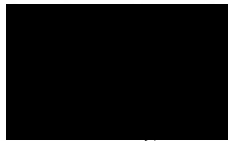




06 August 2012

Mr Mark Thompson
Director-General
British Broadcasting Corporation



Dear Mr Thompson:

By way of introduction, the European Centre for Law and Justice ("ECLJ") is an international not-for-profit law firm located in Strasbourg, France, dedicated to protecting human rights and religious freedom in Europe. The ECLJ is also committed to the rule of law in international affairs. In that light, the ECLJ holds Special Consultative Status as an NGO before the United Nations¹.

In its coverage of the 2012 Olympics, the BBC has maintained a biased and politically divisive stance in its dealings with the State of Israel. On its website compilation of competitor nation profiles, the BBC has intentionally refused to list Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. While the BBC respects the right of other nations to designate their own capitals by listing them as such on their country profiles, the BBC, by refusing to list Jerusalem as the Israeli capital, demonstrates an ignorance of international law, openly biased and politically-charged journalism, and a clear intention to insult and denigrate the State of Israel vis-à-vis other participating states.

The respect for the sovereign equality of all states is firmly rooted in international law². Intrinsic to the sovereignty of a state is its right to expect that the international community will respect its "territorial integrity" and will not interfere "in [its] internal affairs"³. A basic right of a sovereign state is the ability to decide its own internal affairs, such as its form of government and type of constitution, its national language, its economic system, and its national capital, and to do so without external interference in such basic domestic issues⁴.

¹Consultative Status for the European Centre for Law and Justice, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, <http://esango.un.org/civilsociety/consultativeStatusSummary.do?profileCode=3010> (last visited 6 Aug. 2012).

²G.A. Res. 55/2, ¶ 4, U.N. Doc. A/RES/55/2 (18 Sept. 2002).

³*Id.*

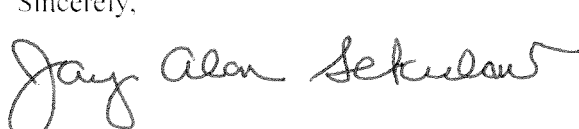

⁴IAN BROWNIE, PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC INTERNATIONAL LAW 287-95 (6th ed. 2006).

Since 1949, the international community has recognised Israel as a sovereign state and as a member in good standing of the family of nations⁵. In 1980, Israel declared Jerusalem to be its national capital⁶. As an internationally-recognised sovereign state, Israel has the inherent right to designate Jerusalem as its national capital and, based on comity, to expect the respect of the international community as to its decision. While some in the international community may dispute such a decision, they must still respect the right of an internationally-recognised sovereign state to take such a basic decision as to its own internal affairs. By intentionally refusing to list Jerusalem as the national capital of Israel, the BBC has demonstrated a clear ignorance of and disrespect for well-established principles of international law regarding state sovereignty.

Moreover, by engaging in such a biased manner toward Israel, the BBC has compromised its own integrity as a reputable news organisation dedicated to its mission of informing, educating, and entertaining the public⁷. Whilst the 2012 Olympics provide an excellent opportunity for the BBC to further its mission, the BBC has instead chosen to impose its own political views with respect to Israel and its ability to designate its own capital, thus striking at the very legitimacy of Israel's existence. By refusing to recognise Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, the BBC has violated one of its claimed core values—impartiality—by imposing its political view concerning Israel's sovereign choice of its national capital. By so doing, the BBC has politicised the Olympic forum, a forum meant to be apolitical.

We call upon the BBC to respect Israel's standing as an internationally-recognised sovereign state as well as Israel's right to designate its own capital. We urge the BBC to correct its blatant and biased political stance and to list Jerusalem as the capital of Israel forthwith.

Sincerely,

	
Jay Alan Sekulow Chief Counsel	Robert W. Ash Senior Counsel

⁵See *Member States*, UNITED NATIONS, <http://www.un.org/en/members/> (last visited 6 Aug. 2012); *Israel*, FOREIGN & COMMONWEALTH OFF., <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/travel-advice-by-country/country-profile/middle-east-north-africa/israel/?profile=all> (last updated 19 Mar. 2012); *Background Note: Israel*, U.S. DEP'T ST., <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3581.htm#profile> (last updated 22 Feb. 2012).

⁶Basic Law: Jerusalem, Capital of Israel, 5740–1980, SH No. 980 p. 186 (Isr.).

⁷*Mission and Values*, BBC, http://www.bbc.co.uk/aboutthebbc/insidethebbc/whoweare/mission_and_values/ (last visited 6 Aug. 2012).