

PO Box 2278
Ilford
Essex
IG1 9XT

Peter Horrocks,
Head of News, BBC
Broadcasting House
Portland Place
London W1A 1AA

T: 020 7330 8796
E: info@iengage.org.uk
W: www.iengage.org.uk

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Dear Mr Horrocks,

Thank you for your reply of 15th January.

You say that the BBC does indeed monitor its news coverage for 'internal journalistic purposes' in order to ensure that it is objective and even-handed and that while you do not make this information public, other organisations are free to monitor the BBC's coverage themselves to see if it is as balanced as it is meant to be.

I am afraid that not many organisations have the same resources at their disposal that the publicly-funded BBC has to monitor its news output properly. In the one detailed study that I am aware of - and which I mentioned in my original letter to you - the Glasgow University Media Group a few years ago found that the BBC's coverage was skewed in favour of Israel and that Israeli spokespersons were interviewed twice as often as Palestinian spokespersons. So I must ask again, will the BBC be making public information about how often they have interviewed Israeli and Palestinian spokespersons during the current conflict in Gaza?

You must be aware that the distinguished journalist and former editor of the New Statesman, John Kampfner, has also been very critical of BBC News' coverage of the Gaza conflict. In an article in the Guardian last week he wrote:

'With some honourable exceptions (a post-holiday Jeremy Paxman and Newsnight), the questioning of Israeli spokespeople has been weak. Compare, for example, Channel 4 News's grilling of Mark Regev, the Israeli government's chief spokesman, on 8 January, with much of the BBC output. Alex Thomson asked Regev "in the name of humanity" to apologise for the refusal of the Israeli army to allow the International Committee of the Red Cross to get to "starving children". Thomson put it to Regev that the Red Cross workers had to "walk one kilometre" to reach the scene. Regev stonewalled, but Thomson did not relent. It was good, objective, non-hedged questioning.

Compare that with various BBC outlets, including similar allegations put on The World at One on 9 January to another Israeli spokesman, Yigal Palmor. Palmor was allowed to fob off the charges with relative ease in an interview with the usually rigorous Brian Hanrahan. These spokespeople, along with Major Avital Leibovich of the Israeli army, have been ever present on the news channel, but rarely have they been truly pressed.'

In my discussions with numerous British Muslims across the UK in the past three weeks, I have been struck by their disappointment with the BBC's news output (not to mention that of

Sky News and ITN) and have often been told that they have now switched over to al-Jazeera English and Press TV to find out what is really happening in Gaza.

Would it be possible for us to meet to discuss these issues?

Yours sincerely,

Mr Inayat Bunglawala,
Advisor on Research and Policy,
ENGAGE