



Australian Federation
of Islamic Councils

**Open Letter on an Urgent Call for Comprehensive Inquiry into Zionist/Pro-Israeli Influence
in the ABC and Cultural institutions**

Hon Michelle Rowland MP
Minister for Communications
Member for Greenway

The Hon Tony Burke MP
Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations
Minister for the Arts

House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Ministers Rowlands and Burke

The Australian Federation of Islamic Councils (AFIC) is writing to express our deep concern regarding the recent revelations surrounding the termination of Australian-Lebanese journalist Antoinette Lattouf from the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC). The leaked WhatsApp messages reported by the Sydney Morning Herald raise serious questions about the circumstances leading to her dismissal and the potential interference from external groups.

The leaked messages suggest a coordinated campaign orchestrated by an element of the Zionist/Pro-Israeli Lobby including a group called Lawyers for Israel, which reportedly wrote to prominent figures at the ABC, including chair Ita Buttrose and managing director David Anderson, demanding Lattouf's dismissal. Furthermore, the messages reveal an alarming level of influence exerted by external entities, raising questions about the independence and integrity of the decision-making process within the ABC.

The nature of the campaign, as detailed in the leaked messages, including threats of legal action and the branding of Lattouf's lawyer, Josh Bornstein, as a "traitor," is deeply troubling. Such actions not only undermine the principles of freedom of expression but also raise concerns about potential discrimination based on religious and ethnic backgrounds.

It is crucial to examine the extent of external influence and the implications for journalistic independence within the ABC.

Australian Federation of Islamic Councils

*The peak body for Australian Muslims representing
State and Territory Islamic Councils and Societies*



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Additionally, the Sydney Morning Herald alleges that this group has been involved in a campaign against the Sydney Theatre Company, raising concerns about a broader pattern of interference in media and cultural institutions. This, coupled with the resignation of political reporter Nour Haydar over concerns about the broadcaster's coverage of the Israel-Hamas conflict, highlights a growing issue within the ABC.

Considering these serious concerns, the Australian Government should initiate a comprehensive inquiry into the Zionist/Pro Israeli Lobby Influence at the ABC and other Cultural Institutions, with a focus on:

1. Examining the decision-making process leading to Lattouf's dismissal.
2. Investigating the extent of external influence from groups such as Lawyers for Israel.
3. Assessing the impact of external pressures on the ABC's commitment to journalistic independence and diversity.
4. Reviewing the broader context of any campaigns targeting media and cultural institutions to ensure the integrity of these organizations.

A transparent and thorough investigation is necessary to uphold the principles of free press, diversity, and independence in journalism. I trust that your commitment to these values will guide your actions in addressing this matter appropriately.

We look forward to hearing about the steps taken to ensure the integrity and independence of the ABC and our cultural institutions.

Established in 1964, AFIC serves as the Peak Muslim Organization, with State Councils in every state and over 150 members. Throughout its history, AFIC has pioneered numerous community services and remains an active peak organization.

We anticipate you reply.

Sincerely,

Dr Rateb Jneid
President

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