

06

Dec 2018

▲ Lvl. 2

Resolved

United Kingdom

n° 81/2017

Alert created on: 28 Jul 2017

License for UK Community Radio Station Revoked

SOURCE OF THREAT ▶ State

CATEGORY  ▶ Other acts having chilling effects on media freedom

PARTNER: Article 19

On 27 July 2017, Ofcom, the UK regulatory authority for audiovisual media, revoked the community radio licence held by Iman FM, due to "extremely serious breaches of the Broadcasting Code, after [Iman FM] aired material likely to incite or encourage the commission of crime or to lead to disorder". The decision is related to the broadcast of a series of lectures by Anwar al-Awlaki, an American radical Muslim cleric. Ofcom launched an investigation into the station, following a complaint from a member of the public at the beginning of July. The radio station's service was suspended on 4 July; and on 27 July, Ofcom issued a decision stating that it will not be reinstated.

According to Ofcom's decision, the breach of the Broadcasting Code was particularly serious: the broadcast lectures are clearly extremist, coming from a known figure identified as a terrorist by the United States. Ofcom stated that Iman FM had demonstrated "a fundamental lack of understanding of the basic requirements of compliance in broadcasting", and that a failure to revoke the license would "put listeners and the general public at risk." Ofcom further noted that, although there is no evidence that Iman FM intended to incite crime, the station's failure to fully listen to or check the source of materials that it broadcast "fell substantially below the standards expected of a responsible broadcaster, including one that is run by a team of volunteers."

Iman FM has admitted it made a mistake broadcasting the lectures and has issued an apology for it.

Freedom of expression groups have raised concerns that Ofcom's decision is disproportionate.

RESOLVED

06 Dec 2018: On 6 December 2018, considering the fact that Iman TV recognised being in breach of the broadcasting code and did not appeal the decision, the partner organisations to the Platform declared this case to be “resolved”, concluding it was no longer an active threat to media freedom.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

-  [Ofcom First Breach Decision and Suspension Notice](#)
-  [Article 19 statement: "UK: Ofcom should encourage community media to improve their practices, not reduce them to silence"](#)
-  [Ofcom Second Breach Decision and Revocation Notice](#)

STATE REPLIES



12 Oct 2017 | Response from the United Kingdom Government

-  [Letter from the United Kingdom Permanent Representation to the Council of Europe](#)