

Tim Davie resigns as BBC director general after accusations of ‘serious and systemic’ bias in coverage

Michael Savage, *The Guardian*, Sun 9 Nov 2025 (shortened)

Tim Davie, the BBC’s director general, and the head of BBC News have resigned after a former adviser to the corporation accused it of “serious and systemic” bias in its coverage of issues including Donald Trump, Gaza and trans rights.

In an announcement that caused shock within the corporation, Davie said his departure was “entirely my decision” and it comes as the BBC prepares to apologise for the way it edited a Trump speech.

Deborah Turness, the head of BBC News, has also resigned. Sources within that department described a mood of dismay at Turness’s exit. “It feels like a coup,” one said. “This is the result of a campaign by political enemies of the BBC.”

10 Michael Prescott, a former independent external adviser to the BBC’s editorial guidelines and standards committee, criticised the editing of Trump’s speech in an edition of *Panorama*, which spliced together clips from an address the US president made on 6 January 2021. The edit suggested Trump told the crowd: “We’re going to walk down to the Capitol and I’ll be there with you, and we fight. We fight like hell.”

15 The words were taken from sections of his speech almost an hour apart. The incident has led to criticism of the BBC by Karoline Leavitt, Trump’s press secretary, who described the corporation this weekend as “100% fake news” and a “propaganda machine”.

On Sunday night Leavitt appeared to celebrate the departures, referring on X to her complaints about the BBC’s treatment of the US president’s speech.

20 Trump posted on his Truth Social platform that “very dishonest people” had “tried to step on the scales of a Presidential Election”, adding: “On top of everything else, they are from a Foreign Country, one that many consider our Number One Ally. What a terrible thing for democracy!”

Davie’s departure comes after a torrid year in which the BBC has been criticised over the comments of its former presenter Gary Lineker, the livestreaming of a Glastonbury festival performance of the rap punk duo Bob Vylan, and criticisms over a Gaza documentary.

The departures of Davie and Turness appear to be an attempt to protect the BBC from further attacks following Prescott’s criticisms, which he made in a letter to the BBC’s board.

The Prescott letter, which was passed to the *Daily Telegraph*, also condemned BBC Arabic for using contributors who had expressed antisemitic views. It included the views of a contributor who had previously stated online that Jews should be burned “as Hitler did”. The BBC has previously said he should not have been featured in the way he was.

Another featured contributor had described Jews online as “devils”. The BBC said in May that the person had been barred from being a contributor in future.

While many BBC figures believe Prescott’s letter refers to some genuine errors, there is also concern it is being used by its political opponents.

The Guardian has been told Prescott’s appointment as an external adviser had been pushed by the BBC board member Robbie Gibb, conservative prime minister Theresa May’s former communications chief who helped set up the rightwing broadcaster GB News.