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Friday 27th May 2011

Dear Ms Mun,

Thank you for your letter concerning our complaint against the Jewish Chronicle (our letter dated 18th February 2011), and the enclosing of the paper's response to our respective complaints detailed in that letter.

We are grateful to have the opportunity to provide further information on the raising of our complaint and in light of the response provided by the JC.

On points 1 and 2 and the JC response:

"My source told me that the pro-iEngage people in the APPG won by a single vote. As the person making the complaint is not an MP and doesn't name his source, he is not better placed than us to know."

ENGAGE was appointed the secretariat of the All Party Group on Islamophobia at its inaugural meeting on November 15, 2010. Our briefing following the meeting held on 14th February 2011 was offered to us in our capacity as the secretariat to this Group and came from the office of the co-chair of the All Party Group, the Rt. Hon. Simon Hughes MP.

We were informed in clear terms by Mr Hughes's office that the JC report contained a number of inaccuracies among them the claim that ENGAGE was retained as secretariat to the All Party Group "by a single vote".

On point 3 and the journalist's response:

"It has not been removed. We did amend the story outline (as it entirely responsible) when Simon Hughes's office told me that the margin was not one vote. I asked what the vote had been and was told I couldn't have the information! At this point, we decided to amend the story to say that the vote had been passed by a narrow margin."

We understand that the JC was provided a statement issued by the three co-chairs of the All Party Group on conclusion of the meeting of 14th February and that the paper was asked to remove the inaccuracies contained in its initial report and replace this with the statement issued.

Point 4 we believe is addressed in our explication on points 1 – 3 above.

On point 5, and the mention of Marjorie Thompson as “spokesperson” for ENGAGE. Again, the incident is mistakenly portrayed and the reference to Marjorie Thompson “acting as a spokeswoman” is wholly inaccurate.

Ms Thompson told the journalist, Martin Bright, that she was a freelance consultant and worked a day a week for ENGAGE on PR. She did not introduce herself as a spokesperson for the organisation and engaged in what she believed to be a personal conversation with the journalist reminding him of a mutual acquaintance of theirs.

She went further to specifically state that her comments in the course of that conversation were “off the record” something Mr Bright failed to respect.

Ms Thompson as a freelance consultant works for a number of organizations doing public relations work and she is not described, by the organizations concerned or by herself, as a “spokesperson” for any of them, including ENGAGE.

The responses from the Jewish Chronicle are unsatisfactory to us and we would ask the Commission to continue its investigation into this matter in light of the further information provided here.

We look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely,

Mohammed Asif
Chief Executive Officer.