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Middle East Broadcasting Networks Sues USAGM for Blocking Access to Congressional Funds

Suit Seeks to Restore Access to Congressionally Appropriated Funds

Washington, DC — Today, the Middle East Broadcasting Networks (MBN), represented by Democracy Forward and Munger, Tolles & Olson LLP, filed [suit](#) in federal court challenging the U.S. Agency for Global Media's (USAGM) unlawful withholding of funds that Congress appropriated to support MBN's independent journalism in the Middle East and North Africa.

The lawsuit alleges that the Administration is unlawfully withholding MBN's funding, forcing the network to suspend operations. The suit urges the court to require multiple federal officials and agencies—including USAGM, the Office of Management and Budget, and the U.S. Department of the Treasury—to restore that funding immediately.

Earlier this month, USAGM unilaterally terminated MBN's funding, citing a new executive order and stating that MBN's grant "no longer effectuates agency priorities," despite Congress's clear directive and statutory requirement to fund MBN's work. As a result, MBN has been forced to furlough U.S.-based staff.

"We are saddened that we need to take this action, but we simply cannot stand by and let America's voice in the region go silent," stated **MBN President and CEO Dr. Jeffrey Gedmin**. "Our brave journalists face threats in their work," Gedmin continued; "they deserve our fullest support — and our audience depends on MBN's reliable and uniquely responsible reporting."

For over two decades, MBN has provided millions of people in the Middle East with accurate, independent reporting in environments where press freedom is limited or nonexistent. The organization relies entirely on congressionally appropriated funds, which, under the law, must be distributed by USAGM.

“Congress created MBN to provide independent news to communities otherwise vulnerable to misinformation, disinformation and propaganda. The termination of MBN’s funding is a violation of the separation of powers in this nation,” said **Robin Thurston, Legal Director at Democracy Forward**. “When an agency decides it can withhold funds Congress specifically directed it to spend, it threatens not only the future of MBN but the integrity of our constitutional system.”

The lawsuit asks the court to immediately block the termination of MBN’s grant and ensure that MBN regains access to its congressionally appropriated funds to continue its vital mission and safeguard its journalists.

Read the full complaint [here](#).

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Democracy Forward is a national legal organization that advances democracy and social progress through litigation, policy, public education, and regulatory engagement. For more information, please visit www.democracyforward.org.

About.Middle.East.Broadcasting.Networks?.Inc.(MBN)

MBN is a multimedia organization whose mission is to provide audiences with Arabic-language news about the United States, important coverage of human rights and governance issues in the Middle East and North Africa, and an essential alternative to the disinformation served up by China, Russia, and Iran. MBN seeks to inform, engage, and connect with the region’s people to support universal freedoms.

MBN is a non-profit corporate media outlet financed by the U.S. government

through a grant from USAGM, an independent federal agency. The USAGM is a firewall to protect broadcasters' professional independence and integrity.