

PETER JOHNSTON'S REVIEW – ACTION PLAN

Peter Johnston's Review was a thorough look at the commissioning, making and broadcast content of the programme, 'Gaza: How to Survive a Warzone', and in particular its compliance with the BBC's Editorial Guidelines. Having considered his report, the Director General has agreed with BBC News a series of actions that the BBC will now take forward:

1. THE FUTURE OF THE PROGRAMME

Given the serious editorial breach identified in the broadcast of 'Gaza: How To Survive A Warzone', we do not think it is appropriate to reinstate the programme in its current form to iPlayer.

However, as we said at the time, it is important to tell the story of what is happening in Gaza, despite BBC News being prevented from reporting independently on the ground. We remain keen to tell the stories of those featured in the documentary and will now explore the possibility of doing this through re-edited and re-versioned shorter films for archive on iPlayer. This will require us to work through difficult and sensitive issues with the independent production company, HOYO Films – involving compliance, including translation, context, consent and the safeguarding of those who took part in the documentary.

Elsewhere, the BBC has no current or future planned commissions with HOYO Films.

2. BBC ACCOUNTABILITY

We have already said that Peter Johnston's Review would enable the BBC to determine whether any disciplinary action was warranted in relation to shortcomings in the making of this programme. While we would never comment on any individual confidential processes, we can confirm that the BBC is taking fair, clear and appropriate action, based on the findings, to ensure accountability.

3. LANGUAGE

The BBC will issue new editorial guidance to programme makers on the use and translation of the word 'Yahud/ Yahudi' into English, following the recommendation in Peter Johnston's Review. While the review found that the team translated the term appropriately in this programme in light of the guidance in place and advice received at the time, going forward, programme makers should default to using the literal translation of those terms as 'Jews/ Jewish'. It will still be possible to use a different translation, but this would need to be referred up to senior executive editor level and the programme should make clear to the audience wherever possible why they deviated from the literal translation. Peter Johnston's report has also recommended that 'Yahud/ Yahudi' be looked at more comprehensively, and with external input, through the forthcoming thematic review of BBC Middle East coverage agreed by the BBC Board.

4. NARRATION

There will also be new editorial guidance that careful consideration must be given to the use of narrators in the area of contested current affairs programmes. The narrator will be subject to a higher level of scrutiny, with assurance required that their own background, connections and/ or viewpoints will not put either them or the BBC in a difficult position or raise questions of impartiality.

5. NEW LEADERSHIP ROLE IN NEWS DOCUMENTARIES AND CURRENT AFFAIRS

BBC News will create a new Director role on the News Board, with the remit to deliver more senior editorial oversight across our portfolio of documentaries and current affairs journalism. This new role will have strategic leadership of our long form output across BBC News.

Once appointed, the first priority of this senior leader will be to review the structure of the department to ensure we continue to produce powerful public interest current affairs journalism, while also upholding robust editorial compliance and fully implementing the findings of the Peter Johnston Review.

We will advertise the role in the next seven days.

6. ENHANCED EDITORIAL CONTROLS

A new 'First Gate' process will be introduced, meaning no high-risk long form programmes can become a formal commission until all potential compliance considerations are considered and listed, including rigorous social media and background checks. These will be tracked through to the 'Final Gate' process, which was introduced earlier this year and will now be made permanent.

Going forward, we will also embed a dedicated senior BBC News executive producer *inside* the production team for every high risk long form film produced by an independent supplier for BBC News – as recommended in Peter Johnston's report. This change will create greater clarity, improve lines of accountability and ensure editorial, legal and safety risks are managed appropriately.

7. CLEARER GUIDANCE ON FINANCIAL CRIME

The BBC will update its guidance to independent producers – working on shows with higher editorial risk – in relation to financial crime. Whilst responsibility sits with the independent producer to undertake sanctions checks, this will help to ensure that financial crime is considered as part of the commissioning process.