

United Nations  Nations Unies

HEADQUARTERS • SIEGE NEW YORK, NY 10017
TEL.: 1 (212) 963.2912 • FAX: 1 (212) 963.4361

25 May 2016

Dear Messrs. Kaye and Forst,

I write in response to your letter of 25 February 2016 about the status of media accreditation to the United Nations of Mr. Matthew Lee of Inner City Press.

I should like to confirm that the privilege that had been accorded to Mr. Lee of the use of office space in the Headquarters premises of the United Nations as an accredited resident correspondent was withdrawn by the United Nations, by my letter of 19 February 2016 to Mr. Lee. Subsequently, Mr Lee applied for and was granted non-resident correspondent accreditation to the United Nations on 25 February 2016. With such non-resident correspondent accreditation, Mr. Lee has been free to continue to carry out his full journalistic activities in reporting in and about the United Nations, in the same manner as any journalist with such accreditation.

Mr. Lee's privilege of using space in the United Nations Headquarters was accorded to him, as he had acknowledged in applying for the use of such space, contingent upon his observing the United Nations Media Accreditation Guidelines, which are publicly available at the following website: <http://www.un.org/en/media/accreditation/guidelines.shtml>. As set forth in the Guidelines and also referred to in my letter of 19 February 2016 to Mr. Lee, the activities of journalists accredited to the United Nations must not "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." The Guidelines further state that accredited journalists "are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner in their interaction with other members of the UN press corps, UN officials, and diplomats," that "[w]here unexpected circumstances arise, the approach will be to avoid confrontation, maintain civility and find the fastest, safest and most secure acceptable solution," and that "[t]hose correspondents who violate the ground rules on access may have their accreditation withdrawn or suspended."

Mr. Lee had no right, whether proprietary, contractual or otherwise, to have the use of space in the Headquarters premises of the United Nations. He paid no rent or other consideration for the use of such space. His use of the space was an accommodation and a privilege accorded to Mr. Lee and revocable by the United Nations in its sole discretion.

Mr. David Kaye
Special Rapporteur on the promotion
and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression

Mr. Michel Forst
Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
Geneva

The privilege of the use of such office space was withdrawn after an incident in which Mr. Lee trespassed in a closed meeting of the United Nations Correspondence Association. The disturbance and altercation that his behavior caused required the presence of United Nations Security and Safety Officers to diffuse. Thus, as was made clear in my letter of 19 February 2016 to Mr. Lee, his behavior did not comport with the express requirements of the United Nations Media Accreditation Guidelines, which are applicable to all journalists accredited to the United Nations. These circumstances, consequently, occasioned the withdrawal of Mr. Lee's resident correspondent accreditation.

Yours sincerely,



Cristina Gallach
Under-Secretary-General
for Communications and Public Information