

# *Damascus revokes BBC's media accreditation for willfully distorting facts about Syria*

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Damascus, August 18 (RHC)-- The Syrian government recently revoked the media accreditation for the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), a British state-controlled news channel, and announced that its journalists are no longer able to legally report from the Arab country.

In the official statement, the Syrian information ministry stated that the BBC has deliberately provided, on multiple occasions, biased and false news reports, giving a distorted picture of reality in Syria. It further noted that this misbehavior continued despite repeated warnings from Syrian authorities, adding that BBC reports occasionally used statements and testimonies from terrorist groups and anti-Syrian hostile entities to push a certain narrative.

Therefore, as the ministry statement concluded, the British broadcaster has failed to adhere to professional standards of journalism, insisting on providing misleading and politicized reports.

The BBC, in its response, rejected the Syrian statement as unfounded; claiming that it provides what it calls "impartial and independent journalism," with a BBC spokesperson insisting that the broadcaster "speaks to people across the political spectrum to establish the facts."

The response, however, fails the fact-check as years of foreign military aggression on the Arab country demonstrates how mainstream Western media outlets, including the BBC, willfully distorted facts.

Throughout the years of imposed war on Syria, the BBC, in particular, peddled lies and got away with it. For instance, in May 2012, it used a 2003 photo from Iraq for a story about an incident in Houla, Syria.

"I went home at 3 am and I opened the BBC page, which had a front-page story about what happened in Syria, and I almost felt off from my chair," photographer Marco di Lauro was quoted as saying then.

Such instances of gross misrepresentation of facts about the war that the British government helped fuel in the Arab country continued over the years, as BBC continued to peddle fake news.

In 2021, BBC admitted serious flaws in a Radio 4 documentary on an alleged 2018 chemical attack in Syria, in a "victory for the truth" after a complaint was filed by journalist Peter Hitchens.

Before that, BBC producer, Riam Dalati, had dropped a bombshell saying the video footage of the alleged chemical attack had been staged. "After almost six months of investigations, I can prove without a doubt that the #Douma Hospital scene was staged. No fatalities occurred in the hospital," Dalati said at the time.

Syria-based independent journalist Vanessa Beeley, who exposed links between Western intelligence and al-Qaeda-linked terror groups, had accused the BBC of undermining and even threatening her.

In late 2021, the Chinese government denounced the BBC for reporting "fake news," describing the corporation as "naturally unpopular" over its coverage of devastating floods in central China.

On Palestine, BBC reportage has always toed the official Israeli line. For example, in an attempt to give clean chit to the killers of journalist Shireen Abu Akleh, BBC said she was "killed during an Israeli raid in West Bank" (BBC), not that she was deliberately murdered with bullets piercing her head.

More recently, BBC released a documentary film about the so-called drug trade in the Arab country, linking it with the Syrian army and Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's family.

The report was based on statements issued by US, British and European Union officials, who have blamed the Syrian government for the production and export of the drug, without evidence. The unsubstantiated accusations of drug trade come at a time when Syria is reintegrating into the region, being warmly welcomed, despite fierce opposition from Western governments.

On May 7, Arab government representatives in Egypt voted to return Syria to the Arab League after a 12-year suspension due to the political turmoil. All 13 of the 22 member states that attended the Cairo session endorsed the decision.

Syria's return has also been welcomed by Iran, Russia, China, Brazil and most countries around the world, with the exception of the United States, the United Kingdom, the European Union and a small number of associated countries.

After their long-lasting campaign of tearing and occupying Syria did not show the desired results, Western countries shifted their focus to undermining the global reputation of the government in Damascus in other

ways, including the accusations of the drug trade.

In mid-June, the EU chose to exclude representatives from the Syrian government from the 7th Brussels Conference on "Supporting the future of Syria and the region" which, according to Damascus, included only corrupt individuals affiliated with Takfiri terrorists.

A few days later, the EU also canceled the ministerial meeting with the Arab League over Syria's readmission, which was a move denounced by all members of the pan-Arab body.

Early July, the Russian foreign intelligence service director had warned that the US is planning to stage new false-flag operations in Syria, including chemical attacks against civilians, to discredit the Syrian government.

Considering the political context, it is clear that the BBC's "investigation" on the Syrian government's involvement in the Captagon drug trade is only part of a coordinated Western smear campaign.

It is not the first time that the BBC, at the behest of the British government and its Western allies, deliberately and outrageously lied about either the drug trade or the Syrian government.

Only three weeks before the report on the Syrian drug trade, the BBC published a report in which, based on satellite images and UNODC data, it acknowledged that the Taliban authorities in Afghanistan have completely eradicated opium production within a year.

The article ended with the blatant lie that the American and British occupation forces in Afghanistan had invested a great effort and billions of dollars in order to eradicate opium production and trafficking, shifting the responsibility for its production to the Taliban.

Therefore, according to the official Anglo-American narrative, despite full knowledge of poppy field locations and immense ground-air military capabilities, the Western coalition forces that occupied the South Asian country for 20 years failed to achieve what the Taliban managed to achieve now.

These contradictions have been challenged by numerous independent investigations, which make clear that coalition powers have significantly benefited from opium production; from injecting \$352 billion into the Western financial system to creating problems for Iranian and Russian borders.

The reactions of London and Washington to the Taliban erasure of opium production did not show much enthusiasm for the new situation either, with both the BBC and US government reports openly complaining about the shortcomings.

These drawbacks include an increase in the use of synthetic drugs as an alternative to heroin, further weakening of the Afghan economy, and new mass migrations, all of which can also be used in favor of maintaining something like the Mexican drug trade.

The accusations of the Syrian government's involvement in the synthetic drug trade, according to observers, are the repetition of the same Western policies and the same false narratives.

Throughout its hundred years of existence, the BBC's overt and covert bias, gross manipulations, disinformation, and innovative propaganda techniques have largely gone unnoticed, according to independent observers.

In the context of international politics, the BBC has been often described as the mouthpiece of the British government with the network's self-proclaimed impartial and independent journalism seen as a disguise for sophisticated false balance, anachronistic objectivity, and other manipulative tactics.

Today, there are almost encyclopedia-like BBC reviews of historical events and individuals, however, without acknowledging that the BBC itself at the time was running smear campaigns against them.

The most notorious case of BBC's "impartiality" during the Syrian war was an interview with Abu Sakkar, a terrorist who boasted on video about eating the raw heart of a slaughtered Syrian soldier.

The report nowhere expressed disgust towards his act of cannibalism and his Takfiri ideology, instead it conveyed jokes about "Valentine's heart," describing the perpetrator as a "rebel symbol" and echoing the Takfiri views of Alawites as "not proper Muslims."

Abu Sakkar's views and story were presented as equally valuable to that of the British government, technically justifying his actions, with some wondering whether such content would be published with, for example, those elements responsible for the Takfiri terrorist massacres inside the UK.

The BBC has also been held responsible for popularizing the euphemism "opposition," using it indiscriminately to describe rebels and terrorists in West Asian countries.

The BBC did not exclusively push the story of Tony Blair's government that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction. But when public opinion support was carefully dosed to above 50 percent by those "open debates," a military attack was launched and hundreds of thousands of Iraqis died as a result.

Today, the British public broadcaster admits that there were no dangerous weapons in Iraq, but never mentions its malicious role in spreading this mass deception, according to human rights activists.

Fifteen years prior to that, they say, when the West-backed Iraqi dictator actually possessed chemical weapons and used them to kill Iranian soldiers and his own civilians, an "open debate" was conducted between reality and the fake Iranian responsibility propagated by the US.

Since its establishment in 1940, the BBC Persian Service has pursued a hostile policy towards the interests of the Iranian people, blatantly defending British imperial interests. Already in 1941, the BBC tried to explain to listeners that the Anglo-Soviet occupation was benevolent and beneficial for them and that the replacement of one dictator by another was necessary for a gradual, long-term process of political liberalization.

Such and numerous other contradictions are not surprising, since the 1951 correspondence of the British Embassy with American counterparts refers to Iranians as "illiterate" people who need to be convinced of the inviolability of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC).

BBC radio programs portrayed the AIOC, a British-owned oil giant whose exploitative concessions were highly unpopular among Iranian politicians and people, as the "best employer" and provider of the "best services" in the country, without which the resources would be worthless.

These BBC manipulations, directed mainly by the British Embassy, did not find fertile ground as many listeners began to call their studio and ask them logical questions.

One Iranian asked how the UK could call itself the "Mother of Democracy" and deny the same thing for Iran, another had wondered why the UK considered it illegal for Iran to nationalize its oil if London nationalized its coal and steel industries.

Others criticized Britain's insistence on adherence to treaties with rulers it had deposed, as well as un lucrative concessions that kept Iran from progressing.

The inability of the BBC Persian staff to meaningfully answer these clear questions worried the London headquarters and the British officials since they provoked a number of protests. The AIOC's Iranian employees also complained against the BBC's claims, as many faced discrimination at work and lived in

poor housing.

Instead of improving their living conditions, the British Foreign Office suggested that the BBC should report the conditions of the Iranian workers at a Russo-Iranian caviar company, which is likely one of the first recorded examples of whataboutism.

British reports from the pre-revolutionary period testify that the BBC had an extremely bad reputation among the people and was one of the least listened-to radio stations.

The situation did not change even after the Islamic Revolution of 1979, because the BBC even today continues with subversive activities and underestimating the Iranian people's intelligence. During the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, Iran's health ministry rejected BBC Persian's allegations about the "real" number of COVID-19 infections and deaths in Iran, advising the broadcaster to work instead on the questionable COVID-19 toll reported by the UK government.

Iran's health ministry spokeswoman Sima-Sadat Lari at the time said BBC Persian tried to create ambiguity by quoting "unnamed" sources and applying an unscientific methodology.

"Iran decisively pursues the scientific path approved by the World Health Organization [in reporting the COVID-19 statistics]," she said in her statement at the time.

More recently, during the West-backed riots in Iran, BBC World Service in general and the BBC Persian Service in particular spearheaded the misinformation campaign against the Islamic Republic.

For example, it reported that police officers beat Mahsa Amini's head with a baton and banged her head against one of their vehicles. The CT Scan report demolished such lies.

The British broadcaster tried to indoctrinate young Iranians with distorted coverage, pushing them into the streets but failed in the end as truth and facts triumphed over falsehood and distortions.

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