability of the UK to promote and protect its interests abroad whilst also undermining the UK’s ability to form new and mutually beneficial relationships with other states. The damage that confirmation or denial is likely to cause to the UK’s international relations in this case cannot be said to be in the public interest. The UK depends on constructive, confidential bilateral and multilateral relationships to investigate and disrupt international exploitation. Any erosion of that trust would have wider and lasting implications beyond a single case or request.

Factors favouring Confirming or Denying for Section 30

Confirming or denying information is held would improve the public’s confidence in the work of the police to apprehend offenders and reassure them that procedures to tackle crime were robust and effective.

Factors against Confirming or Denying for Section 30

Confirming or denying whether the requested information is held could reveal whether specific investigations have taken place, which may prejudice current or future investigations. Such confirmation could provide individuals or organised groups with intelligence about enforcement priorities or investigative focus, enabling them to adapt their behaviour to avoid detection.

Factors favouring confirmation or denial information is held - s31 Law Enforcement:

This FOIA request relates to the involvement of GMP in multi-agency, cross-border operations concerning organised criminality core international crime, and there is likely to be a public interest into what specific involvement each agency had within such an investigation. Therefore, this in itself favours confirming whether the information is held.

Factors favouring not confirming or denying information is held s31 - Law Enforcement:

There is an inherently strong public interest in public authorities carrying out investigations to prevent and detect crime. GMP need to be allowed to investigate crime effectively and ensure that offenders are brought to justice. To confirm or deny that the requested information is held could compromise law enforcement tactics in the area of core international crime, which would hinder the UK Police service's ability to prevent and detect criminality in this area. By confirming GMP's involvement in an investigation or alternatively stating that they had no involvement in any such cases, would give vital information to criminals regarding areas of more or less policing activity. Those with intent could take steps to avoid detection if they are aware of force areas that do not take part in such operations. The ability of the UK police service to effectively investigate organised crime would be severely compromised. Given the niche nature of core international crime, even a nil response could be operationally damaging. A zero today followed by "one" in future would signal a new case has emerged, alerting offenders and undermining intelligence-led policing.

Balance Test:

The Police Service is responsible for enforcing the law, preventing and detecting crime, and protecting the communities we serve. The security of the country is paramount, and therefore GMP Police will not confirm or deny whether information is held if doing so could endanger individuals, compromise law enforcement, or undermine national security.

While transparency and public reassurance about policing activity are important, there is a stronger public interest in safeguarding national security and protecting the integrity of sensitive investigations and operations.

For these reasons, the public interest favours neither confirming nor denying the existence of the requested information. This response should not be taken as indicating whether such information does or does not exist.