

Ottawa Forum on Israel/Palestine

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Ottawa, May 10, 2021

OPEN LETTER

Mr. Michael Goldbloom,
Chair, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation
Ms. Catherine Tait,
President, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation

Dear Mr. Goldbloom and Ms. Tait,

We are writing to express our disappointment and frustration over what appears to be a systematic failure of CBC to report on credible public criticism of the State of Israel, no matter how well founded. We do not think this approach, whether as a matter of policy or of individual choice, brings credit to our national public broadcaster.

In the last six months, credible reports have appeared which have been highly critical of Israeli actions. Among others these include:

- a determination from the [International Criminal Court](#) that there is a legitimate case for investigating alleged war crimes by Israel.
- a report entitled “This is apartheid” from [Bt’selem](#), a very credible Israeli human rights organization, arguing that Israel exercises “Jewish Supremacy” over all the territory it controls “from the river to the sea”.
- a report from [Human Rights Watch](#), an international human rights organization with impeccable credentials which also claims that Israel is in fact applying an “apartheid-type” regime not only in the West Bank but inside Israel as well.

All of these developments have been well covered by respected international news media including the New York Times, CNN, Associated Press and Le Monde, not

to mention Haaretz and Aljazeera. In Canada, CTV and the [Globe and Mail](#) have been more informative on this issue has the CBC.

CBC has downplayed all of these reports, when it hasn't completely ignored them (as in the case of the Human Rights Watch report).

Most recently, CBC has given minimal coverage to racist attacks on Arabs by right wing Jews shouting "death to Arabs" in Jerusalem, or to the evictions of Palestinians in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood of occupied East Jerusalem. The coverage it has given, including again today, tends to focus on the violence while avoiding reference to the fundamental issues including the ongoing evictions of Palestinians.

Of course, we do not expect our national broadcaster to take up the cause of the Palestinians, but we do not believe CBC should insulate Canadians from knowing about legitimate criticisms of Israel.

Mr. Bloomberg and Ms. Tait, as you know the mandate of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation is "*to inform, enlighten and entertain*". In many respects, the CBC carries out this mandate admirably.

We know that the completion of this mandate can require courage and integrity. CBC has an obligation to inform Canadians in an evenhanded way, even if some constituencies would prefer otherwise.

I would be pleased to discuss this issue with either of you at your convenience. Please do not hesitate to contact me at ofip.chair@gmail.com

Thank you in advance.

Peter Larson, Ph. D. Chair, Ottawa Forum on Israel Palestine (OFIP)

David Halton, retired senior correspondent CBC, and member OFIP Council of Advisors

cc.

- Rt. Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada
- Hon. Erin O'Toole, Leader of the Opposition
- Hon. Jagmeet Singh, Leader NDP
- Yves-Francois Blanchet, Leader Bloc québécois

- Elizabeth May, Parliamentary leader Green Party of Canada
- All members, Ottawa Forum on Israel/Palestine