

Reference: 02188318

Information Requests
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12 June 2026

Freedom of Information request: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information concerning bias complaints.

We received your request on 20 April 2026. We sought clarification of your request on 14 May 2026 and this was received the same day. We have considered your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the 'FOI Act').

Your request & our response

I am requesting data on audience complaints received by Ofcom relating to UK broadcast coverage of the Israel–Lebanon conflict from October 2023 to April 2026.

Specifically, I request:

Total number of complaints referencing Lebanon, Hezbollah, or Israeli military action

Breakdown by broadcaster (BBC, Sky News, ITV, Channel 4 etc.)

Categorisation of complaint themes (e.g. bias, terminology, balance, accuracy)

If possible, I would also request examples of complaint wording (anonymised).

Clarified as:

Please only focus on the Lebanon conflict, not Gaza.

By way of background, complaints about broadcast standards are carefully assessed under the [Ofcom Broadcasting Code](#) ("the Code") which sets standards for programme content that all Ofcom licensees must follow. Individual complaints received by Ofcom are assigned to cases, and a case is opened when Ofcom is assessing a specific programme or issue and each case may consist of one or more complaints. In line with our published [complaints procedures](#), we review every complaint we receive to consider whether it raises potentially substantive issues under the Code which warrant investigation by Ofcom. If we consider that these standards may have been breached, we will investigate. You can find decisions about complaints we have considered in [Ofcom's Broadcast and On Demand Bulletin](#), published every fortnight on our website. For complaints about the BBC Ofcom can normally only consider complaints about BBC programmes where the complainant has already complained to the BBC, and the BBC has reached its final decision.

We have searched our data management system for any complaints that reference "Lebanon" in the complaint text, which identified 181 complaints related to 69 cases – we have provided a summary in excel format. Please note that these figures may not be comprehensive as complainants may have mentioned the Lebanon conflict in other terms that will not have been picked up by this search and

which would require a manual search of all complaints - this would take us over the permitted 18 hours for an FOI request.

The figures above are from complaints received by Ofcom only. We do not receive or have access to any complaint data that broadcasters may have received directly.

We are unable to disclose the text of the complaints as this information is exempt under section 44(1) of the FOI Act. Section 44(1) of the FOI Act provides that information is exempt from disclosure if its disclosure is prohibited by or under any enactment. The enactment that prohibits the disclosure of this information is section 393(1) of the Communications Act 2003 ("the Communications Act"). Under this section, we are prohibited from disclosing information with respect to a particular business that has been obtained in the exercise of our regulatory functions, unless that business consents or one of the statutory gateways under section 393(2) of the Communications Act is met, neither of which apply here. Section 44 of the FOI Act is an absolute exemption and therefore is not subject to the public interest test.

Yours sincerely,

Information Requests

Request an internal review

If you are unhappy with the response you have received to your request for information, or think that your request was refused without a reason valid under the law, you may ask for an internal review. If you do, it will be subject to an independent review within Ofcom. We will either uphold the original decision, or reverse or modify it.

If you would like to ask us to carry out an internal review, you should get in touch within two months of the date of this letter. There is no statutory deadline for us to complete our internal review, and the time it takes will depend on the complexity of the request. But we will try to complete the review within 20 working days (or no more than 40 working days in exceptional cases) and keep you informed of our progress. Please email the Information Requests team (information.requests@ofcom.org.uk) to request an internal review.

Taking it further

If you are unhappy with the outcome of our internal review, then you have the right to [complain to the Information Commissioner's Office](#).