



In the Pakistan Information Commission, Islamabad

Appeal No 1932-05/22

Muhammad Iqbal Khan

(Appellant)

Vs.

Ministry of Information and Broadcasting

(Respondent)

ORDER

Date: November 02, 2022

Mohammad Azam: Chief Information Commissioner

A. The Appeal

1. This commission has received an appeal from Mr. Iqbal Khan dated May 20, 2022, through email, stating that he submitted an information request dated April 13, 2022 under the Right of Access to Information Act 2017 to the Secretary, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. The Respondent public body has not responded to his information request as required under section 13 of the Right of Access to Information Act, 2017. Therefore, the appellant has filed his appeal to the Commission.
2. The information sought by the Appellant is as under:
 - “What was the policy of former Prime Minister Imran Khan on relationship with national media?
 - What was the policy of former Prime Minister Imran Khan on granting media houses’ request for one-on-one interview?
 - During his premiership, how many interviews former Prime Minister Imran Khan gave to national newspapers, television channels and M radio stations?
 - During his premiership, how many interviews former prime minister Imran Khan gave to international newspapers, television channels and radio stations?
 - How many requests for interview with former Prime Minister Imran Khan were not granted? What was the reason?
 - How many press conferences the former prime minister, Imran Khan, held during his premiership inside Pakistan?
 - How many press conferences the former Prime Minister Imran Khan, held during his premiership outside Pakistan?

- *How many times the former prime minister invited Pakistan journalists to prime minister's House or his Bani Gala residence for formal briefings?*
- *How many times the former prime minister invited journalists to Prime Minister House or his Bani Gals residence or elsewhere in Pakistan for informal briefings?*
- *How many budgets were spent on media advertisement during the government of former Prime Minister Imran Khan?"*

B. Proceedings

3. Through a notice dated May 31, 2022, sent to Deputy Secretary (Coord), Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, the Commission stated that "Under Section 14 of the Right of Access to Information Act 2017, each federal public body is bound to respond to a request as soon as possible and in any case within ten working days of receipt of the request. You are directed to provide reasons in writing within 7 working days of the receipt of this notice as to why the requested information has not been provided to the applicant, (copy of the information request and appeal thereon enclosed)".
4. The Respondent through a letter vide No. NCAC/Admn/2022-59 dated June 13, 2022 submitted its response which is as under:
"NAC gave due coverage to former Prime Minister Imran Khan's speeches and statements in its programmes. His interviews to various media houses were also broadcast."
5. Response submitted by the public body was shared with the appellant on June 23, 2022.
6. The Appellant on June 28, 2022 submitted rejoinder to the response of the public body, which is as under:
"I received response / information shard by Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation Headquarters in Islamabad in response to my above mentioned appeal from your office on 28 June 2022 via Pakistan Post with 'UMS27725578' number.
I am not at all satisfied with the response as the respondent nowhere referred to any questions I asked in my information request submitted in April 2022. Therefore, I contested the response to seek complete answer to each of my questions mentioned in the information request.
May I request your office to set a hearing against the response of the respondent to my appeal while the respondent (s) are also put on notice for the same purpose."
7. Rejoinder submitted by the appellant was shared with the Respondent on July 04, 2022 with the directions to respond to the queries of the appellant within 10 working days.
8. The appeal was fixed for hearing on August 30, 2022 and both parties were informed through notices sent on August 04, 2022.

9. The appellant through a letter dated August 05, 2022 submitted response to the queries of the appellant which is as under:

“It is submitted that only query No.4 and 5 of the Para 2 of the Appeal of the citizen is related to External Publicity Wing, the reply to which is as under:

- i. *According to the record of this Wing, Former Prime Minister, Imran Khan gave eighteen (18) interviews during his premiership to the journalists of international Media organizations. The details which can be seen at Annex-I.*
- ii. *The former prime minister of Pakistan, Mr. Imran Khan, had not agreed to the requests for interview of two foreign media organizations during his premiership as per our record. During March 202, the requests of TASS (Russian News Agency) was not acceded to and on 10.03.2021, the former premier had not agreed for a Special Talk at Oxford University’s Blavatnik School of Government.”*

10. The Respondent through a letter dated August 30, 2022 submitted another response which is as under:

“The undersigned attended the hearing on 30.08.2022 before PIC. In this regard requisite details on account of this Ministry were provided to PIC. However, some information demanded by the appellant relates to Prime Minister’s office, hence, PIC is requested to advise the appellant to approach PM’s Office directly.”

11. Responses submitted by the public body were shared with the appellant on August 30, 2022.

12. The appellant on September 12, 2022 submitted rejoinder to the response of the public body which is as under:

“Thank you for sharing information provided by the Federal Ministry of Information and Broadcasting in response to Pakistan Information Commission’s direction to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting on 31 May 2022 in response to my appeal no. 1932-05/2022.

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting provided partial information responding to just question # 4 but did not respond to questions # 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10. Therefore, I am not satisfied with the Ministry’s response and it needs to provide information about other unanswered questions are mentioned above.

May I request Pakistan Information Commission to remind the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting to share requested information about the remaining questions as well.”

C. Discussion and Commission's View on Relevant Issues

13. The commission has to decide:

The question for the consideration of the commission is that whether the Respondent has provided complete information to the appellant? And whether the public body has fulfilled its duties as defined in the Right of Access to Information Act, 2017 hereafter referred to as Act?

14. The record on the file shows that respondent has provided the complete requested information pertaining to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. The remaining information belongs to the Prime Minister's Office and the Respondent is not bound to provide that information to the appellant.

15. The appellant can file a new information request to the Prime Minister Secretariat to obtain the remaining information.

D. Order

16. The appeal is disposed of with no further directions to the respondent.

17. Copies of this order be sent to Deputy Secretary (Coord), Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and the Appellant for information and necessary action.

Mohammad Azam

Chief Information Commissioner

Zahid Abdullah

Information Commissioner

Announced on: November 02, 2022

This order consists of 4 (four) pages, each page has been read and signed.