

Media Release

20 August 2015

BSA upholds complaint about unbalanced coverage of Gaza conflict

The BSA has upheld four complaints that a segment on Radio New Zealand National's *Sunday Morning* programme discussing the July/August 2014 Gaza conflict was unbalanced.

The segment contained two items. One discussed the relationship between Israel and South Africa and Israel's arms industry. The other was an interview with an anti-apartheid activist, who discussed these things as well as modern-day Israel's treatment of Palestinians.

The activist interviewed by Radio New Zealand described Israel's actions in Gaza as 'genocidal' and said that Zionism and apartheid were the 'spiritual twins of Nazism'. The Authority acknowledged that as this was a live interview the programme host was likely 'caught off-guard by the path the interview took'.

It pointed out that 'the opposing view did not necessarily have to come from another interviewee; the interviewer could have presented an alternative viewpoint by acting as "devil's advocate" and challenging the interviewee's assertions, or alerting listeners to the existence of other perspectives'.

The Authority also found that, although the controversial issues standard allows the broadcaster to make reasonable efforts to achieve balance either within the programme or within the period of current interest, some of the comments made in the segment were so extreme that they could not be balanced by other broadcasts dealing with the Gaza conflict generally.

As a result of failing to present countering views, listeners were not able to 'arrive at an informed and reasoned opinion about the July/August 2014 developments in the Gaza conflict', the Authority said.

The Authority made no order as Radio New Zealand acknowledged there were issues with how the interview was handled.

ENDS

For more information contact Nicole Hickman on 027 313 0179.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The full decision is available at <http://bsa.govt.nz/decisions/latest>.

ABOUT THE BROADCASTING STANDARDS AUTHORITY

The Broadcasting Standards Authority is an independent body that oversees the broadcasting standards regime in New Zealand. We do this by determining complaints that broadcasts have breached standards, by doing research and also by providing information about broadcasting standards.

We are essentially an appeal body, which is why complaints generally go to the broadcaster first (with the exception of privacy issues and election advertisements).

The Authority Board has four members – Peter Radich (chair), Leigh Pearson, Te Rau Kupenga and Paula Rose.

The Authority members who determined this complaint were Peter Radich, Mary Anne Shanahan, Leigh Pearson and Te Rau Kupenga.

For more information see our website: www.bsa.govt.nz.