

Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press



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Palestinian Voices and the Media



Aia Khalaily

Aia Khalaily is a Palestinian who graduated from The Hebrew University in Jerusalem with a BBA in Occupational Therapy. Aia was on a work placement with WIFP through New Story Leadership. Aia has worked with Creativity For Peace where she returned as a public speaker, workshop facilitator, and fundraising coordinator. She works in Jerusalem as a translator in a group of Palestinian and Israeli teenagers about the conflict. At WIFP she wrote about the Palestinian perspective.

The Media in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Since the Palestinian media has no voice raised over the world, we decided to introduce how does this media looks, The materials included and to whom it talks. Palestinian media are divided into three regions each of which pander to a different audience:

There are different groups of media that have various agendas, ideologies, and diplomatic policies. The Palestinian media, as any other media in the world, tend to be scattered in spectrum – left, right and neutral. But unfortunately, none of them have the complete freedom of the press. The Palestinian media divided according to regions which each region supporting different authority. However, the situation is different in Israel, since the country is not separated into different governmental and geographic parts.

As every other newspaper, the Palestinian newspapers deal with politics, social and economic issues. There are about 30 Palestinian's newspapers. Some of the Palestinian newspapers shows the Israeli perspectives by translating articles from both left and right-wing Israeli media; into

Arabic, in order to expose the people to the Israeli perspectives. In the following articles you will find more information about organizations aim to promote freedom of the press in Palestinian media. The PA had laws that guarantee the rights of journalists to express their perspectives and the free press. However, these laws is not fully implemented since some journalists have been persecuted based on articles that they wrote about covering some events or writing against Palestinian authority. Furthermore, the press in Palestine is controlled and imposed by the IDF as they restrict the journalist.



The Israeli Media from Palestinian's Eyes

Israel is defined as a country that has freedom of the press, but do Palestinians agree?

Established in 1948, the Israeli media works to document the “Israeli story.” Painting all Israelis as victims, and their neighbors, including Palestinians, as set out to destroy them. The press, in Israel, is free as long as it talks about the government and criticizing its members. However, the media does not cover violence attacks against Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip made by the IDF (Israeli Defending Forces) or settlers. For instance, if the IDF incited, suppressed, or raided Palestinians houses, the Israeli press usually refuses to mention these instances of abuse, unless it can be dramatized. Yet, when it comes to stabbings or assaults against the IDF from the Palestinian side, these violences will be covered extensively in all Israeli publications.

In the 2014 Gaza War, 66.5% of the content mentioned in the newspaper “Yediot Ahronot,” aimed to

justify the operations of the IDF against Palestinians.. Simultaneously, 65% of the published materials aimed to show Israel as the “victim” and as “the weak side,” being attacked by Hamas, during the Gaza War.

The lack of the Israeli media coverage on the attacks of the Palestinians, created the need for Israeli NGO’s, that cover the attacks and the occupation on the west bank and Gaza Strip. These news organizations focus on covering events in different areas. for example, B’Tselem, the Israeli information center for human rights in the occupied territories, acts primarily to change Israeli policy in the Occupied Territories and ensure that its government, which rules the Occupied Territories, protects the human rights of residents there and complies



with its obligations under international law. This organization tries to cover human rights violations all over the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem. Another organization that works mainly in Hebron is Breaking the Silence. It’s an organization of veteran combatants who have served in the Israeli military since the start of the Second Intifada and have taken it upon themselves to expose the Israeli public to the reality of everyday life in the Occupied Territories. Soldiers who serve in the Territories witness and participate in military actions which change them immensely. Cases of abuse towards Palestinians, looting, and destruction of property have been the norm for years, but are still explained as extreme and unique cases.

These events, are not documented or mentioned in any Israeli media. Therefore, since many Israelis cannot read Arabic they conclude that their country and their army does nothing to suppress Palestinians. Consequently, Palestinians are always pained as “the attacking terrorists.”

These kinds of organizations are not welcomed in Israel and have been attacked by extreme right-wing Israeli citizens. For instance, a policeman, who was responsible for the evacuation of Amona settlement, was attacked by settlers and his car was burned.

Benet, the Israeli education minister, is promoting a bill against organizations that would prevent them from entering schools. With multi-party support, Benet stated: “I will not let this kind of organizations teach our kids values against the country and IDF, we will not let them ruin our values”.

Additionally, a year ago, a coexistence school that brings both Israelis and Palestinians to study together in Jerusalem was burned by an extreme right movement where they wrote Nazis statements like “death to Arabs”.

It is very important to be aware and conscious about human rights violation and suppress against humanity. It is important to be exposed more to both sides media, Palestinian and Israeli, in order to not be biased and to shape your own opinion about the conflict.

Israeli organizations that work in the West Bank and Gaza to cover attacks and protect Palestinians rights



Taayoush: Arabs and Jews, Israelis and Palestinians — live surrounded by walls and barbed wire: the walls of segregation, racism, and discrimination between Jews and Arabs within Israel; the walls of Apartheid, closure and siege encircling the Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip; and the wall of war surrounding all inhabitants of Israel, so long as Israel remains an armed fortress in the heart of the Middle East.

Breaking the Silence is an organization of veteran combatants who have served in the Israeli military since the start of the Second Intifada and have taken it upon themselves to expose the Israeli public to the reality of everyday life in the Occupied Territories their work aims to bring an end to the occupation.

**BREAKING
THE SILENCE**

ב'תס"ט
B'TSELEM
بتسيلم

B'TSELEM: The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories was established in February 1989 by a group of prominent academics, attorneys, journalists, and Knesset members. It endeavors to document and educate the Israeli public and policymakers about human rights violations in the Occupied Territories, combat the phenomenon of denial prevalent among the Israeli public, and help create a human rights culture in Israel.

The Palestinian with the Israeli Nationality

It is often taken for granted to have a homeland, to feel a sense of belonging, and to live freely. For me, that story of freedom does not exist. When I was 5 years old, my mom told me about her brother, my uncle Kheir, which means goodness. was shot to death by an Israeli soldier during a curfew in 1976, when the Israeli military forces raided the city on march 31, on that day, our land was confiscated- the land that my grandfather planted his olives tree, that symbolizes Peace.

Every 31 of March, my people commemorate the land day, the day that my uncle and other Palestinians were murdered.

Since that early age, I used to be committed going out to the streets, and demonstrating to the right and ownership of our land, to raise my Palestinian flag and shout out loudly, لاحتحم اي لحررا لحررا "Occupier, get out get out of my land." We used to hold vigils and plant olive trees in an act of collective resistance to the occupation.

Since that early age I was using words bigger than me: death, soldiers, occupation, wars, demonstrations. Words that I did not know the meaning of. what should all those words mean for a 5 years old kid?

Growing up, the Palestinian culture, language, and Identity played a major role in curving my personality. I grew up defining myself as a PALESTINIAN and considering Israelis as my enemies: the people who occupied my land, expelled my people, and killed us.

I can't forget the first time I traveled, to America – the land of the free when I was 17 years old. It was supposed to be a marvelous experience where there would be many "first time in my life" experiences. The first time I would have been freed out of the borders of the occupied Palestine, that is how I called it.

I dragged my suitcase with an innocent and happy smile shining on my face, I took my Israeli passport out of my pocket and showed it to the TSA agent, after she read my full name. "Wait here" she asked, I waited until the supervisor came and started his endless questions – why did you move from your apartment, with whom you work, what is your flat mates names, what is your father's work, etc..

It did not end there; I was sent to a particular unit to have the "massage" part. Where They asked me to sit down, one was searching my hair, asking me to take off everything from it, to take my shoes off and took them for check, she touched my legs my face and the rest of my body. I was stock there for 2 hours waiting, outrageously to this investigation to end.

They treated me as a terrorist who planned on killing herself and killing the people around her. I can't explain how I felt back then, and how I feel every time I'm using the Israeli airport and passport to travel.

Although I have the Israeli passport, Israel does not treat nor consider me as her own citizen. I don't consider myself as an Israeli citizen either.

Finally, I was released out of all the security. It was happening. I was on the airplane traveling and escaping my reality. I landed in New Mexico where I was asked to show my passport. The TSA agent looked at my passport, and then looked me in the eyes and said: "Welcome to America Aia, you probably had a long flight from Israel. Enjoy your stay."

How could I be an Israeli, when I had been discriminated based on my Identity, when I always end up being "the suspicious one" every time I speak Arabic in the buses and people start moving as far away from me as they can, when I got fired twice from my work because I am not Jew. When I was humiliated in the airport, because I am a Palestinian.

Today, I study at the Hebrew university where I have Israeli Jewish friends and can speak Hebrew fluently. I believe that every person you meet is affecting you so I realized that obviously, the Israeli culture is taking a role on shaping my personality.

The rest of the world sees me as an Israeli because I have the Israeli passport. Israel sees me as her enemy because I am a Palestinian.

For many of you, where you are from? might sound like an easy question. For me, it fills me with a mix of a frustrating feelings, a complexity of identity and the story of my history. The Palestinian Kuffayah and the Israeli passport. Each of them symbolize a culture, these both cultures, made me who I am today, but I don't want to fit into category, I don't want to be defined, because my being is larger than that frame.



WIFP Summer Team

Hazar Badin

Hazar Badin is from Palestine and a member of New Story Leadership. She is studying environmental engineering at Technion- Israel Institute of Technology Haifa. Hazar is on a work placement with WIFP. Hazar is currently involved in social program encouraging equal opportunities between Arabs and Jews at the Technion. In 2015, Hazar worked as a research assistant for Environmental Sensing, The Technion Center of Excellence in Exposure Science (TCEEH), looking at air pollution in micro areas. At WIFP she researched Palestinian and Israeli media.

A Glimpse towards Palestinian Media

I am seeking the truth, wanting to know what really happened and what exactly was said. I want to create my own understanding and develop my personal opinions based on MY values and principles. I want to take decisions according to real facts to make sure I am doing the right thing.

But how can I do that? How will I be able to recognize truth from lies? Is that even possible in a place where people are mostly trying to sell me information that is not necessarily true, or does not tell the whole truth? When I read biased articles or biased stories they are not only hiding most of the truth but are also trying to shape my views by their words!

What I am trying to do with this confusing elusory situation, is to look for information from different sources, to read different coverage for “the same story.” However, it is never easy, especially for me as a Palestinian living in Israel, where the major media and press bodies are Israeli. This provides little coverage about issues of my interest- the Palestinian people.

This article will provide a brief explanation about Palestinian Media Status, and a list of the major Palestinian press and news websites. The focus during my research was on electronic news and magazines. Hence, this report is not mentioning TV channels nor Radio stations.

Palestinian media is branched into four main branches, according to the location:

Palestinian media in the West Bank,

Palestinian media in Gaza Strip,

Palestinian media in Israel.

International Palestinian media.

The relations between the groups are complicated, and each one has different kinds of restrictions and limitations.

One of the main problems affecting media quality in Palestine is the political tension between the leaders, in each group. For example, you will find many articles in West bank’s newsletters criticizing Hamas (The leaders in Gaza) and less criticism of Fatah. And vice versa. The media in Gaza will blame the Palestinian Authority headquartered in the West Bank for problems they have. (The lack of self-criticism made me believe that even the privately owned press is not fully free)

However, both of these groups blame the Israeli occupation for the Palestinians suffering in all aspects.

So, it is important to note that the Palestinian media, from an outsider point of view, might be biased as well, sympathizing with the Palestinian people. For example, it seems like Palestinian journalists believe that they are obligated to play an active role in fulfilling the dream of creating a Palestinian state. This sentiment alone is enough to deter many Palestinian journalists from including the wrongdoings of their own people or their own authorities in



their reports.

There are magazines and newspapers that consider themselves as free press, not controlled by governmental parties, nor funding bodies. There are also government owned newspapers as well. However, for me, Palestinian media seems to be still far away from being efficient in making a change.

Palestinian journalists are frequently being attacked by different groups. For example, in may 2017, 41 violations were implemented against media freedom, 23 of them were by the Israeli occupation forces, and 18 attacks were committed by Palestinian parties. (the violations of the israeli part included gas bombs, shooting, confiscation of equipment and travel bans, the violations from the Palestinian side were arrests,



interrogations, equipment confiscations and preventing from covering certain marches)

The IDF raided the printing facilities of the West Bank newspaper Al-Ayyam, in Ramallah, after it started printing Gazan newspapers. They warned staff to cease publishing Hamas-linked content on the grounds that it incited hatred against Israel. In contrast, to Israeli journalists have access to enter Palestine, while Palestinian journalists never have this level of admission.

The Palestinian media in Israel that is mainly used for advertisements, and shallow information copied from other magazines and newsletters.

The role of women in Palestinian media is also marginalized, according to the Global Media Monitoring Project national report. In Palestine, women are significantly underrepresented in the news. Only 11% of news subjects- the

People who are interviewed, or who the news is about- are female and in the Internet news stories 14% are female. Women are rarely heard from in dominant news topics: The highest overall percentage of women as news subjects reaches only 30% for Social and Legal, news related to Crime and Violence (9%), Politics and Government (6%) and (4%) in Economy. And they mostly function as providers of personal experience (25%) or as people providing Popular Opinion (19%), and rarely as experts (4%), spokespersons (14%), or the main subject of the story only 7%. Female journalists produced 16% of news stories, in television 26% and in radio 20% of the news items were presented by female reporters.

Although the shortfalls of the Palestinian media, there are some newsletters and magazines that are worth reading, that brings different views and will help for better understanding the different situations of the Palestinians. It is important to bring up the Palestinian media's voice since it covers issues that probably will not be covered by any other media.

Here, I provide a list of Palestinian electronic newspapers and magazines, trying to cover as many groups as possible, it is not necessarily the most read by Palestinians, since I am providing some that are also published in English. By the end of the list you will find a list of local magazines and journals that are published only in Arabic, which I recommend to Arabic speakers and readers.

Reading Palestinian media might be an eye opening experience for some people, for others it might be a thought provoking one. One thing for sure- it will raise more questions.

My Story About Media

I am driving my car, on my way to another day at university, the sky is cloudy and everything looks terribly gray. There is a traffic jam and I realize I'm probably going to be late for my first class, so I turn on the radio: Al shams radio station is broadcasting the daily news. Two houses in Al- Led city in Israel were demolished, two Arab families with 9 children are now homeless, without any compensation, without any plan B. No where to go! One of the family members was interviewed: "the municipality did not offer us a

shelter! This house that we put so much efforts to build is gone and we are left with nothing.”

I became angry, how can this happen? So yeah, those houses were illegally built, but what do you expect them to do when apartments are so expensive, getting the documents to enable legal permits for building in your land is almost impossible, and no one is offering them any other option.



What option am I talking about? I'll give you a real example: when settlers from Amona settlement were forced out because it was an illegal settlement, the prime minister, Bibi Netanyahu, promised them to be compensated by giving them other lands to build on, and the state offered them shelters till they get settled somewhere else. The two kinds of lawbreakers had Israeli citizenship, the difference between those two is that the first ones were Arab Palestinians and the latter were Jews! How can democratic country treat two lawbreakers differently? How can it claim being humanitarian, treating all of its citizens “equally”?

The day after, a huge fire ignites the Carmel mountain in Haifa. This is an environmental disaster and it reached to some inhabited neighborhoods. I could hear about it everywhere, Facebook, TV channels, radio, newspapers. I was not able to go to the university that day because the main street leading there was close do to fire. I was not able to study either, I was too nervous, worrying about the future of that forest, the trees, the animals, the beautiful view. I was also angry, angry because everyone forgot about that demolished house in Al- Led,

including the Palestinians.

Few hours later, what I have expected happened. The media started blaming the Arabs for lighting the fire. Just like 6 years ago, claiming that the fires were “Terror attacks” aiming to destroy Israel. Absurd!

The fire is not even close to be subsided yet, and they already got to racist conclusions. No evidence, no investigations were held yet.

The day after, I hear people in the streets talking: “what a loss, the beautiful Carmel mountain is destroyed” and in my mind I agree with them, it is truly a sad event. And then it comes: “such a shame, those Arabs destroy everything, they don't appreciate what they have” lowering their voice while saying the word Arabs, hoping no left wings would hear them being “politically incorrect”.

Here I am again, feeling angry, blamed and belittled. That's true, they were not talking directly to me, they didn't even know there was a young Arab woman sitting next to them. They were not blaming me because usually women are less suspected with violent vandalize acts, however they were blaming my friends, my brother, my father

I want to argue them, to tell them that they are stupidly repeating what is heard by media without even thinking. But I say nothing, because myself, like media, have no evidence, and because I know that as soon as they know an Arab was sitting next to them they will start telling excuses, and try to defend their sayings with “I know not all of the Arabs are like this”, and then will try hopelessly enter to the “politically correct” fake conversation.

And everybody forgets about the two fresh homeless families from Al- Led.

Palestinian Media List (Available also in English)

Women Media and Development (TAM) (2003)

English- Arabic- France

(Palestine- the West Bank)

<http://tam.ps/en/>

Tam was initiated by a group of media women who felt that there was a severe shortage of programs and information materials of social and feministic issues in Palestine, and by believing that media is an essential instrument in community development and empowerment of women, they established TAM in September 2003 and headquartered in Bethlehem while its work scope covered Palestine.



Mada (Palestinian Center for Development & Media freedom)

English- Arabic

(Palestine- the West Bank)

<http://www.madacenter.org/index.php?lang=1>



MADA center was established in 2006, where a group of Passionate vision driven Palestinians “citizens and journalists” joined forces to promote and defend the Right to Freedom of Expression and Opinion.

MADA is an independent, non-governmental, and non-profit organization, registered under the number (IRA-250-I), with its headquarters in Ramallah. The center operates throughout the Palestinian territories, working

daily to develop the Palestinian Media and to promote and defend media freedoms and freedom of expression.

Maan News Agency (2005)

English- Arabic

(Palestine- the West Bank - privately owned)

<http://www.maannews.com/Default.aspx>

“Ma’an News Agency is an integral part of Ma’an Network, a non-profit media organization founded in 2002 to strengthen professional independent media in Palestine, build links between local, regional and international media, and consolidate freedom of expression and media pluralism as keys to promoting democracy and human rights. Ma’an Network is a partnership between independent journalists throughout Palestine, including nine local television stations and nine local radio stations.

In addition to MNA, its activities include television, video, and radio production, and training courses for Palestinian journalists and media personnel.”



Wafa- Palestinian News & Info Agency (1972)

English- Arabic - French

(Palestine- the West Bank - Government owned)

<http://english.wafa.ps/>



Wafa agency focuses since its establishment on transporting the Palestinian news, especially the military notifications issued by the general command of the Palestinian revolutionary forces. However, the publications were expanded to cover different national events, news about Palestinians in the diaspora and any news related to the Palestinian case.

Jadaliyya (2010)

English- Arabic- French- Turkish

(International)

<http://palestine.jadaliyya.com/>

Jadaliyya is an independent ezine produced by ASI (Arab Studies Institute), adaliyya provides a unique source of insight and critical analysis that combines local knowledge, scholarship, and advocacy with an eye to audiences in the United States, the Middle East and beyond.

In this electronic magazine, Palestine has its own page, which allows Palestine to command the distinctive attention that it deserves, and the concentration of articles and other materials on this new page will make it easier for our readers to find what they are looking for when they go to the Jadaliyya home page.



The Electronic Intifada (2001)

English

(International)

<https://electronicintifada.net>

“The Electronic Intifada is an independent online news publication and educational resource focusing on Palestine, its people, politics, culture and place in the world. Founded in 2001, The Electronic Intifada has won awards and earned widespread recognition for publishing original, high-quality news and analysis, and first-person accounts and reviews. The Electronic Intifada’s writers and reporters include Palestinians and others living inside Palestine and everywhere else that news about Palestine and Palestinians is made.”

The Palestinian Information Center (1997)

English- Arabic- French- Russian- Urdo- Malay- Persian- Turkish

(Palestine- Gaza)

<https://english.palinfo.com>

“PIC is a news website that provides news coverage of mainly Palestinian events for its readership in the world in various languages. It is dedicated to advocating the Palestinian cause from a multi-layered lens.

The PIC does not lay any claim to neutrality for it blatantly sides with the oppressed Palestinian people.”



Palestinian Return Center

English- Arabic

(International)

<http://www.prc.org.uk/portal/>

“The Palestinian Return Centre depends primarily on donations from people who believe in its cause. It accepts contributions in money and kind from any source as long as there are no strings or conditions attached. The Palestinian Return Centre is an independent consultancy focusing on the historical, political and legal aspects of the Palestinian Refugees.

It specializes in the research, analysis, and monitor of issues pertaining to the dispersed Palestinians and their internationally recognized legal right to return.

Provide news and updates on local and regional and international events which affect the refugees...”



Palestinian Media List (Available only in Arabic)

Qadita.net

Arabic

(Palestinians in Israel)

<http://www.qadita.net/>



Palestinian Art, literature, poets, articles criticizing social phenomenon, governmental behavior and religious issues. Raising new vision and different points of view to old controversial subjects regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Arab 48

Arabic

(Palestinians in Israel)

<http://www.arab48.com/>

Daily news, focusing on Palestinians living in Israel, critical articles, OP ED, world news.

Kul alarab

Arabic

(Palestinians in Israel)

<http://kul.alarab.com/>

Daily news

Ramallah news (2014)

Arabic

(Palestinians in Israel)

<http://ramallah.news/index.php>

Daily local and global news, focusing on spreading the suffering of Palestinian people from the occupation and aggression against the Palestinian people. One of the most popular news agency in Palestine.



رام الله الإخباري
Ramallah News

Felesteen (2006)

Arabic

<http://www.felesteen.ps/>

Owned by Alwasat media and publishing company.

Daily political general newspaper, aims to raise the thinking level and knowledge among Palestinians through studying the Palestinians situation in a deeper way.



Sonara.net

Arabic

(Palestinians in Israel)

<http://www.sonara.net/>

Daily local news, sports, arts.

Bab al wad

Arabic

<http://www.babelwad.com/ar>

Itijah

Arabic

<http://www.itijah.ps/uploads/9121904ca0b758d657df02d67adfea42.pdf>

Wattan

Arabic

<http://www.wattan.tv/ar>



Independent news website aims to provide national democratic media, the website is part of the “Wattan TV, Wattan media center, Wattan for TV production” media system. Focuses on what is related to the Palestinian case, politically, economically, law, education and sports. Considering the fact that high amount of Palestinians are refugees, calling for the right of return, freeing the prisoners in the Israeli prisons and resisting the occupation.

What makes this website unique compared to the other Palestinian news websites is that it brings up cases and interviews local employees and officers in the Palestine authority, criticizing social and systematic phenomena.

Almanar (1991)

Arabic

Published by the International Company for Media and Distribution/ Jerusalem

<http://www.manar.com/page-1-ar.html>

Democratic political newspaper, covers world news emphasizing the middle east news and Palestine issues.



Al-Quds

Arabic

(West Bank)

<http://www.alquds.com/>