

YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS

XXXXXXXXXXXX MP

House of Commons

London SW1A 0AA

INSERT DATE HERE

Dear XXXXXXXXXXXX

I am writing to bring to your attention changes that are being proposed by the BBC, which threaten to undermine the future of quality journalism and the independence of the World Service.

Proposals are being enacted which will see major parts of World Service operations being moved overseas. As a member of BECTU I have real concerns over the implications of these moves for the future integrity and independence of Britain's voice overseas.

The current proposals would see at least 50 per cent of programming from the World Service's South Asia section being produced abroad. The BBC wants work from the Urdu, Hindi and Nepali services to be relocated to Pakistan, India, and Nepal. These services account for a third of the World Service audience.

The rationale given for these changes is that they will help bring World Service programming "closer to its audiences." While we have heard this particular piece of BBC jargon many times, it is the first time we have seen it applied quite so literally in a geographic sense; this statement also ignores the many fine freelances and correspondents the BBC uses across the world. However, since production in these countries will be subject to local laws, we have very real concerns that such moves fatally undermine the ability of the World Service to provide an independent voice, and will subject employees to much less favourable local employment laws.

BECTU and NUJ members at the World Service are also concerned that these plans have the potential to erode the distinctive nature of BBC broadcasts. It is not clear to us how the UK public interest is served by the production of broadcasting similar in nature to local radio stations already operating in these regions. It is the distinctive voice of BBC broadcasts, combined with their independence from local political and commercial influences, which define the value of the BBC World Service.

BBC staff are being pushed to give up full time jobs. In their place, most are being offered a choice between redundancy or lower paid short term jobs in unstable and possibly unsafe locations abroad. The World

Service is funded by the taxpayer. We do not believe that the UK public interest is being served by these moves.

I would be happy to meet with you to discuss this issue in more depth. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

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