

# Press Release

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### **PACE Sub-Committee on the Media expresses its relief at the release of Alan Johnston**

Strasbourg, 04.07.2007 - "It is with great relief that we have learned of the release of the BBC journalist Alan Johnston", said Robert Walter, Chairman of the Sub-Committee on the Media of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) today. "Alan Johnston has been held hostage in Gaza since 12 March by a terrorist group which claimed religious legitimacy. As the Sub-Committee on the Media stated last week, holding an innocent person hostage for alleged political reasons is a grave violation of universal human values.

The Sub-Committee has called repeatedly for the immediate release and appealed to the Palestinian authorities to do their utmost. The Palestinian Legislative Council is regularly invited the sessions of the Parliamentary Assembly when the Middle East is on the agenda. The Parliamentary Assembly passed in April Resolution 1550 (2007) on the situation in the Middle East and called in this Resolution for the release of Alan Johnston.

The Parliamentary Assembly pays special attention to media freedom and the security of journalists, especially in conflict situations, and is resolved to support monitoring this issue."

<http://assembly.coe.int/main.asp?Link=/documents/adoptedtext/ta07/eres1550.htm>  
<http://assembly.coe.int/Main.asp?link=/Documents/AdoptedText/ta07/ERES1535.htm>  
<http://assembly.coe.int/Main.asp?link=/Documents/AdoptedText/ta05/ERES1438.htm>  
<http://assembly.coe.int/Main.asp?link=/Documents/AdoptedText/ta05/EREC1706.htm>

The Parliamentary Assembly brings together 318 members from the national parliaments of the 47 member states.

President: René van der Linden (Netherlands, EPP/CD); Secretary General of the Assembly: Mateo Sorinas.

Political Groups: SOC (Socialist Group); EPP/CD (Group of the European People's Party); ALDE (Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe); EDG (European Democratic Group); UEL (Group of the Unified European Left).