

Monday 30 September 2024

Dear Sir,

Since the terrible terrorist atrocities of October 7th, we have witnessed an unprecedented surge in anti-Jewish hatred both across the UK and around the world.

The BBC is one of the most trusted news brands in the world. Funded by the British public, it has a unique statutory duty under its Royal Charter to deliver news that is fair, balanced, impartial, and above all, accurate.

However, this new and authoritative report, which we have read and endorse, provides troubling evidence of repeated and systematic failures by the BBC to meet that duty, in its coverage of the Israel-Hamas war.

We recognise the challenges of reporting accurately in war zones, but the evidence presented in this report goes far beyond what might reasonably be attributed to errors made in the fog of war.

These are not academic errors. They have real world consequences. Inaccurate media reporting on the conflict contributes to the delegitimization of Israel in the public sphere, which in turn fuels anti-Jewish hatred, and has made British Jews and Jews around the world less safe and secure in their communities. As a global media leader, the BBC carries extra responsibility in these regards.

This has led many British Jews to conclude that the BBC has become, in practical terms, institutionally hostile to Israel, eroding trust in the institution. At least until recently, the BBC's response to the Jewish community's legitimate concerns about its coverage has appeared to vary between defensive and dismissive.

As the pre-eminent communal organisations tasked with representing and protecting the Jewish community in the UK, we endorse this report and implore the BBC to address the issues that it highlights with great seriousness, urgency, and sensitivity. We want to work constructively with the BBC to help it better navigate this most complex of issues and be all that it can when it is at its best.

We support the report's core recommendations and join in its call for an independent inquiry into the BBC's coverage of the Israel-Hamas war, and wider conflict with Hezbollah, the Houthis, Iran and its other proxies, with terms of reference and reviewers that command widespread public support.

These steps will go a long way to restoring public trust in a national institution that we have long treasured.

Sincerely,



Phil Rosenberg
President
Board of Deputies of British Jews



Claudia Mendoza
Chief Executive
Jewish Leadership Council



Mark Gardner
Chief Executive
Community Security Trust