

17 September 2018

Dear Mr. Kaye,

Thank you for your communication, dated 20 July 2018, regarding Mr. Matthew Lee. As you will be aware from your exchanges with my predecessor Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information, Ms. Cristina Gallach, in 2016, Mr. Lee was a Non-Resident Correspondent for Inner City Press to the United Nations pursuant to the accreditation granted to him by the United Nations Department of Public Information (“DPI”), Media Accreditation and Liaison Unit (“MALU”). As explained in Ms. Gallach’s letter to you of 25 May 2016, Mr. Lee’s accreditation was revised from Resident Correspondent to Non-Resident Correspondent in February 2016 as a result of his breaches of the United Nations Media Accreditation Guidelines (the “Guidelines”).

I would note that Mr. Lee’s accreditation as a Non-Resident Correspondent was withdrawn by letter from me to Mr. Lee, dated 17 August 2018, in light of his continued repeated breaches of the Guidelines. A copy of the letter is enclosed for your reference.

Your communication requests information in response to the following questions:

- “1. What standards apply to determine the various statuses for journalists at the United Nations? Would you kindly identify where those standards may be found in UN rules, regulations or policies? In addition, who has the authority to interpret and implement the standards? Are decisions and actions under those standards subject to appeal?
2. How were those standards applied to the situation of Mr. Matthew Lee? What specific standards did he violate, according to your office’s findings?
3. How does your office respond to the allegations lodged by Mr. Lee about the use of force by security officers? Has your office undertaken any kind of evaluation to determine whether force was used and, if so, whether it was excessive?”

Regarding question 1, DPI’s media accreditation requirements and the statuses granted to correspondents are described on MALU’s website at <http://www.un.org/en/media/accreditation/accreditation.shtml>. As described in pages one and two of my letter to Mr. Lee, members of the media accredited by the United Nations are holders of United Nations Media ID cards and, as such, are held to abide and adhere to the Guidelines.¹ The Guidelines are publicly available at <http://www.un.org/en/media/accreditation/guidelines.shtml> and a copy is attached. The Guidelines set out the terms by which access to the United Nations is granted to accredited media. Their purpose is to grant as much access as possible to members

¹ “All card holders are held to abide and adhere by the following guidelines by acceptance of and use of their issued U.N. Media ID Card” - United Nations Media Guidelines, Introduction.

of the media while safeguarding and protecting United Nations Headquarters and ensuring the safety, security and comfort of all occupants, including staff, delegates and media.²

By reference, the Guidelines include the United Nations Administrative Instruction ST/AI/309/Rev. 2 on the “Authority of United Nations Security Officers” which was in effect at the time of relevant events.³ The Administrative Instruction is publicly available at <https://undocs.org/ST/AI/309/Rev.2> and a copy is attached. The Administrative Instruction confirms that all persons, while they are on United Nations premises, are expected to comply with the directions that may be issued by a United Nations security officer.⁴

In accepting a United Nations Media ID card, most recently on 18 April 2018, which afforded him the privilege of access to the premises of the United Nations, Mr. Lee agreed to the terms of the Guidelines. The Guidelines are interpreted and implemented by DPI and decisions made pursuant to the Guidelines are not subject to appeal.⁵

Regarding question 2, I would refer you to pages three and four of my letter to Mr. Lee which describe conduct by him which constituted repeated breaches of the relevant provisions of the Guidelines as set out in the letter.

Regarding question 3, the allegations made by Mr. Lee with respect to officers of the United Nations Department of Safety and Security are not under the purview of DPI. I would, however, note from the perspective of DPI, as the Department interpreting and implementing the Guidelines, that the withdrawal of Mr. Lee’s accreditation did not stem from a single incident, but was the result of his continued repeated breaches of the Guidelines and followed several prior notifications from DPI to him to cease such conduct.

I understand that, subsequent to your letter, Mr. Lee submitted the allegations regarding United Nations security officers to the United Nations for consideration pursuant to Secretary-General’s Bulletin ST/SGB/2008/5 on “Prohibition of discrimination, harassment, including sexual harassment, and abuse of authority” (the “SGB”) and to the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services pursuant to United Nations Administrative Instruction ST/AI/2017/1 on “Unsatisfactory conduct, investigations and the disciplinary process” (the “AI”). The SGB and AI are

² United Nations Media Guidelines, Preamble

³ “*All Correspondents who are granted access to UNHQ must abide by the policies in place...*” - United Nations Media Guidelines, Preamble

⁴ “*...All persons on the premises are expected to comply with the directions that may be issued by the security officers in the performance of their functions.*” - United Nations Administrative Instruction ST/AI/309/Rev. 2, paragraph 1

⁵ “*All UN Media ID Card holders acknowledge that the United Nations reserves the right to deny or withdraw accreditation of journalists from media organizations whose activities run counter to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations or who abuse the privileges so extended or put the accreditation to improper use or act in a way not consistent with the principles of the Organization or established journalism ethics and standards*” - United Nations Media Guidelines, Introduction

publicly available at <https://undocs.org/ST/SGB/2008/5> and <https://undocs.org/ST/AI/2017/1> respectively and copies are attached. I further understand that the allegations are currently under review by the United Nations in accordance with the procedures set out in the SGB and the AI.

Finally, I would like to note that, even though the United Nations has withdrawn the accreditation granted to Mr. Lee as a correspondent for Inner City Press and, thereby, the privilege of Mr. Lee's access to United Nations premises, the Organization continues to respond to questions submitted by him for Inner City Press to the Office of the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General so that his capacity to report freely on the United Nations remains.

Yours sincerely,



Alison Smale
Under-Secretary-General
for Global Communications