



June 29, 2023

To:
The Foreign Press Association Board

In your letter from June 28, you make several claims regarding a video published by the Israeli Ministry of Public Diplomacy as a quick guide to reading the news about Israel.

I'd like to take this opportunity to elucidate those claims, and reply accordingly.

Firstly, you say the word "fake" has disturbed you. And you go on to discuss its use in "less-than-democratic governments around the world." But the mere fact you can write such a letter proves the opposite - Israel is and always will be a vibrant democracy. Also, as journalists, it's expected that you accept the definition of a word as it's used in a given context, namely - following a list of examples showing journalistic distortions.

Secondly, you state that you welcome fair criticism of news coverage, and mention the corrected examples in the video. Indeed, the video – whose fact checking was impeccable – clearly states where inaccuracies were dealt with. But you failed to welcome the fair criticism shown by other, uncorrected, examples in the video, as well as the underlying bias that necessitated corrections to begin with.

Thirdly, you request the removal of the video. Clearly, there is no justification for it, based on all of the above. The video was also scrutinized by professionals, and received legal approval. It is accurate, factual and legitimate.

Finally, a word about the values of your profession. Journalists must be committed to the freedom of speech, and not seek the silencing of uncomfortable truths that must be addressed.

I'd be glad to meet you and further discuss your work.

Sincerely,

Galit Distal Atbaryan,
Israeli Minister of Public Diplomacy

CC: Nitzan Chen, Government Press Office (GPO) Director
CC: Lior Haiat, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
CC: David Baker, Prime Minister's Office