

8 September 2009

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST

Thank you for your e-mail of 7 August to the Information Rights Team in which you requested information about the costs associated with the repatriation of Samantha Orobator under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) holds information relevant to your request. I will respond to each of your points in turn.

1. "Did Ms Orobator fly economy class to the UK?"

Ms Orobator flew economy class on the Vientiane to Bangkok and the Bangkok to London legs of her flight.

2. "What was the total cost to the British tax payer of this transfer? Please give a breakdown of this figure to include:

(2a) "Official and contracted hours worked"

Our Consular Assistance Group does not record the number of hours worked on individual cases. We do not, therefore, have record of the number of hours that consular staff spent working on this case. Consular staff overseas work the same contracted hours as all FCO staff (41 hours per week). Out of office hours, assistance is provided by a duty officer in some Posts, or by the FCO's Global Response Centre, which is staffed 24-hours a day.

(2b) "Cost of transfer from Prison to the airport?"

Ms Orobator's transfer was carried out by the Laotian authorities at their expense. We do not hold information on how much they spent on Ms Orobator's transfer to the airport.

With regards to the remaining questions (2c, 2d and 2e) you asked for;

(2c) "Cost of food supplied to Ms Orobator and escorts?"

(2d) "Cost of flight to the UK for Ms Orobator and all escorts?"

(2e) "Cost of escorts for the trip to/from UK?"

I can confirm The FCO does not hold information on the above points. The Ministry of Justice lead on the issue of prisoner transfers, so you may wish to contact them. Requests for information can be made via their Data Access and Compliance Unit (Data.Access@justice.gsi.gov.uk). Further information is available on their website (<http://www.justice.gov.uk/requestinginformation.htm>).

(2f) "Cost of clothing and baggage supplied to Ms Orobator?"

Ms Orobator used her own clothes for the flight from Vientiane. The baggage that she flew home with was hold loaded and part of the cost of her flight ticket.