

The role of the media in spreading the demonization of the Palestinian resistance.

دور الإعلام في نشر شيطنة المقاومة الفلسطينية

Pr. BELACEL Mohammed¹, University of M'sila

أ.د. محمد بلعسل، جامعة محمد بوضياف-المسيلة

mohammed.belasal@univ-msila.dz

Received:06./04/2026

Accepted: 14/05/2026

Published:01 /07/2026

Abstract:

This study examines the role of global media and communication, especially Western media, in demonizing Palestinian resistance. It highlights how international media programs and social media platforms contribute to portraying the Palestinian resistance as terrorism, rather than a legitimate struggle against the occupation. The paper explores the political and ideological motives behind this media bias, and its impact on the Palestinian people internally and externally. It also examines how social media platforms disseminate and promote these distorted images. The study concludes that various media programs significantly influence the values of justice, legitimacy, and human rights in the Palestinian issue.

Keywords: Global media and communication, Palestinian resistance, Demonization.

ملخص:

تبحث هذه الدراسة عن دور وسائل الإعلام والاتصال العالمية، وخاصة الغربية، في شيطنة المقاومة الفلسطينية. وتسلط الضوء على كيفية مساهمة البرامج الإعلامية ومنصات التواصل الاجتماعي العالمية في تصوير المقاومة الفلسطينية على أنها إرهاب، بدلاً من كونها نضالاً مشروعاً ضد الاحتلال. وتستكشف الورقة الدوافع السياسية والأيدولوجية وراء هذا التحيز الإعلامي، وتأثيره على الشعب الفلسطيني على المستوى الداخلي والخارجي. كما تبحث في كيفية نشر منصات التواصل الاجتماعي لهذه الصور المشوهة

¹. *Corresponding author: BELACEL Mohammed*

وتعزيزها. وتخلص الدراسة إلى أن البرامج الإعلامية المختلفة تؤثر بشكل كبير على قيم العدالة والشرعية وحقوق الإنسان في القضية الفلسطينية.

كلمات مفتاحية: وسائل الإعلام والاتصال العالمية، المقاومة الفلسطينية، الشيطنة.

1.INTRODUCTION

Undoubtedly that the recent Zionist aggression on Gaza revealed that many media outlets, especially Western media, played an important role in transmitting incorrect news and falsifying facts about the idea of the Palestinian people's resistance to the Israeli occupation and the way to achieve the people's freedom and take their legitimate independence like any other people. (Of course, this is not a general rule; there are exceptions).

Therefore, this research paper deals with the way the media covers the act of resistance of the Palestinian people, who have known a long journey in which they demanded their liberation from an occupation that practiced all means of oppression, crime, injustice, siege, displacement, and migration on them. We will also analyze the impact of this media demonization of the resistance on the internal and external levels.

From the above, this study attempts to answer the following question:

- **How does the media portray the Palestinian resistance in news coverage?**

This research follows a descriptive-analytical design. Firstly Descriptive, as it identifies and describes the dominant patterns and themes in the media portrayal of the Palestinian resistance. Secondly Analytical, as it interprets and explains how these portrayals serve political or ideological purposes, especially in shaping international public opinion.

2. Analysis of media coverage during major confrontations between the Palestinian resistance and Israeli forces.

In the beginning, modern media and communication have a major role in spreading news, revealing facts, and creating a global public opinion that follows events and news anywhere in the world, whether this news is true or incorrect. Therefore, in our topic, "The role of the media in spreading the demonization of the Palestinian resistance is a complex and multifaceted

issue that involves various factors and actors. This language creates a dichotomy where Palestinians are seen as inherently evil, justifying their portrayal as enemies that need to be defeated. How victimhood is politicized, often depicting Israelis as innocent victims while Palestinians are portrayed as aggressors. This narrative simplifies the complex reality of the conflict and supports the justification for disproportionate violence against Palestinians (Vargas and Daniela, 2024). As an example of this "One particularly familiar face is the Palestinian Ambassador to the UK, *Husam Zumlot*, who was persistently and relentlessly required by presenters and anchors in mainstream media, such as *CNN*, *BBC*, *Sky News*, and *Sky News Australia/Talk TV*, to condemn the Hamas attack on Israel and even to apologise for it"(Vargas and Daniela, 2024).

As another instance, the *BBC* mistranslated the testimony of a Palestinian hostage who was set free, subtitling the fragment to say "Only Hamas cared ... And we love them very much". In reality, she said, in Arabic: "As winter came, they cut off the electricity. We almost died from the cold weather. They sprayed us with pepper spray and left us to die inside the prison." The *BBC* has since corrected the translation and added a clarification stating the inaccurate subtitles were due to "an error in the editing process" (Vargas and Daniela, 2024).

Israeli propaganda has historically used significant events, such as the Holocaust, to portray itself as an eternal victim, enabling it to commit mass atrocities with impunity, including the mass killings in Gaza, the blockade, and the displacement of Palestinians, as efforts to reinforce Israeli settler colonialism.

In terms of numbers, " The number of martyrs in the recent Gaza events (2024) reached more than 36,379 martyrs in the Gaza Strip, including 15162Kids, 10018 Woman ,1049 elderly,492 Medical staff martyrs,147 Press Martyrs,246 Educational staff martyrs,152 UN staff martyrs..." (Ministry Of Health,2024).These non-final statistics reveal to us that Israel is practicing a policy of comprehensive destruction in Palestine, and is working in all colonial ways to implement a "de facto policy" by force without taking into account legal texts and human feelings.

So, "Hamas' attack and the suffering it wrought were newsworthy – it was shocking, direct physical violence. But while the eyes of the world were now focussed on the region, Israel's massive retaliation did not receive nearly the same amount or type of coverage. Instead, it was frequently uncritically framed as self-defense. This discrepancy can be attributed to news values, where proximity, prominence, human interest, and conflict play a role. But while newsworthiness is important, it should never result in biased reporting. (Jong, Belle de, 2024)

According to this context, "In a press conference, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu compared Palestinians to the Amalekites, a tribe mentioned in the Hebrew Bible that the Israelites were commanded to annihilate completely. Netanyahu referenced this biblical passage, emphasizing the importance of remembering and combating their enemies. He praised Israeli forces in Gaza and other regions, linking their efforts to a historical chain of Jewish heroes spanning 3,000 years. Netanyahu declared that the primary objective of Israeli forces is to utterly destroy their ruthless enemy and secure Israel's survival". (Inc, 2024)

In addition to the above, it is quite literally disgusting to see the way the U.S. gives nothing but unequivocal support for Ukrainians, the occupied, while providing the same unequivocal support for the occupier, Israel. Let us now take a look at what a handful of mainstream media coverage looks like, shall we? *CNN* posted a clip on its Instagram featuring anchor Christiane Amanpour discussing a hostage incident with the headline, "Video appears to show Israeli woman taken hostage." Footage is then shown of an Israeli woman being forced into a black Jeep as Amanpour details the woman's condition, to justify whether this action is right or wrong is not the point. Where was this same coverage when the Israeli Defense Forces continuously took Palestinians as hostages? Where was *CNN* then? (Abd-Elhameed, 2025).

An almost unanimous consensus has emerged in global opinion that the Western media coverage as a whole was not fair or just, and that it showed a clear bias towards the Israeli side, and that this bias clearly revealed the status

and credibility of the Western media, which it always advertises." the pro-Israel bias in Western media is rooted in the long-standing political alliance between the United States and Israel. This bipartisan support-shared by both Democrats and Republicans-ensures unwavering backing for Israel, regardless of its actions. Over time, the language used by U.S. administrations has become normalized within political discourse, shaping public perception and influencing media narratives that often go unchallenged"(Faras, 2025).

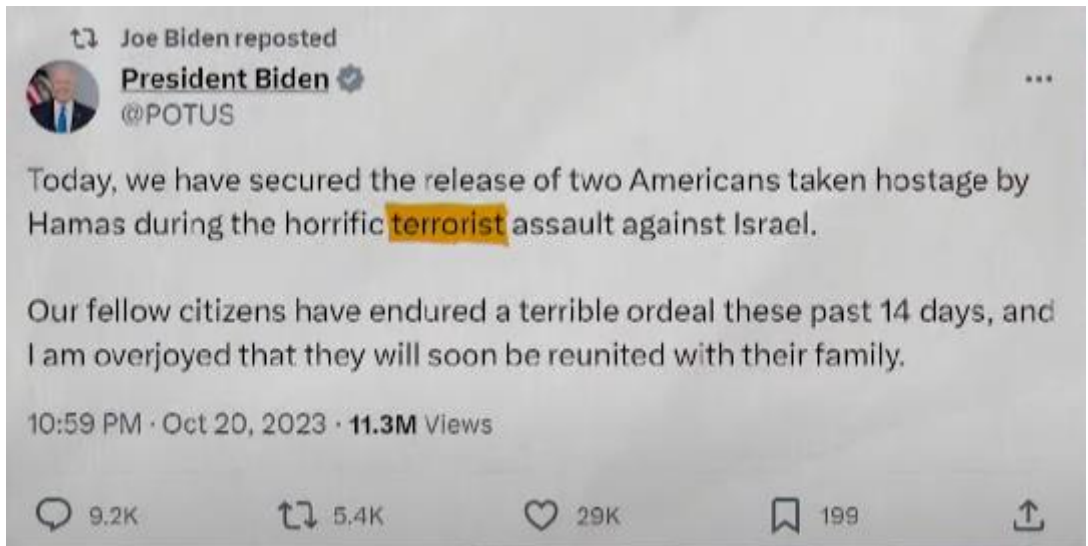
At the level of Arab media, we find ourselves facing a different path, where "Screens that follow countries that have moved in the direction of normalization, recognizing Israel and celebrating the growing relations with it, and reflect policies of Arab capitals that have clearly bet on economic partnerships from Tel Aviv, and political guarantees for the continuation of their rule after the Arab Spring made them not only be wary of its dimensions and future potential, but even go so far as to thwart it. Harassing its symbols and eliminating all its chances to change the Arab reality in the direction of freedom, democracy, and ensuring the sovereignty of states and peoples who have their own free decisions". (Al-Rihani, 2024)

Therefore, we note that the Arab media can be divided into two levels. The first is media that serves the Palestinian cause and is biased toward highlighting just issues in the world and revealing the truth of the situation in Palestine with all credibility, such as *Al-Jazeera*, *Alalam News* channel, the *Algerian media*, and others. While we notice on the other level that the countries that normalize relations with Israel or follow the policy of normalization with the Zionist entity, their media seeks to falsify the facts and publishes them as the Western and Zionist media publish them, and demonizes the resistance and defends Israel more than Israel defends itself.

On this basis, we can say, the *social media* or the *social networks* via the Internet helped reveal the truth about the demonization of the Palestinian resistance, which made the world, countries, institutions, and individuals know the truth about what is happening in Palestine and the truth about the media that is biased towards the Zionist project or not. Social media also plays a role in this topic. A major role in the strategies of oppression and

killing practiced in Palestine due to the enormous time that individuals spend every day on social platforms and applications such as: *X, Facebook, WeChat, ShareChat, Instagram, Pinterest, QZone, Weibo, VK, Tumblr, Baidu Tieba, LinkedIn, YouTube, Letterboxd, QQ, Quora, Telegram, WhatsApp, Signal, LINE, Snapchat, Pinterest, Viber, Reddit, Discord, TikTok, Microsoft Teams and Wikis.*

In this context, we note this tweet by US President *Joe Biden* on the Social media platform *X (X.COM)*. This reveals the complete political and media bias towards Israel and its work to suppress the voice of the Palestinian resistance and the absence of the right of the Palestinian people to live in dignity and with all legitimate freedom. Whoever defends their right is a terrorist and the occupied person is innocent and oppressed in the eyes of world leaders.



3.The impact of media demonization on the Palestinian resistance internally and externally:

Undoubtedly, the demonization of the Palestinian resistance in some Western media programs and social media, especially American and European ones, has affected the Palestinian problem and the Palestinian people's resistance to the Zionist occupation throughout the years of their

struggle and fight.

The demonization of the Palestinian resistance, both internally and externally, has had profound political, social, and psychological impacts on the Palestinian problem and the struggle of the Palestinian people against the Zionist occupation. This effect can be classified on two levels: the internal level and the external level.

3.1. External Impact:

Externally, the negative portrayal of Palestinian resistance in much of the Western media and political discourse has:

- Distorted the image of the Palestinian struggle by equating resistance with terrorism, ignoring its roots in occupation and dispossession." documents that Western outlets frequently trigger a "counter-terrorism" frame (labeling Palestinian actors as terrorists) which privileges official Israeli security narratives and reduces coverage of structural causes". (<https://lup.lub.lu.se/student-papers/record/9152769/file/9152777.pdf>).
- **Weakened international sympathy** and reduced diplomatic support for Palestinian rights in global institutions such as the UN and the European Union. Weak international sympathy and low diplomatic support for Palestinian rights in global institutions such as the United Nations and the European Union. The United Nations, using its VETO power in its meetings related to Gaza, denied the act of genocide, starvation and killing practiced by the Zionist occupation on the Palestinian people in Gaza. Therefore, " the ongoing genocide in Gaza is a collective crime, sustained by the complicity of influential Third States that have enabled longstanding systemic violations of international law by Israel " (Francesca,2025).
- **Justified Western military and financial support** for Israel under the pretext of "fighting terrorism," while overlooking ongoing human rights violations against Palestinians. This has led some media outlets

to encourage this policy and view Palestinian resistance movements as terrorist organizations and have not ignored the crimes committed by Israel against a defenseless people who are not militarily and materially strong.

Despite this, the rise of alternative and social media has enabled Palestinians and their supporters to challenge these biased narratives, exposing the realities of occupation and human suffering directly to global audiences. "unlike AJE, Western media (BBC, CNN, and NYT) tend to emphasize the individuality of Israeli victims experiencing hardship, while treating Palestinian victims more frequently as a collective. This is evident in the higher ratio of individualized to group-level reporting for the Israeli compared to the Palestinian side. The only outlet showing a more balanced pattern is AJE; here the prevalence of individualized (vs. group-level) narratives is very similar for the two sides. These findings suggest that even highly professional (and relatively "liberal") Western media tend to downplay the individuality of Palestinian victims experiencing the traumatic (and often fatal) consequences of war"(Bedoor, p12).

3.2. Internal Impact:

On the internal level, the demonization of the Western media has affected the Palestinian issue by dispersing national unity, diminishing morale in support of the people's right to freedom from the Israeli occupation, and supporting the state of confusion and mistrust in the resistance and resistance men, as well as focusing on the political division taking place in Palestine, especially between the political authority and the Hamas movement. "Palestinians are victims of Zionist and Israeli colonization, ethnic cleansing, dispossession, apartheid, and genocide. Furthermore, Palestinians have predominantly engaged in long-term non-violent resistance, including popular" (Vargas and Daniela, 2024).

These various media outlets encourage the Israeli occupation leaders, whether political or military, who kill the people and children in Gaza, and follow their way of thinking and tracking their criminal behavior. In this

context, "Defense Minister Yoav Gallant has termed Palestinians in Gaza 'human animals'; Deputy Mayor of Jerusalem Arie King, utilized the term 'subhuman'; Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu dubbed Palestinian children 'children of darkness' and compared them to Israel's 'children of light' (Vargas and Daniela, 2024,p01). . So many Western media outlets and social media platforms that support the Zionist entity have forgotten that the Palestinian people have the right to independence and to live in an environment of freedom that they have not known since 1948.

4.Conclusion

In summary, the media has played a major role in distorting the image of the Palestinian resistance by portraying it as terrorism and ignoring the reality of occupation and oppression. This biased coverage has weakened international sympathy, justified Israeli aggression, and divided Palestinian unity. However, alternative and social media have begun to expose the truth and challenge these false narratives. True media responsibility lies in presenting facts objectively and supporting justice, freedom, and the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.

5. Bibliography List

1. Abd-Elhameed, Naaima." ABD-ELHAMEED: Continuous demonization of Palestinian resistance in mainstream media makes me sick". 10 /10/ 2023. New Jersey. 25.09.2025, <<https://dailytargum.com/article/2023/10/abd-elhameed-continuous-demonization-of-palestinian-resistance-in-mainstream>>.
2. Al-Rihani, Nabil. Between “Al-Aqsa Flood” and the Arab media... a pause at the lines... and what is between them. 17 10 2023. 15 02 2024 <<https://www.aljazeera.net/opinions/2023/10/17/>>
3. Bedoor AlShebli, Bruno Gabriel Salvador Casara , and Anne Maass, " Media Coverage of War Victims: Journalistic Biases in Reporting on Israel and Gaza", p12. <https://arxiv.org/pdf/2510.06453v1>

4. Faras Ghani , "The Sharp Contrast: How Israeli and Western Media Cover the War on Gaza" , Published on: 5 Mar, 2025, .Aljazeera media institute. <https://institute.aljazeera.net/en/ajr/article/3081>
5. Francesca Albanese, " Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, Gaza Genocide: a collective crime ", Eightieth session , 20 October 2025. <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/special-rapporteur-report-gaza-genocide-a-collective-crime-20oct25/>
6. Inc, Anadolu Agency Turkish. Israeli officials accused of inciting war crimes in Gaza with violent rhetoric. 18 11 2023. 25 02 2024 <<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/israeli-officials-accused-of-inciting-war-crimes-in-gaza-with-violent-rhetoric/3057940>>.
7. Jong, Belle de. Why journalists are speaking out against Western media bias in reporting on Israel-Palestine. 27 02 2024. 25 03 2024 <https://unbiasthenews.org/why-journalists-are-speaking-out-against-western-media-bias-in-reporting-on-israel-palestine/?_gl=1*mm2sim*_up*MQ..*_ga*MTi0NTQ3NzUyNi4xNzA3OTI0ODA0*_ga_JNLJJ9FXSK*MTcwNzkyNDgwNC4xLjAuMTcwNzkyNDgwNC4wLjAuMA>.
8. Ministry Of Health, UN OCHA. State of Palestine Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. 2024. 2024 <https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/site/lang__en/1405/default.aspx?lang=en>.
9. Vargas Tamara Tamimi and Daniela Suárez. Propaganda vs. Truth: Israeli Propaganda and Palestinian Demonisation. 13 02 2024. 18 04

2024 <<https://www.e-ir.info/2024/02/13/israeli-propaganda-and-palestinian-demonisation/>>.

10. <https://lup.lub.lu.se/student-papers/record/9152769/file/9152777.pdf>