

As Netanyahu and Theresa May Chat, a Large Nest of Israeli Spies in London Exposed

By [Craig Murray](#)

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[Craig Murray](#) 7 February 2017

Region: [Europe](#), [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [Intelligence](#)

The Israeli Embassy has seventeen Israeli “technical and administrative staff” granted visas by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The normal number for an Embassy that size would be about two. I spoke to two similar size non-EU Embassies this morning, one has two and one zero. I recall I dealt with an angry Foreign Minister during my own FCO career incensed his much larger High Commission had been refused by the FCO an increase from three to four technical and administrative staff.

Shai Masot, the Israeli “diplomat” who had been [subverting Britain’s internal democracy](#) with large sums of cash and plans to concoct scandal against a pro-Palestinian British minister, did not appear in the official [diplomatic list](#).

I queried this with the FCO, and was asked to put my request in writing. A full three weeks later and after dozens of phone calls, they reluctantly revealed that Masot was on the “technical and administrative staff” of the Israeli Embassy.

This is plainly a nonsense. Masot, as an ex-Major in the Israeli Navy and senior officer in the Ministry of Strategic Affairs, is plainly senior to many who are on the Diplomatic List, which includes typists and personal assistants. There are six attaches – support staff – already on the List.

Embassy of Israel
2 Palace Green Kensington W8 4QB
020 7957 9500
Fax 020 7957 9555
www.london.mfa.gov.il
Monday-Thursday 08.30-18.00 & Friday 08.45-14.15

Defence Section
2a Palace Green Kensington W8 4QB
020 7957 9548

Consular Section
15a Old Court Place Kensington W8 4QB
020 7957 9516

HIS EXCELLENCY MR MARK REGEV *m Ambassador Extraordinary & Plenipotentiary (since 4 April 2016)*

Mrs Vered Regev
Mrs Rachel Shabi Shani *m Consul General*
Mr Dan Golan *m Minister-Counsellor (Cultural Affairs)*
Mr Eyal Azoulay *m Minister-Counsellor*
Mrs Rony Yedidia *m Counsellor (Public Affairs)*
Mr Yiftah Curiel *m Counsellor (Public Affairs)*
Mr Marcos Christian Cantor *m Counsellor*
Mr Nathan Tsrur *m Minister-Counsellor for Commercial Affairs*
Mr Ran Chana *m Attaché (Defence)*
Ms Ortal Ben Nun *m Attaché (Defence)*
Mr Ofer Grinboim-Liron *m 1st Secretary*
Mr Sivian Holder *m 1st Secretary*
Mr Michael Freeman *m 1st Secretary*
Mr Lior Ben-Dov *m Attaché*
Mr David Gaash *m Attaché*
Mr Eyal Rashi *m Attaché (Embassy Secretary)*
Mr Tom Winberg *Attaché*
Mr Dekel Yaloz *Attaché*
Mr Victor Lokshin *Attaché*

Masot was plainly not carrying out technical and administrative duties. The term is a formal one from the [Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations](#), and it is plain from the convention that technical and administrative staff are in official status lower than the diplomatic staff. The majority of support activities are carried out in all Embassies by locally engaged staff already resident in the host country, but a very small number of technical and administrative staff may be allowed visas for work in particularly secure areas. They may be an IT and communications technician, possibly a cleaner in the most sensitive physical areas, and perhaps property management.

These staff do not interact with politicians of the host state or attend high level meetings beside the Ambassador. The level at which Shai Masot was operating was appropriate to a Counsellor or First Secretary in an Embassy. Masot's formal rank as an officer in his cover job in the Ministry of Strategic Affairs would entitle him to that rank in the Embassy if this were a normal appointment.

The Al Jazeera documentaries plainly revealed that Masot was working as an intelligence officer, acquiring and financing "agents of influence". It is simply impossible that the FCO would normally grant seventeen technical and administrative visas to support sixteen diplomats, when six of the sixteen are already support staff. The only possible explanation, confirmed absolutely by Masot's behaviour, is that the FCO has knowingly connived at settling a large nest of Israeli spies in London. I fairly put this to the FCO and they refused to comment.

I asked my questions on 10 January. On 12 January the FCO asked me to put them in writing. On 2 February they finally replied to the first three questions, but refused to comment on

questions 4 or 5 about involvement of the intelligence services in Masot's appointment.



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12/01/2017 10:01



Shai Masot's Visa and Residence Status
To: newsdesk@fco.gov.uk

Dear Bates

I am investigating the status of Shai Masot, the Israeli Embassy officer caught plotting against Alan Duncan and who was very active with UK political parties.

I appreciate the FCO line is that the case of his conduct is now closed. But I am not investigating his conduct, I am investigating the improper conduct of the FCO in granting him a visa and residency status in the first place.

My initial questions are these:

- 1) On what basis was Mr Masot in the UK?
- 2) He was not on the Diplomatic List, but plainly was a senior officer (an ex Major and current executive in the Directorate of Strategic Affairs) and therefore not qualified in the normal categories of technical and support staff. What precise visa and residence status did he hold?
- 3) How many more officers does the Israeli Embassy have with that same visa and support staff?
- 4) Has the FCO connived with the Israeli Embassy to allow many more Israeli intelligence operatives residence in the country than the official and reciprocated diplomatic staff allocation of the Embassy?
- 5) Did MI5, MI6 or any other of the security services have any input into Mr Masot's acceptance and visa/residency status?

It is over 12 hours since I contacted the FCO's media people with these questions. I would appreciate your earliest contact. My number is [07979 691085](tel:07979691085).

Craig Murray

On 2 February I sent these follow-up questions to the FCO by email:

That is very helpful. It is also astonishing. These people are not just notified to the FCO, the FCO has to agree and give them residence visas for the UK. The FCO does not have to – and does not – accept any number an Embassy suggests. Other Embassies are limited to a small handful of technical and administrative staff.

Seventeen is far more than is normal for an Embassy with 18 diplomatic staff – which already includes some secretarial attaches.

Two questions

- 1) By way of comparison, can you tell me the number of technical and administrative staff at the following similar size non-EU Embassies:
Iraq
Ghana
Argentina
Ecuador?
- 2) In the light of Shai Masot affair, has the FCO taken any steps to ascertain whether the remaining 17 so-called administrative and technical staff of the Israeli Embassy are genuinely in administrative and technical duties?

Thank You

Craig

FCO Media Department have replied that they refuse to give me any further information on the subject, and that I should proceed through a Freedom of Information request so the FCO can assess properly whether the release of any further information is in the national interest.

What is it they are always saying to us: if you have got nothing to fear, you have got nothing to hide?

I am confident I know what they are hiding, and that is FCO complicity in a large nest of Israeli spies seeking to influence policy and opinion in the UK in a pro-Israeli direction. That is why the government reaction to one of those spies being caught on camera plotting a scandal against an FCO minister, and giving £1 million to anti-Corbyn MPs, was so astonishingly muted. It is also worth noting that while the media could not completely ignore [the fantastic al Jazeera documentaries](#) that exposed the scandal, it was a matter of a brief article and no follow up digging.

This was not just a curiosity, it reveals a deep-seated problem for our democracy. I intend to continue picking at it.

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