



[NAME] MK
The Knesset
Kiryat Ben Gurion
Jerusalem 91950

BY E-MAIL

26th May 2014

Dear Sir,

RE: Draft Bill on Israel Broadcasting Authority

I write, on behalf of the International Federation of Journalists, to express our strong concerns regarding the draft bill being prepared to close down the Israel Broadcasting Authority, following the recommendations of the Landes Committee.

The IFJ was shocked to hear that the draft legislation proposes to sack 1000 out of the 1700 employees of the IBA. We join our union in Israel in condemning this move which is being prepared without consultations with employee representatives over the size and shape of the new proposed broadcasting body, except to say that it would be a “slimmer and more efficient organisation.”

Our unions, the world over, would not accept that a public service broadcasting, which is so crucial to citizens, can be shut down at such a speed before the broadest consultation with civil society and representatives of the employees and without clear plans for the replacement body, including how it would be structured, funded and governed.

A similar move in Greece last year was also presented as a slimmed-down version of their public broadcaster but, with its accompanying asset stripping, merger of divisions and outsourcing of programmes, it ended up becoming a poor version of the old broadcaster, struggling to attract audiences let alone fulfill public service values.

IFJ unions, which represent journalists working in public service broadcasting all over the world, have always reached agreements with politicians and governments during discussion on reforms, on the minimum conditions to ensure a high standard for the service output. This necessitates a clear remit and sustainable funding as well as a transparent governance and independence.

Page 2 of 2

The proposal to abolish the fees may well be a measure designed to boost the popularity of politicians, but without any new mechanisms for funding, it will leave the new authority dependent directly on government funding, making it vulnerable to political interference.

Furthermore when the minister in charge would become responsible for the appointment of the board and select the candidates for the posts of general manager and chief editor, this would strip the new authority of any capacity to be independent.

The IFJ respectfully urges you to maintain your commitment to public service broadcasting and values by extending the timetable in order to open consultation with all the stakeholders, including representatives of the employees, and guaranteeing the independence of any future public broadcaster with emphasis on delivering top quality and diverse services to all Israeli citizens.

The IFJ and its 180 unions of journalists worldwide will follow carefully how the situation will develop and we will work closely with our Israeli unions to defend the future of their members.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jim Boumelha", written in a cursive style. A long, thin horizontal line is drawn underneath the signature, extending from the left side of the signature towards the right.

Jim Boumelha
President