U.S. Department of Justice

United States Attorney
Southern District of New York

86 Chambers Street
New York, NY 10007

May 31, 2024

BY ECF
The Honorable Alvin K. Hellerstein
United States District Court
United States District Judge
500 Pearl Street
New York, NY 10007

Re: *Knight First Amendment Institute at Columbia University v. U.S. Department of State*, No. 23 Civ. 02513 (AKH)

Dear Judge Hellerstein:

We write jointly on behalf of Defendant the United States Department of State (the "State Department" or the "Government") and Plaintiff the Knight First Amendment Institute at Columbia University (the "Institute") to provide a status report in the above-referenced Freedom of Information Act ("FOIA") matter.

Since the Parties' last status report on March 29, 2024, the State Department has completed its processing of all records identified as being potentially responsive to the FOIA request, and also completed its re-review of some of the previously reviewed records that were deemed non-responsive. The State Department also sent two release letters to Plaintiff:

On April 12, 2024, the State Department advised that it had completed processing three excel files that had been identified as potentially responsive to the FOIA request, and determined that the files were non-responsive. It also advised that it had completed re-processing of 518 pages of material, and determined the material to be non-responsive.

On May 24, 2024, the State Department advised that it had re-reviewed the remaining 215 pages of material that had been identified for re-review, which concludes the re-review process. The Department determined that 12 pages were responsive and released those pages in full, and that 106 pages were non-responsive. In addition, the Department determined 97 additional pages were responsive and require internal and external consultation before a release determination could be made with respect to those pages.

At this time, the only outstanding documents at issue in connection with this FOIA request are the 97 pages that have been sent out for internal and external consultation. Additionally, the State Department is working to address a question the Institute has asked related to the adequacy of the agency's search.

In accordance with the Court's May 3, 2024 scheduling order, the Parties will appear telephonically for a status conference on June 14, 2024 at 10:00 A.M.

We thank the Court for its consideration.

Respectfully,

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United States Attorney

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