

19th January 2022

By E-mail to Tim Davie, Director General of the BBC

Dear Mr Davie,

Thank you for meeting us yesterday. I wanted to follow up on a number of points which caused us concern.

We were very surprised to learn that you were unaware if the Hebrew speakers at the BBC who were originally consulted as to the content of the video in question had not been asked to consider our reports in advance of our meeting.

Furthermore, we were extremely taken aback by the comments made by Fran Unsworth during the meeting; her false accusation that we had accused the BBC of "antisemitism" was offensive and damaging; we noted with regret that you did not contradict her.

Her follow-up, citing the actions of the Simon Wiesenthal Centre, was astonishing. The Board of Deputies had absolutely nothing to do with this list, produced by an American-based organisation, and has not promoted it in any way. We are not collectively responsible for this action.

To cite this as evidence that we had accused the BBC of antisemitism suggests that Ms Unsworth also paints completely different groups with the same brush. At the very best, this is completely at odds with her claims of the need for accuracy from the BBC. At the worst, this was a not very subtle way of saying that 'you lot are all the same'. I would like to know what action you are going to take to discipline Ms Unsworth for her highly inappropriate comments.

The ECU representative, invited by the BBC, was in the meeting and witnessed these comments by Ms Unsworth first-hand.

I would also like to reiterate the point made by our organisation's Chief Executive regarding reimbursement of the Board's costs. The Board of Deputies expended a significant amount of money to commission independent reports which throw the BBC's actions concerning this process into significant doubt. We are a charity; this should not have been something which we felt forced to do. We believe that the BBC should strongly consider, if the ECU report comes back upholding our complaint, reimbursing us for the direct costs involved in these efforts.

I cannot stress enough the urgency of bringing this issue to a swift conclusion. This is for the benefit of the victims of the antisemitic bus attack, who have had to suffer significant damage to their reputations since the BBC reporting on the matter, and for the benefit of the Corporation's relationship with the British Jewish community. This incident has led to a major breach of trust between our community and the BBC, and we sincerely hope that the Corporation will swiftly reach the correct conclusion regarding this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Marie van der Zyl

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President