



British Broadcasting Corporation
Broadcasting House, London W1A 1AA

9th January 2025

Rt Hon Dame Emily Thornberry MP Chair, Foreign Affairs Committee
Dame Caroline Dinenage MP Chair, Culture Media and Sport Committee
Sarah Champion MP Chair, International Development Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Dear Dame Emily, Dame Caroline and Ms Champion,

Thank you for inviting BBC Director General Tim Davie and me to give evidence at the joint committee session on the future of the BBC World Service.

Following on from the questions you asked about the decision process for closing BBC Arabic radio and engagement with the Government in the lead up to the decision, I include below some additional information which I hope you will find helpful.

The BBC shared details of its budget deficit and subsequent overall savings requirement with the FCDO in spring 2022. In order to achieve those savings within the necessary timeframe, the BBC advised the FCDO that Arabic radio was likely to be in scope of the savings programme in summer 2022 and – in dialogue with FCDO – provided some information about the impact of the proposals such as reach loss. We advised that BBC News Arabic 24/7 TV programming and our digital content would remain available and that the trends at the time were for audiences to continue to migrate to digital content. We answered the questions the FCDO put to us regarding the overall savings programme with both parties respecting provisions in the BBC's Royal Charter requiring the BBC to be editorially and operationally independent. The final decision and announcement of savings were made by the BBC in September 2022.

Please do get in touch if you have any further questions.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JCMunro'.

Jonathan Munro
Deputy CEO and Global Director, BBC News