

20<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Tim Davie CBE

By email: [tim.davie@bbc.co.uk](mailto:tim.davie@bbc.co.uk)

Dear Mr Tim Davie CBE,

This letter concerns the requested dismissal of Robbie Gibb from the BBC's board. Gibb currently chairs the BBC's Remuneration Committee along with the England Committee. Gibb is also a member of the Editorial Guidelines and Standards Committee, alongside his role as a non-executive board member. During his time on the Board, he was a member of the Serota Review looking at BBC editorial processes, governance and culture.

Despite his role in the Serota Review, Gibb's failure to uphold editorial standards has become exceedingly clear in the recent scandal at *The Jewish Chronicle*, which partly occurred during his ownership, whilst he was Director. This episode casts significant doubt on his capabilities to uphold the BBC's standards with regards to editorial processes, governance and culture and his continued tenure as a non-executive board member poses reputational damages for the BBC. Further, his partisan politics with regards to his well-documented pro-Israel sentiment makes him unsuitable to have input over editorial standards at the BBC at a time when coverage of the Israel-Hamas War is so contested.

In 2020, Robbie Gibb led a successful consortium bid to buy *The Jewish Chronicle*, believed to be approximately £3.5 million.<sup>1</sup> In his declaration of interest on the BBC website, Gibb states that he owns a 100% holding in Jewish Chronicle Media Limited, but he has not said who funded the consortium bid. According to Jewish Chronicle Media Limited's company files on GOV.UK, Gibb was a Director of *The Jewish Chronicle* newspaper until his dismissal on 20<sup>th</sup> August 2024<sup>2</sup> and was a 'person with significant control' until 12<sup>th</sup> August 2024.<sup>3</sup>

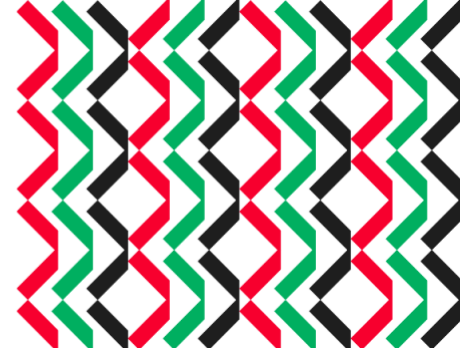
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<sup>1</sup> Ed Cumming. (16<sup>th</sup> September 2024) [The 'fabrications' and resignations that plunged The Jewish Chronicle into crisis](#). The Telegraph.

<sup>2</sup> Companies House (20<sup>th</sup> August 2024) [Termination of a Director Appointment](#). TM01(ef). XD9WZQ7E

<sup>3</sup> Companies House. (19<sup>th</sup> August 2024) [Notice of ceasing to be a person with significant control](#). PSC07(ef). XD9U8ZOY





Following recent revelations that has brought *The Jewish Chronicle* into disrepute, the International Centre of Justice for Palestinians is writing to query the continued presence of former *Jewish Chronicle* Director Robbie Gibb on the BBC's board of non-executive directors. The scandal revolves around the fabrication of news articles, including articles that pertain to reporting of Israeli military activity in Gaza.

One of the articles mentioned an intelligence document which the Israeli Defence Forces has subsequently said it is not aware of its existence.<sup>4</sup> As the BBC has published, the article 'appeared to be similar to talking points used by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to justify the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) presence in the Philadelphi Corridor.' Elon Perry wrote nine articles from 13<sup>th</sup> June 2024 until the scandal broke in September. Despite The newspaper's decision to delete these articles, archived webpages show that seven articles were published by Perry in the Jewish Chronicle between the 13<sup>th</sup> June 2024 and 20<sup>th</sup> August 2024, the day that Gibb ceased to be Director of the Jewish Chronicle.<sup>5</sup>

Given Gibb's failure to uphold journalistic standards whilst Director of *The Jewish Chronicle*, his continued presence on the non-executive board of the BBC poses a significant reputational risk to the organisation and in light of the revelations at *The Jewish Chronicle*, Gibb's role at the BBC should be terminated.

There is also a need to provide transparency over the impartiality of Gibb's appointment to his role at the BBC in the first instance. On the BBC website, an archived screenshot from as recently as 5<sup>th</sup> March 2024 showed that Robbie Gibb's role as 'Member for England' as a non-executive board member had a term of appointment from 7<sup>th</sup> May 2021-6<sup>th</sup> May 2024.<sup>6</sup> However, at the time of writing (20<sup>th</sup> September 2024), the same page now shows that Robbie Gibb's term of appointment runs from 7<sup>th</sup> May 2021-6<sup>th</sup> May 2028. The website also shows he is paid £43,000 a year for this role.<sup>7</sup>

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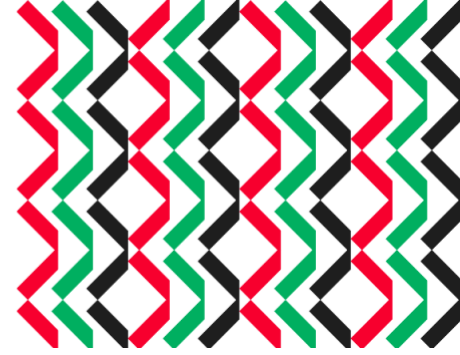
<sup>4</sup> TOI Staff (14<sup>th</sup> September 2024). [UK's Jewish Chronicle removes stories by writer accused of fabrications about Gaza war](#). Times of Israel.

<sup>5</sup> The Jewish Chronicle (Accessed 20<sup>th</sup> August 2024) [Elon Perry: Author Page](#).

<sup>6</sup> BBC (Accessed 5<sup>th</sup> March 2024) [Sir Robbie Gibb. Non-Executive Director; Member for England](#).

<sup>7</sup> BBC (Accessed 19<sup>th</sup> September 2024) [Sir Robbie Gibb. Non-Executive director; Member for England](#).





Whilst his reappointment was confirmed by a GOV.UK press release published on the 14<sup>th</sup> March 2024,<sup>8</sup> the BBC website refers to his ‘term’ of employment in the singular tense, rather than the reality that he is serving two consecutive terms. This obfuscation is concerning, especially considering the fact that his reappointment was overseen by Sir William Shawcross CVO, the incumbent Commissioner for Public Appointments as of 1<sup>st</sup> October 2021.<sup>9</sup> Shawcross is himself reported by *The Guardian* to be one of the initial backers of Sir Robbie Gibb’s consortium takeover of *The Jewish Chronicle* in 2020,<sup>10</sup> and he has also previously been published as an author in the news outlet.<sup>11</sup>

This apparent conflict of interest remains unaddressed by the BBC, despite concerns that it may interfere with the impartiality of Gibb’s appointment, which in turn undermines his ability to carry out his role effectively. Gibb’s £43,000 payment is paid for by the British public and transparency must be provided over his appointment.

I trust that the following concerns will be addressed appropriately, and we look forward to hearing your response.

Yours sincerely,

The International Centre of Justice for Palestinians

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<sup>8</sup> UK Government (14<sup>th</sup> March 2024) [Sir Robbie Gibb reappointed as BBC Board Member for England](#). Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

<sup>9</sup> UK Government. (30<sup>th</sup> September 2021) [Appointment of the Commissioner for Public Appointments](#). Cabinet Office.

<sup>10</sup> Jim Waterson. (23<sup>rd</sup> April 2020) [Jewish Chronicle saved by consortium after messy takeover battle](#). The Guardian.

<sup>11</sup> William Shawcross. (11<sup>th</sup> December 2019) [Prime Minister Corbyn would be bad for Israel, bad for Britain and bad for the West](#). The Jewish Chronicle.

