

## Telegraph Media Group

I am writing in response to Ofcom's invitation to comment on the proposed acquisition of the Telegraph Media Group by Redbird IMI Media Joint Venture, LCC, which is closely linked to the Qatar Investment Authority, Qatar's sovereign wealth fund. I believe this acquisition, if it went ahead, would have a harmful effect on both the accurate presentation of news and the free expression of opinion.

### **The accurate presentation of news ground**

It seems unwise to allow any organisation with close links to a foreign government to acquire a UK media organisation on which people rely for accurate presentation of news. It seems even more unwise where the foreign government in question is that of a Muslim country with values that are at odds with the Judeo-Christian values that underpin the UK and which the Telegraph has consistently supported.

The Telegraph has previously reported on human rights abuses in Qatar:

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/qatar-world-cup-workers-exploited/>

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/world-news/2022/11/05/lived-qatar-speculations-police-torture-no-surprise-bring/>

The acquisition of the Telegraph Media Group by Redbird IMI Media Joint Venture, LCC would inevitably lead to the Telegraph's staff feeling less able to report freely on news items like this.

Currently the Telegraph is the most pro-Israel of the UK's national newspapers, and many people in the UK value the Telegraph's stance, which unlike many other UK news outlets seems to be free from ideological opposition to Israel's existence. The acquisition of the Telegraph Media Group by Redbird IMI Media Joint Venture, LCC would inevitably lead to the Telegraph's staff feeling less able to continue with this stance. Qatar hosts many members of the leadership of Hamas and clearly the Qatari authorities are supportive of this terrorist organisation. It was reported a few days ago that four Hamas terrorists who had been in prison in Libya had been freed following the intervention of the president of Turkey, and were being flown to Qatar:

[Turkey's Erdogan mediates release of Hamas terrorists from Libya - report \(msn.com\)](https://www.msn.com/en-gb/news/world/turkey-erdogan-mediates-release-of-hamas-terrorists-from-libya)

### **The free expression of opinion ground**

It is well known that the freedom of expression that we enjoy in the UK does not exist in Qatar.

Amnesty International has documented many human rights abuses in Qatar, which include repressing press freedom. The following sentence is an extract from information available on the Amnesty International website here: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/middle-east-and-north-africa/qatar/report-qatar/>

**Authorities continued to repress press freedom by imposing restrictions on broadcasters, including banning them from filming in certain locations such as government buildings, hospitals, universities, migrant workers' accommodation sites and private homes.**

Similar human rights abuses, including the case of a former media and communications director who claims to have been maliciously prosecuted and imprisoned because he had criticised the handling of a migrant workers' strike in Qatar in August 2019, are documented on the website of Human Rights Watch here: <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2023/country-chapters/qatar>

With such a repressive approach to freedom of expression in Qatar itself, it would be naïve to suppose that Qatar would not seek to influence the Telegraph Media Group's reporting on issues in which it had an interest, if it had the opportunity. The proposed acquisition of the Telegraph Media Group by Redbird IMI Media Joint Venture, LCC would give Qatar such an opportunity. I believe that this acquisition should not be allowed.

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