



BBC Coverage of the Israel-Hamas war

A comprehensive analysis of BBC News output of the first eleven months of the conflict.

FOREWORD

The primary purpose of BBC News, according to the Director-General Tim Davie, is the pursuit of truth with no agenda. That purpose – to deliver news that is fair, balanced, impartial and above all accurate – is codified in law, in the BBC’s Royal Charter. What this report comprehensively demonstrates is how often the corporation falls short of this ideal when it comes to its reporting on Israel. Meticulously researched and sourced, you will find here example after example of lax journalistic standards and institutional bias against Israel, with a real-world impact on the safety of Jewish people in the UK and across the world.

Set out in the following pages are repeated instances of facts being grossly misrepresented or ignored, whilst the worst possible interpretation is consistently pushed front and centre.

Honest mistakes can happen in any field, especially one where quick judgements are needed in response to incomplete information. This report concludes that the BBC is not merely careless in its reporting of the war in Gaza. The “mistakes” are almost always in the anti-Israel direction. It would not be possible to compile a similar record of anti-Palestinian errors.

Whenever the corporation is faced with the choice of whose account or narrative to believe, it seldom points in Israel’s direction. For Hamas in this war, proof is rarely necessary. For the IDF and Israel, proof is rarely enough.

False and damaging claims about Israel’s conduct of this war remain on the BBC website long after they have been comprehensively debunked. The damage done by misleading broadcasts and social media output is unaffected by the occasional brief correction issued weeks or months later. Meanwhile, there almost never seems to be quite enough space or time to sufficiently record or discuss developments that are favourable to Israel.

Military analysts and experts across the world will tell you that Hamas cannot win the war it started with Israel by force of arms alone. Anti-Israel propaganda isn’t merely a tactic for Hamas; it is integral to its war effort. Indeed, it is a war aim in and of itself. Hamas must convince the world, through media outlets like the BBC, that Israel is brutal, indiscriminate, and unjust; that the deaths of innocent Palestinian civilians are something that Israel wantonly pursues, rather than a tragic consequence of Hamas turning the Palestinian people into human shields.

Hamas has embedded its terrorist infrastructure amongst civilians, including in former school buildings (often mistakenly described as working schools in news reports), hospitals and mosques.

With an iniquitous disregard for the truth, Hamas even lays the false charge of ‘genocide’ against Israel in responding to the attack on 7 October – the worst antisemitic atrocity since the Holocaust and an indisputably genocidal act.

Through these tactics, they seek to claim that Israel is actually fighting a war of aggression, rather than taking necessary defensive action in an existential fight against Iran and its proxies.

As this report comprehensively demonstrates, the BBC all too often accepts Hamas’s distortions as fair framing or fact. Worse than that, it then sells them on to a credulous world as news burnished by the BBC’s authority and reputation.

When the BBC is presented with a complaint about its coverage, standard operating procedure seems to be to deny, deflect, and then finally grudgingly accept what they will assure the world is an isolated mistake. This report catalogues many of those “isolated mistakes” in one place for the first time.

Irrespective of one’s views on the conflict, any fair-minded reader will conclude that the BBC has serious questions to answer and real problems to address if it is to live up to its mission. Whether the BBC chooses to engage substantively on the content and recommendations of this report will be a litmus test for their commitment to change. And unless they change, public confidence and trust in the impartiality of their reporting in this area will only deteriorate.

Baroness Deech – Governor of the BBC, 2002-06

Danny Cohen – Director of BBC Television, 2013-15

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The BBC remains Britain's most trusted news source, the broadcaster millions turn to in times of crisis. This is not just the case in the UK but for audiences right across the world.

However, what this report comprehensively catalogues is how the BBC has failed in both its moral and statutory duty to present this conflict with impartiality, while appalling lapses in accuracy have served to fuel the flames of antisemitism that have spread across the world.

This report details how:

- On the day of the 7 October massacre, while the rest of Britain's media were detailing the brutality of Hamas's attack on Israel, the BBC led its coverage with a headline about "Israeli revenge attacks".
- The BBC broadcast interviews in the immediate aftermath of the atrocity with Hamas apologists who used their platform to make comments which the BBC was forced to admit were "offensive".
- The BBC refused to call Hamas "terrorists" because it would be seen as "taking sides", only to back down following days of criticism from the outraged Jewish community and senior politicians from all sides.
- The BBC reported that an 'Israeli strike' killed 'hundreds' at the Al-Ahli hospital: thereby repeating, legitimising and reinforcing entirely false claims that directly caused unrest in some European and Middle Eastern countries, including serious arson attacks upon synagogues in Germany and Tunisia.
- The BBC failed to remove articles suggesting the same hospital blast may have been caused by the Israeli military, even after the BBC admitted it got its reporting wrong.
- The BBC incorrectly reported that Israeli soldiers had been "targeting" medical teams and Arab speakers as they hunted Hamas terrorists in a hospital, when instead they actually had brought medical teams and Arab speakers with them to help the patients during the military operation.
- A senior BBC executive admitted inaccuracies had "real world consequences" for British Jews but were inevitable because of the "fog of war".
- The BBC aired an edited interview with French President Macron which was highly critical of Israel only for French diplomats to insist it was not a fair representation of his views.
- The BBC published an article that wrongly claimed a UN report had warned "half of Gaza's population is starving" and peddled a Hamas propaganda line that Gaza had become a "polio epidemic zone".
- The BBC failed to investigate claims babies were beheaded by Hamas terrorists in a kibbutz massacre on 7 October – despite the issue dominating other news outlets' coverage and British political debate for days.
- The BBC was forced to correct an article that described Iran's bombardment of 300 rockets fired into Israel as "dozens" of "objects".
- The BBC took no action against five BBC Arabic reporters placed under investigation for offensive social media posts in the wake of the 7 October

massacre.

- At the height of the conflict, BBC Arabic was forced to correct articles on average every 48 hours, including copy that referred to Hamas as the “resistance”.
- BBC Arabic platformed one guest who had previously referred to the 7 October massacre as a “heroic military miracle” and another who described Hamas atrocities against innocent Israelis as “necessary”.
- BBC Arabic was forced to purge articles from its website including one that asked whether the Kfar Aza kibbutz atrocities really happened.
- BBC Arabic failed to moderate antisemitic and offensive comments on its YouTube channel and encouraged a discussion about whether the killing of a 79-year-old Israeli woman was “terrorism” or “resistance”.
- The BBC failed to remove graphs from its website that purported to show that 70 per cent of Gazan fatalities were women and children – after those figures were shown to be inaccurate.
- The BBC routinely quoted figures produced by the Hamas Health Ministry without highlighting it as a terrorist-run organisation, and routinely failed to stress in reporting that Hamas fatality figures are unverifiable and include thousands of Hamas terrorists.
- The BBC repeatedly reported Israeli strikes on Hamas command centres based inside school buildings as “strikes on schools” and repeatedly failed to explain the terror group’s use of innocent Palestinians as human shields.
- The BBC referred to Hezbollah not as terrorists but as a “heavily armed militant and political movement” in one story, while a BBC News Channel presenter suggested during an interview that Hezbollah terror attacks were in protest over Palestinian deaths.
- The BBC referred to one killed senior Hamas fighter as an “advisor” rather than a terrorist, and portrayed an assassinated Hamas leader as a “moderate” rather than a terrorist under sanction in the US.
- The BBC came under fire for calling Palestinian militants and activists killed in the conflict ‘journalists’. One BBC Arabic article described 69 “journalists” killed in the conflict, while evidence from their social media posts suggest 55 of them either supported Hamas or worked for the terror group.
- The BBC used freelance journalists and eyewitness reports without due diligence on their social media accounts which would have revealed clear anti-Israel bias.
- The BBC was forced to sack one employee who described Jews online as “Nazi apartheid parasites” and called the Holocaust a hoax.
- The BBC failed to sanction high-profile sports presenter Gary Lineker who shared a BDS post calling for Israel to be banned from international sporting events.
- The BBC failed to apologise for wrongly claiming the International Court of Justice had ruled that allegations Israel had committed genocide in Gaza were “plausible”.
- The BBC refused to launch an investigation called for by its own Jewish staff and contributors after extensive broadcasting mistakes and repeated failures of due diligence on sources and guests.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Restoring trust

- The BBC should agree to an independent inquiry into its Israel-Gaza coverage, with terms of reference and reviewers commanding wide public support.
- The BBC should have a zero tolerance of antisemitism and bias, with a 'one strike' policy that removes a journalist from reporting on Israel/Gaza.
- The BBC should conduct a thorough review of its recruitment policy at BBC Arabic, and commit to a workforce that more accurately reflects the region it serves and delivers on standards of impartiality that are expected of the BBC.
- The BBC should commit to consistency in the way it describes Hamas across its platforms, always referencing it as a 'proscribed terrorist organisation' as a minimum.
- The BBC should consider whether BBC Verify is meeting high standards of accuracy and impartiality. A review should consider whether BBC Verify has overly focused on the Israel-Gaza conflict at the expense of other important stories around the world.
- Quarterly meetings between the Board of Deputies President and other representatives of the Jewish community with the BBC Director-General to ensure progress on key issues.
- The government should review the efficacy of the BBC's complaints system and, as part of Charter Renewal, the government should make the BBC Executive Complaints Unit truly independent to prevent the perception of the BBC marking its own homework.

Online

- Online stories that are proven to be inaccurate should be removed from all BBC platforms and YouTube channels as they continue to be shared. The BBC should not be complicit in any spread of disinformation in this way.
- The BBC should run proactive assessments of BBC social media accounts, as well as journalists' personal accounts, to ensure they meet the highest possible standards of impartiality and accuracy.
- The BBC should implement new rules for social media usage by its journalists to ensure accuracy and full context is always prioritised.
- In its understandable desire to produce short and snappy story headlines, the BBC should always include the necessary caveats and sourcing warnings as, in the world of social media, the headline is often the most read part of any story. This is particularly important with BBC news alerts.

Third parties

- The BBC should commit to carrying out thorough background checks on eyewitnesses to ensure they are truly independent observers. If they are not independent, this should be clearly stated in all reporting.
- The BBC should commit to carrying out thorough background checks on journalists it is employing in Gaza to ensure that they do not have terrorist

affiliations, or have shown, on social media, support for the destruction of Israel.

- When interviewing Israeli spokespeople, the BBC should explain to audiences, as part of its transparency commitments that Hamas spokespeople do not make themselves available for similar cross-examination.
- Ensure Hezbollah is described in similar terms to Hamas, i.e. “designated as a terrorist organisation by the UK, the USA and Germany, among others”.
- The BBC should make it clear to audiences that, because they do not have trusted correspondents in Gaza, they are relying on unverified sources for many of their stories.
- When reporting claims about casualty numbers in Gaza, the BBC should make it clear to audiences that, not only are these figures provided by the Hamas-run ministry of health, they are heavily disputed.
- When the BBC use freelance reporters from Gaza, it should be transparent with audiences that the journalists may not be able to be forthcoming with their reporting because of fear for their safety – for themselves and their families – from Hamas.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

Terrorists Not Militants

BBC Coverage in the First Two Weeks 8

CHAPTER 2

The Fog of War

BBC Verify, Fact Checking and Misinformation 16

CHAPTER 3

“A Morning of Hope”

BBC Arabic 23

CHAPTER 4

Reporting Death

Civilians, Combatants and Journalists 31

CHAPTER 5

“Failing in the most basic of journalistic practices”

Social Media 44

CHAPTER 6

An Anatomy of ‘Genocide’

The ICJ and UN Reports 51

CHAPTER 7

Enough is Enough

Staff and Jewish community fears 56

Conclusions

59

CHAPTER ONE

Terrorists Not Militants

BBC Coverage in the First Two Weeks

On the morning of 8 October 2023, Britain's newspapers catalogued in gruesome detail the barbarous depths plumbed by Hamas terrorists in an orgy of violence that shattered Israel's security and plunged the country into war.

The Sunday Times described the horrific events of 7 October 2023, as "scenes ripped from a nightmare", detailing how "Hamas terrorists, armed with Kalashnikovs," dragged innocent civilians through the streets.¹

The front page of the Sunday Telegraph declared: "Hamas terrorists butcher civilians as stunned Israel suffers 9/11 moment."² The Sunday Express declared: "Hamas terrorists kidnap grandmas and children as hundreds slaughtered in brutal attack on Israel".³

And The Mail on Sunday featured the terrified face of 25-year-old Noa Argamani, one of 251 Israeli and foreign hostages taken by "Hamas terrorists" following the horrific slaughter of 364 festival-goers.⁴

In the bloody aftermath of the invasion, world leaders rushed to express their outrage at the terror attack, to pledge their solidarity with Israel and to assert its right to defend itself.

US President Joe Biden relayed "stomach churning" stories of babies being butchered, women raped and parents being murdered in front of their children,



- 1 Hostages dragged from homes in Israel as families flee slaughter, [The Sunday Times](#), 8 October 2023.
- 2 Hamas terrorists butcher civilians as stunned Israel suffers '9/11' moment, [The Sunday Telegraph](#), 8 October 2023.
- 3 Human Shield Horror, [Sunday Express](#), 8 October 2023.
- 4 War on Israel: Don't Kill Me!, [The Mail on Sunday](#), 8 October 2023.

calling Hamas “pure unadulterated evil” that “brings to mind the worst rampages of ISIS.”⁵

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen called the atrocity “terrorism in its most despicable form” and said Israel had a right to defend itself.⁶

On the evening of 7 October, BBC News splashed the front page of its website with the headline: “Israel warns Gaza residents to flee homes ahead of revenge attacks”.⁷



BBC News front page at 11:35pm on 7 October 2023.

It is very striking that on the actual day of the terrorist massacre – and with the brutal attacks on civilians still ongoing – the BBC led on its website with a headline about Israeli “revenge attacks”. It is the first piece of evidence that shows how, from the outset of this war, the BBC’s default position has consistently been to portray Israel as the vengeful aggressor.

Defenders of Hamas

On the evening of the atrocity, the BBC interviewed Refaat Alareer, a lecturer at Gaza’s Islamic University, who was described as a “Palestinian educator”.

Speaking from inside the Gaza Strip, he referred to the terror attacks as the work of “the Palestinian resistance” and said they were “legitimate and moral”. He also likened them to the “Warsaw ghetto uprising” – the heroic Jewish resistance who fought back as Nazis tried to liquidate the Polish ghetto in 1943. He also said: “This is the Gaza ghetto uprising against one hundred years of European and Zionist colonialism.”

The interview drew a complaint from the Board of Deputies and an admission from the BBC it should not have been broadcast. In a statement, the BBC said Alareer had been “robustly challenged” at the time but accepted his comments were

5 US President Joe Biden calls Hamas actions ‘pure unadulterated evil’ in defence of Israel, [ITV News](#), 10 October 2023.

6 EU condemns Hamas attack on Israel as ‘terrorism in its most despicable form’, [Politico](#), 7 October 2023.

7 BBC News, [BBC News Front Page Archive](#), 7 October 2023.

“offensive” and said he would not appear again.⁸

Another BBC guest that weekend was Bushra Shaikh, a social media influencer who competed in the 2017 series of *The Apprentice*. She told viewers the atrocities were a “symptom of the conflict” that was bound to “boil over at some point”, simply because “we have one of Israel’s most right-wing governments in history”.⁹

It is hard to believe that this approach would have been taken by the BBC in the aftermath, for example, of the Manchester terror attacks. In those circumstances, the BBC would not have considered providing a broadcast platform to anyone who sought to justify the murder of civilians. Yet this was the choice that BBC News made when it came to a mass terror event in Israel, even whilst the terror attacks were still taking place.

Steve McCabe, then MP and chair of Labour Friends of Israel, said the BBC was failing in its mission as a public service broadcaster.

He told the Jewish Chronicle: “The BBC must cover the outrageous and horrible events in Israel in an appropriate and respectful manner. Those who defend or justify terror attacks should not be given a platform to propagate their hatred on our public service broadcaster.”

Stephen Crabb, then MP and chair of Parliamentary Conservative Friends of Israel, agreed, saying: “The BBC seems to be falling back into bad old ways, trying to draw an equivalence between acts of terror and the response of a democratic state trying to protect and defend its citizens.”

Taking sides

While other broadcasters, including ITV, have referred to Hamas as terrorists, and senior politicians from all sides were in no doubt about what to call the terror group, the BBC drew fierce criticism for referring to Hamas merely as “gunmen” and “militants”.

Complaints from the British Jewish community and senior politicians flooded in. The Board of Deputies called for an urgent review of BBC Editorial Guidelines, which were last revised in 2019.

Britain’s Chief Rabbi Sir Ephraim Mirvis said: “If one doesn’t use the term ‘terrorist’, it is as if one is providing a window of opportunity for justification, and nothing can justify this.”¹⁰

On 11 October, the BBC published a response to the complaints outlining its Editorial Guidelines (Sections 11.3.5 and 11.3.6) which state:

“We should not use the ‘term’ terrorist without attribution.

“The word ‘terrorist’ itself can be a barrier rather than an aid to understanding.”¹¹

This is a very surprising justification from the BBC. It suggests that accuracy can be sacrificed in order to reach larger audiences. The BBC should never subordinate accuracy for these purposes.

The argument was underpinned by the BBC’s World Affairs Editor John Simpson who wrote that: “calling someone a terrorist means you are taking sides”.¹²

Again, the implication here is that accuracy can be sacrificed in order to appeal to certain audiences. The BBC’s job is not to be popular for its own sake if that means that accuracy is disregarded.

Hamas was designated a proscribed organisation in its entirety by Home

8 Senior MPs blast BBC for refusing to call Hamas a terrorist group, [Jewish Chronicle](#), 8 October 2023.

9 Senior MPs blast BBC for refusing to call Hamas a terrorist group, [Jewish Chronicle](#), 8 October 2023.

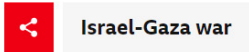
10 Chief Rabbi Sir Ephraim Mirvis hits out at media outlets that fail to label Hamas terrorists, [Jewish Chronicle](#), 9 October 2023.

11 BBC News, language used to describe Hamas in coverage of the Israel-Gaza conflict, [BBC Complaints](#), 11 October 2023.

12 John Simpson, [Twitter](#), 10 October 2023; Why BBC doesn’t call Hamas militants ‘terrorists’ – John Simpson, [BBC News](#), 11 October 2023.

Why BBC doesn't call Hamas militants 'terrorists' - John Simpson

© 11 October 2023



| Watch: Why the BBC doesn't call Hamas 'terrorists'

Secretary Priti Patel in November 2021. It means members of Hamas or those who invite support for the group could be jailed for up to 14 years.

Speaking to LBC on the same day the BBC issued its response to complaints, the then Defence Secretary Grant Shapps branded the broadcaster's decision "verging on disgraceful" and urged the corporation to locate its "moral compass".¹³

Simpson's reference to BBC wartime broadcasters not describing the Nazis as "evil or wicked" was also mocked by Shapps.

"When you start to cite the Nazis in any argument you've basically lost it," he said.¹⁴

The then Foreign Secretary, James Cleverly, and Culture Secretary, Lucy Frazer, urged the BBC to revise its policy.

Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer, who has since become Prime Minister, told LBC the same day: "I said 'terrorism' and 'terrorist', and to me that's obviously what we are witnessing."¹⁵

The Times suggested the BBC's position in the face of an atrocity which left 1,400 men, women and children dead amounted to "cloaking the evils committed by Hamas in euphemism."¹⁶

The BBC's argument was weakened by evidence of other instances where the broadcaster had used the language of terrorism.

The 9/11 attack on the Twin Towers, the 2005 London bombings and the 2015 Bataclan Theatre attack in Paris were all described as "terror" attacks by the BBC.

Ironically, at the same time the BBC was defending itself against using the word, it reported the shooting of two Swedish nationals in Brussels as a "terror attack", before it was highlighted by critics and the website headline hastily changed.¹⁷

13 BBC defends policy not to call Hamas 'terrorists' after criticism, [BBC News](#), 11 October 2023.

14 'When you cite the Nazis, you've lost the argument', [Daily Mail](#), 18 October 2023.

15 BBC defends policy not to call Hamas 'terrorists' after criticism, [BBC News](#), 11 October 2023.

16 The Times view on the BBC and Hamas: The T Word, [The Times](#), 12 October 2023.

17 BBC refusal to call Hamas terrorists 'unsustainable and indefensible', says MP, [Telegraph](#), 17 October 2023.

Many in the Jewish community have been struck by the apparent difference in standards and language applied. Terrorist attacks on others have been clearly labelled by the BBC as 'terror attacks' but this was banned when the terror was directed towards citizens of Israel.

After digging in for almost a week, in a partial climb-down the BBC ditched the word "militant" and began to describe Hamas as a "terrorist organisation proscribed by the UK Government and others".¹⁸

However, the use of this language has been inconsistent since this climbdown. There have been numerous occasions since in which the BBC has failed to describe Hamas as a 'proscribed terrorist organisation' when reporting their claims. This is a serious failure of omission which means that the BBC has not been providing audiences with the proper context for their reporting.

It is surprising the BBC have not taken into account the crucial report from the UN Sharm el-Sheikh Fact-finding Committee in April 2001 (page 20) which was very clear about the definition of terrorism. It stated: "Terrorism involves the deliberate killing and injuring of randomly selected noncombatants for political ends. It seeks to promote a political outcome by spreading terror and demoralisation throughout a population. It is immoral and ultimately self-defeating".¹⁹

The Al-Ahli hospital incident

A day after the BBC was forced into its climb-down over how it described Hamas, it found itself embroiled in a fresh controversy.

On 17 October, the BBC reported on the Al-Ahli hospital blast.

"Hundreds of people have been killed in an Israeli strike on a hospital in Gaza, according to Palestinian officials" declared a BBC news alert on X/Twitter. The alert did not make clear that "Palestinian officials" meant the proscribed terrorist group Hamas.²⁰

The BBC tweet was swiftly and widely shared on X by, among others, the Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby, as the hospital is run by the Anglican Church. His post has received 1.4 million views.²¹

However, during a visit to Jerusalem, the Archbishop warned that allegation of Israeli responsibility for the 17 October blast could be tantamount to an antisemitic blood libel.²²

Covering the breaking story on BBC News, reporter Jon Donnison declared: "It's hard to see what else this could be really, given the size of the explosion, other than an Israeli airstrike or several airstrikes."²³

The IDF swiftly issued evidence to show the explosion was caused by a misfired Palestine Islamic Jihad rocket. The UK Government and the US Government later both concluded the blast was caused by a misfired PIJ rocket.

But the hospital blast was to prove a flashpoint for communities the world over. Cities across the Middle East and Europe exploded into violent protest by pro-Palestine demonstrators, synagogues were targeted in Berlin and Tunisia, and US President Joe Biden's meeting with Arab leaders in Jordan was called off.

The coverage prompted the Board of Deputies to issue a fresh complaint to the BBC's Executive Complaints Unit (ECU).

18 BBC drops 'militant' as default description for Hamas, [Financial Times](#), 20 October 2023.

19 Report of The Sharm el-Sheikh Fact-Finding Committee, [UNSCO](#), 30 April 2001.

20 BBC World, [Twitter](#), 17 October 2023.

21 Justin Welby, [Twitter](#), 17 October 2023.

22 Archbishop of Canterbury: Accusing Israel of hospital blast is 'blood libel', [Times of Israel](#), 23 October 2023.

23 BBC News, [Twitter](#), 17 October 2023.

In its letter of complaint, Board lawyers cautioned: “Full credence was given to the Hamas line, and the Israeli line was treated dismissively.”²⁴

The then British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak told MPs in the House of Commons: “If we don’t treat what comes out of the Kremlin as the gospel truth, we should not do the same with Hamas.”²⁵

This underlines a consistent failing by the BBC since 7 October: the BBC has treated the terror group Hamas with the same level of credibility as the government of a democratic nation.

The ECU ruled Donnison had not offered a “definitive judgment” but accepted it was “not consistent with the BBC’s standards of due accuracy to offer any view about responsibility for the incident at a point where so little reliable information was available.”²⁶

The BBC later apologized for elements of its coverage, saying: “We accept that even in this fast-moving situation it was wrong to speculate in this way about the possible causes.”

It vowed to do more to “increase clarity and accuracy in breaking news.”²⁷

A new formula was applied to news alerts and headlines, where the headline would start with the source of the claim, rather than the claim itself.

The BBC also pledged to give more information about the source of the claims being made and any affiliations that source had.²⁸

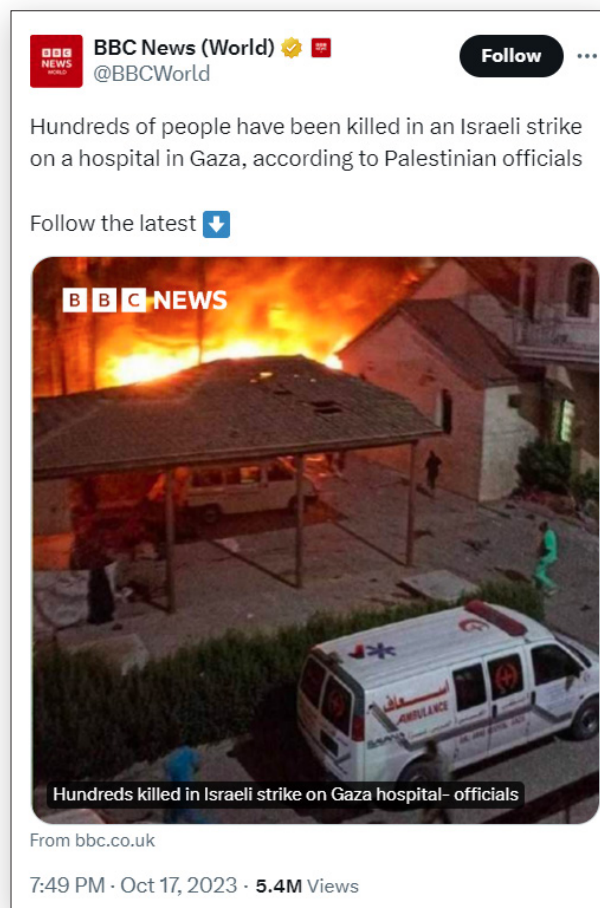
“Flattened”

The BBC’s International Editor Jeremy Bowen was less contrite. In a BBC interview in November he stated he did not regret “one thing” about his reporting, even though he had incorrectly stated the hospital had been “flattened”.

At the time he reported: “The missile hit the hospital not long after dark. You can hear the impact. The explosion destroyed Al-Ahli Hospital. It was already damaged from a smaller attack at the weekend. The building was flattened.”

Asked about the report a month later, Mr Bowen told the BBC’s Behind The Stories programme: “So it broke in I suppose mid-evening and to answer your question, no I don’t regret one thing in my reporting because I think I was measured throughout. I didn’t race to judgement.”

Asked specifically about the “hospital being flattened” comment, he said: “Oh yeah, well I got that wrong because I was looking at the pictures and what I could



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7:49 PM · Oct 17, 2023 · 5.4M Views

24 Board of Deputies’ solicitors call on BBC to answer complaints on failure to label Hamas as terrorists, [Board of Deputies](#), 20 October 2023.

25 The BBC is under fire for its coverage of the Israel-Hamas war – rightly so, [Times of Israel](#), 3 November 2023.

26 BBC’s Jeremy Bowen admits he ‘got it wrong’ in Gaza hospital report but has ‘no regrets’, [Telegraph](#), 25 November 2023.

27 The BBC is under fire for its coverage of the Israel-Hamas war – rightly so, [Times of Israel](#), 3 November 2023.

28 How the BBC is covering Israel-Gaza, [BBC Media Centre](#), 25 October 2023.

see was a square that appeared to be flaming on all sides and there was, sort of, a void in the middle. I think it was a picture taken from a drone.

“So, you know, we have to piece together what we see and I thought, ‘it looks like the whole building has gone’.

“That was my conclusion from looking at the pictures and I was wrong on that but I don’t feel particularly bad about that. It was just the conclusion I drew.”²⁹

Mr Bowen’s comments suggests that he takes a relaxed attitude to accuracy and impartiality when it comes to reporting the Israel-Hamas conflict

BBC’s response

On 20 October 2023, the President and CEO of the British Board of Deputies, Marie van der Zyl and Michael Wegier, met with BBC Director-General Tim Davie.

In a joint statement issued after the meeting, Marie van der Zyl said: “We emphasised our outrage at the refusal of the BBC to describe Hamas’ barbaric actions as terrorism and the damaging false reporting of the rocket which killed innocent civilians. We will both continue dialogue as well as pursuing legal avenues.”

Mr Davie thanked the Board for the meeting and said the broadcaster was “committed to continuing dialogue through this period”.³⁰

BBC News Chief Executive Deborah Turness published a blog on the broadcaster’s coverage of the Israel-Gaza war, on 25 October.

She set out how BBC reporters were moving away from using the word “militant” as “a default description of Hamas or Hezbollah fighters”.

“But we don’t ban words, and there may be times now or in the future when it’s appropriate to use the term,” she added.

“It’s important that we all think carefully about the language we use to avoid creating a false impression.”³¹

Ms Turness’s comments are not accurate. It is very evident that there has been a ban on the use of the words ‘terror attack’ and ‘terrorist’ by the BBC when it comes to descriptions of Hamas.

Months later, speaking on Laura Kuenssberg’s BBC show on 12 May 2024, then Foreign Secretary David Cameron reflected on a video released by Hamas on X/ Twitter of 51-year-old British-Israeli hostage Nadav Popplewell, who the group said had died in Gaza.

“I watched that video and you just think what callous people they are to do that, to play with the family’s emotions that way,” he said.

“Maybe it’s a moment actually for the BBC to ask itself again, shall we describe these people as terrorists? They are terrorists.”³²

The BBC retains its particular formulation to describe Hamas.

Articles outlining the “contested” nature of claims around the Al-Ahli blast remain on the BBC’s website today.

They include claims that “hundreds” of people were killed in the blast – following a report from the Hamas-controlled Health Ministry that 471 people died.

One article states: “Amid the claim and counterclaim, getting to the truth is harder than ever.”³³

29 BBC international editor Jeremy Bowen admits Gaza hospital report was inaccurate, [Jewish Chronicle](#), 27 November 2023.

30 Board of Deputies meets BBC Director-General Tim Davie, [Board of Deputies](#), 20 October 2023.

31 How the BBC is covering Israel-Gaza, [BBC Media Centre](#), 25 October 2023.

32 David Cameron urges BBC to describe Hamas as terrorist organisation, [Guardian](#), 12 May 2024.

33 Gaza hospital: What video, pictures and other evidence tell us about Al-Ahli hospital blast, [BBC News](#), 19 October 2023; Gaza hospital blast: What does new analysis tell us?, [BBC News](#), 26 October 2023.

The death toll is now believed to be dozens, rather than hundreds, of people.³⁴

By leaving these highly inaccurate articles on the website in an uncorrected form, misinformation continues to be spread. For the corporation that prides itself on being a trusted impartial source of accurate information, they are becoming disseminators of disinformation themselves.

34 Death toll in Gaza hospital blast greatly exaggerated - independent intel, [The Jerusalem Post](#), 19 October 2023.

CHAPTER TWO

The Fog of War

BBC Verify, Fact Checking and Misinformation



Convoy blast misreporting

On 13 October 2023, a convoy of civilians leaving northern Gaza for the south was destroyed in a blast on Salah-al-Din street – one of two designated evacuation routes.

The BBC News website published a BBC Verify report headlined: “Strike on a civilian convoy fleeing Gaza”.³⁵

It opened: “Reports first emerged on Friday evening of a strike on a convoy of vehicles heading towards southern Gaza. These vehicles were carrying civilians, who were fleeing northern Gaza after the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) issued an evacuation order. Videos showing the carnage at the scene emerged shortly afterward.”

It continued: “The Palestinian Health Ministry says 70 people were killed at the scene, and Hamas blamed Israel for the attack. The IDF has told the BBC it had no involvement in the incident.”

The headline, and its use of the word ‘strike’ suggested military involvement. The report also cited death toll claims from the Palestinian Health Ministry without clarifying it is controlled by Hamas.

The terror group itself was referenced without any recognition of its ‘terrorist’ status and the report cites both organisations as if they are two separate bodies.

The report added: “We spoke to several weapons experts but they said it is hard to tell what caused the explosion based on the videos of the aftermath.”

A report at the same time by Sky News quoted missile expert Sean Bell who concluded the blast was “almost certainly not” caused by a missile strike and the explosion appeared to have taken place on the road surface or under the vehicle.³⁶

The only verified facts on the BBC Verify website were the date, time and place of the blast. It remains online.

It is not clear why BBC Verify – which claims to pride itself on accuracy – has kept this report online in these circumstances. By keeping it online the BBC has chosen to stick with a misrepresentative picture of what facts are known and what took place.

35 Strike on civilian convoy fleeing Gaza: What we know from verified video, [BBC News](#), 16 October 2023.

36 Gaza City residents flee south amid IDF evacuation orders with number of displaced people reaching 1 million, [Sky News](#), 18 October 2023.

IDF “targeting medical teams and Arab speakers”

On 15 November, the IDF issued a statement to say it was carrying out a “precise and targeted operation” in a “specified area in the Shifa Hospital based on intelligence information and an operational necessity”.

It added that IDF forces included “medical teams and Arabic speakers” to help patients.³⁷

The breaking news was correctly reported by the news agency Reuters but then misquoted by BBC News presenter Monica Miller.

She said: “At this moment we’re hearing from Reuters that it’s reporting that Israel, it says, its forces are carrying out an operation against Hamas in Gaza’s al Shifa hospital and they are targeting people including medical teams as well as Arab speakers. They are also saying that Israel is calling on *all* Hamas operatives in the hospital to surrender at this point.

“Once again, we are hearing from Reuters that Israel has said its forces are carrying out an operation against Hamas in that hospital we had just heard of there, targeting its Arab speakers as well as some of the medical staff there and they are asking all Hamas operatives in that hospital to surrender.”³⁸



In a statement, the Board of Deputies said it was “absolutely appalled” by the incident and demanded an apology. “At best, this shows a staggering lack of care when reporting on a highly volatile situation, which can have a knock-on effect all over the world, including in Britain, where antisemitic attacks have risen by more than 500 per cent since 7 October. Incidents like this make a mockery of the BBC’s oft-stated dedication to professionalism and impartiality.”³⁹

The very fact that BBC journalists – behind and in front of the camera – thought it was even a possibility that Israeli forces would deliberately target Arab speakers and medical staff is incredibly revealing about the anti-Israel groupthink that appears to happen inside BBC newsrooms.

37 IDF, [Twitter](#), 15 November 2023.

38 BBC News promotes disinformation about IDF Shifa Hospital op, [CAMERA UK](#), 15 November 2023.

39 BBC apologises after Board of Deputies say broadcast shows a ‘staggering lack of care’, [Board of Deputies](#), 15 November 2023.

Campaign Against Antisemitism meeting

The Community Security Trust records incidents of antisemitism nationwide. In November, they released figures which revealed that in the month following 7 October, cases surged by over 500 per cent year on year. Dozens of assaults and more than 100 threats were recorded.⁴⁰

That same month, BBC executives Rhodri Talfan Davies, the BBC executive in charge of local and regional outlets, and David Jordan, the head of the BBC editorial policy department that issues reporting guidelines, met 300 community members at South Hampstead United Synagogue. The event was organised by the Campaign Against Antisemitism (CAA) to address community fears around BBC reporting.

Mr Davies denied accusations the BBC was institutionally antisemitic. He accepted errors in BBC coverage of the Israel conflict could endanger British Jews but said they were inevitable because of the “fog of war”.

The CAA’s CEO Gideon Falter raised the issue of reporting of the Al-Ahli hospital.

In the wake of the report, Mr Falter said, the CAA was notified of physical threats to Jews being posted on social media, including one threatening that “no Jew in London” should be left alive.

Mr Davies’s acknowledged that inaccurate reports might have “real world” consequences for British Jews.

In this instance, it is notable that a BBC Executive acknowledged that the BBC’s errors have ‘real world’ consequences for British Jews. Yet the volume of issues of impartiality and inaccuracy since this date suggests that the BBC has failed in its duty of care to one of Britain’s minority communities.

Mr Davies said he realised that since the 7 October atrocities, “the fear factor for the Jewish community is significant” but he added unravelling events such as the Al-Ahli blast during the “fog of war” was always “an enormous challenge for the journalists on the ground”.

Multiple sources of information making contradictory claims contributed towards inevitable “chaos and confusion at times of conflict,” he added.⁴¹

Macron interview branded as “Israel killing babies”

Three days after that meeting took place, the BBC News website created a diplomatic incident through its reporting of the broadcaster’s interview between Europe Editor Katya Adler and French President Emmanuel Macron.

Running on the website’s ‘World’, ‘Europe’ and ‘Middle East’ pages, the interview sat under the headlines: “Macron urges Israel to stop bombing babies in Gaza” and “Macron calls on Israel to stop killing Gaza’s women and babies”.

Its introduction continued: “Israel must stop killing babies and women in Gaza, French President Emmanuel Macron has told the BBC.”

During the interview, President Macron called on the US and UK Governments to support a ceasefire.

This was clearly the top line message the President came to deliver during the interview, however, it does not feature until the report’s third paragraph.⁴²

Following the report, French diplomat sources condemned the BBC’s editing of the interview which, they said, including cutting President Macron’s support for

40 Record number of hate incidents against British Jews reported, says antisemitism charity, [Guardian](#), 3 November 2023.

41 Israel war: BBC executive admits errors in its coverage could endanger British Jews, [The Jewish Chronicle](#), 10 November 2023.

42 Macron calls on Israel to stop killing Gaza’s women and babies, [BBC News](#), 11 November 2023.

hostages held captive by Hamas.⁴³

President Macron called Israel's President Isaac Herzog to stress he did not accuse Israel of striking civilians intentionally and that he supported the country's right to defend itself.⁴⁴

It is not clear why the BBC edited the interview to remove references to the hostages or the focus on a possible ceasefire.

The BBC chose to emphasise the part of Macron's statement that was most critical of Israel, without sufficient weight being given to his comments in support of the release of Israeli hostages. Any reader's overall takeaway from the article is one that gives a false impression of the French President's true position on the conflict.

Again, when the BBC had a range of different highlights to draw out from this interview, they honed in on the one most critical of Israel.

"Starving" Gaza population

In December 2023, the World Food Programme issued a report on the food security situation in Gaza following an investigation made during a humanitarian pause in fighting.

Its key finding showed an: "18-point increase in the share of households who experienced severe levels of hunger, rising from 38 per cent to 56 per cent."⁴⁵

An article published on the BBC News website on 10 December 2023 carried the headline: "Half of Gaza's population is starving, warns UN".



The following strapline read: "A senior UN aid official has warned that half of Gaza's population is starving, as fighting there continues."⁴⁶

The words 'starving' and 'starvation' are not used in the WFP report. They also do not appear in the body of the BBC article or in the quotes used by Carl Skau, the deputy director of the UN World Food Programme.

This reckless use of emotive language, deliberately designed to paint Israel in the most negative light, was not backed up by the facts in the UN Report.

The BBC has not provided an explanation of why this language was included in the headline. Again, it demonstrates a lack of internal editorial checks on accuracy and fairness.

The article details the difficulties of getting aid through the Rafah crossing but does not highlight Hamas's role in stealing aid meant for Palestinian civilians.

The failure to adequately report on the theft of aid by Hamas and its associates has been a consistent 'bias of omission' in the BBC's reporting of conditions in Gaza.

43 After criticizing civilian deaths in Gaza, Macron asserts 'unequivocal support' for Israel, [Jewish Insider](#), 13 November 2023.

44 Macron reaffirms support for Israel after controversial BBC interview, [Jerusalem Post](#), 12 November 2023.

45 Food Security Update For Internally Displaced Populations in Southern Gaza Strip, [World Food Programme](#), 14 December 2023.

46 Israel-Gaza war: Half of Gaza's population is starving, warns UN, [BBC News](#), 10 December 2023.

Polio “epidemic”

In August, a BBC article revealed plans by the World Health Organisation to send 1.2 million polio vaccines to Gaza after the virus was detected in wastewater. The disease, linked to a strain from Egypt, was first detected in Gaza before the conflict, but Hamas propaganda, covered by the BBC, blamed Israeli military for the “health catastrophe”.

Polio is a serious infectious disease that causes fever and can, in some cases, lead to paralysis or death. Polio vaccination was estimated at 99 per cent in Gaza in 2022 but had declined to 89 per cent last year. The WHO said there had been no serious cases reported and it was in the process of getting the necessary approvals to enter Gaza and hoped to start vaccinating 600,000 children first. However, it also warned that displacement of the population and the damage caused to hospitals by the war had increased the risks of the disease spreading, creating the need for widespread vaccinations. The WHO called for a ceasefire to make the programme easier to deliver.

The BBC article quoted the Hamas-run Health Ministry’s dramatic declaration that Gaza had become a “polio epidemic zone”. It blamed the reappearance of the virus on Israel’s military offensive and the resulting destruction of health facilities.⁴⁷

However, an earlier article by the BBC, published in July, highlighted that cases of polio had been around in Gaza “for some time” and could date back to September 2023 – before the Hamas attack that plunged Israel into war. It also included comments by an IDF spokesman saying the military was working with health organisations to get vaccines into Gaza.⁴⁸

Boy with cerebral palsy was in “excellent health” until war

In June 2024 the BBC was accused of anti-Israel bias after a report about the water crisis in Gaza wrongly claimed a boy with cerebral palsy was “normal” and in “excellent health” before the war.

The website article portrayed the acutely ill nine-year-old as only suffering from malnutrition and dehydration, making no mention of his life-long condition.

The piece described Yunis as “stretched out, semi-unconscious” in Khan Younis hospital, “his twisted frame” being “hard to look at”.

Sitting at his bedside, mother Ghanima Jumaa is quoted as saying: “My son was in excellent health before, he was normal. But when he developed this malnutrition and dehydration, he became as you see him now.”

Following complaints the story was pulled from the website, rewritten and republished with a note explaining how the original article had not been clear.⁴⁹

In the age of social media, this was too little too late. The original misleading article appeared prominently on BBC platforms and was very widely shared online. This is an example of the way that the BBC’s inaccurate reporting has contributed to the ‘real-world consequences’ for British Jews since 7 October that BBC Executive Mr Davies acknowledged.

47 Gaza to get 1.2m polio vaccines amid outbreak fears, [BBC News](#), 7 August 2024.

48 WHO ‘extremely worried’ about possible Gaza polio outbreak, [BBC News](#), 23 July 2024.

49 BBC accused of anti-Israel bias after incorrect Gaza report, [Telegraph](#), 21 June 2024.

No coverage of “baby beheading” claims

While the BBC has repeatedly documented claims of ‘famine’ and dehydration in Gaza, alongside the civilian casualties caused by Hamas’s ruthless use of human shields, one of the most shocking events of 7 October, received scant coverage by the broadcaster: the beheading of babies by Hamas at Kfar Aza.

Israel-based news channel i24 was the first to report that 70 Hamas terrorists beheaded babies as they stormed through Kfar Aza slaughtering innocent families in their homes on the day of the attack.

British newspapers including The Sun, the Daily Express and the Daily Mail splashed on the story, and US President Joe Biden became embroiled when he claimed to have seen pictures of the beheaded children.

Despite the controversy which raged about the claim for days on social media and the mainstream press, the BBC covered the story just once, in a four-minute video clip and an accompanying article.

There has been no investigation conducted by BBC Verify of such a brutal crime.

The Sun, cleared of any wrongdoing following an IPSO probe into its front page coverage of the atrocity, described the claim as “a credible one based on what was indisputably true about the massacre at Kfar Aza”.⁵⁰

On 11 October 2023, reporting from the kibbutz as soldiers removed the bodies of innocent Israeli men, women and children, International Editor Jeremy Bowen described the horror of Kfar Aza as “without doubt a war crime”.

He then added: “But what about the Palestinian civilians Israel is killing in attacks on Hamas?”

In an interview, an Israeli soldier tells Mr Bowen: “We will be aggressive, and we will be strong, but we will keep our morals and our values... We come to kill the enemy, not civilians in their bed.”

The accompanying BBC website article about the massacre, is headlined: “Inside Kfar Aza where Hamas militants killed families in their homes”.

It quotes Davidi Ben Zion, the deputy commander of Unit 71, the experienced team of paratroopers who led the assault into the village.

He was quoted as saying: “Thank God we saved many lives of many parents and children. Unfortunately, some were burned by Molotov [cocktails]. They are very aggressive, like animals.”

The article continued: “Mr Ben Zion said Hamas gunmen who killed families, including babies, were ‘just a jihad machine to kill everybody, [people] without weapons, without nothing, just normal citizens that want to take their breakfast and that’s all.’

“Some of the victims, he said, were decapitated. ‘They killed them and cut



50 Sun, Telegraph and Metro cleared by IPSO over report of claim Hamas ‘beheaded babies’ on 7 October, [Press Gazette](#), 23 May 2024.

some of their heads, it's a dreadful thing to see... and we must remember who is the enemy..."⁵¹

It is deeply telling that the BBC has failed to properly investigate this story, and give this war crime the appropriate prominence.

Iranian "objects"

On 1 April 2024, an air strike on the Iranian consulate building in Syria's capital Damascus killed seven officers of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corp, including senior commander of the elite Quds Force Brig-Gen Mohammad Reza Zahedi.

Iran blamed Israel for the strike. The BBC website has 19 stories covering the attack and subsequent warnings it could prompt a retaliation from Iran.

In the early hours of 13 April, the retaliation came. Iran launched 300 hundred rockets into Israel, most destroyed with the help of Britain, the US and Jordan.

In the BBC's coverage of this bombardment, a number of articles on the BBC website referred to "dozens" of missiles. One brief article originally referred to them as "objects" in its headline: "Israel-Iran: Sirens ring through Jerusalem as objects shot down from sky".⁵²

Following a complaint the copy was amended three days later.

*"Clarification 16 April: This article originally referred to Israeli air defence systems shooting down objects over Jerusalem and has been amended to refer to missiles because only ballistic missiles reached Israeli airspace."*⁵³

It is not clear why it took the BBC three days to amend the article. By then it had been widely shared on social media and the news cycle had moved on.

Views of Jewish people on BBC bias

A survey commissioned by the Jewish Chronicle in December found that more than three-quarters of Jewish people, 77 per cent, thought the BBC's coverage of the Gaza war was biased against Israel.

Respondents to the poll were asked whether they agreed that BBC coverage was biased against Israel. An absolute majority of 51 per cent said it was "very biased" and a further 26 per cent that it was "biased".⁵⁴

51 Inside Kfar Aza where Hamas militants killed families in their homes, [BBC News](#), 11 October 2023.

52 Israel-Iran: Sirens ring through Jerusalem as objects shot down from sky, [BBC News](#), 13 April 2024.

53 Israel-Iran: Sirens ring through Jerusalem as missiles shot down from sky, [BBC News](#), 14 April 2024.

54 Three quarters of UK Jews say BBC is biased against Israel, [Jewish Chronicle](#), 7 December 2023.

CHAPTER THREE

“A Morning of Hope”

BBC Arabic



BBC Arabic is a foreign language service, broadcasting 24 hours a day from London and Cairo to the Middle East, across TV, radio and online.

It is the BBC World Service’s second-largest service, reaching a weekly audience of 38 million people across the Arabic-speaking world.⁵⁵

It’s supposed to be a window into BBC values from abroad – but the last eleven months have shown it in a very different light.

Hamas support by BBC Arabic staff

Just one week after the Hamas terror attack, the BBC launched an urgent investigation into five of its own reporters and a freelancer who posted or shared a series of anti-Israel tweets, including some which likened Hamas to freedom fighters.

The inquiry followed news coverage of an investigation by the Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting and Analysis (CAMERA) into the social media posts of: Mahmoud Sheleib, senior broadcast journalist; Sally Nabil, correspondent; Salma Khattab, journalist based in Cairo; Sanaa Khoury, the Beirut-based Religious Affairs Correspondent; and Nada Abdelsamad, a Beirut-based programmes editor. It also investigated Aya Hossam, a freelancer who had described herself as a broadcast journalist at BBC Arabic.

Salma Khattab, based in Cairo for BBC News, liked a post appearing to refer to Hamas as freedom fighters. It said: “You cannot support freedom fighters in Ukraine as they resist Russian occupation but not in Palestine against Israeli occupation, unless you have no conscience.”

Mahmoud Sheleib, a BBC News senior broadcast journalist, tweeted suggesting that young Israelis were effectively combatants.

“[I see] In front of me on Al Jazeera, their so-called civilians are standing armed alongside the police and shooting because they basically don’t have any civilians among the youth. This is what the ignorant often don’t know. I am in favour of fighting them with love, yes, this is the solution.” This was followed by a laughing emoji.

The Cairo-based journalist also took part in an online conversation in which he joked about a woman whose grandmother was abducted by Hamas receiving an “inheritance”.

Sanaa Khoury, the Beirut-based Religious Affairs Correspondent for BBC Arabic,

55 Arabic, [BBC World Service Careers](#), accessed 22 August 2024.

tweeted: "Israel's prestige is crying in the corner."

Ms Khoury also tweeted about reports of "Baklava and candy being distributed in celebration" of a Hamas raid.

Nada Abdelsamad, a Beirut-based programme editor at BBC Arabic, retweeted a video of Israelis hiding in fear titled: "Settlers hiding inside a tin container in fear of the Palestinian resistance warriors".

This came with the hashtag: "promise of the hereafter", a Quranic reference to killing of the Jews.

Sally Nabil, a BBC Arabic correspondent, liked a tweet which stated: "The Palestinian resistance taking an initiative and surprises the Israeli occupier with an operation of quality". She also liked a comment to a video showing footage of jeeps loaded with bodies and kidnapped civilians. The comment said: "A proud scene photographed by me."⁵⁶

A tweet describing Israel as "an occupation state" was also liked by her along with one which described the 7 October attack as a "morning of hope".⁵⁷

Aya Hossam liked a tweet that said: "Every member of the Zionist entity served in the army at some point in his life, whether men or women, and they all had victims of explicit violations... This term "civilians" applies to the animals and pets that live there and they are not seriously at fault."

She later retweeted a message which included: "the Zionist must know that he will live as a thief and a usurper". The BBC said Ms Hossam was a freelancer who would no longer work for the BBC.

Egypt All Sports, a website founded by Amr Fekry, a sports correspondent and pundit at BBC Arabic, posted warm wishes to "Palestinian brethren in their war against the occupying entity" the day after the atrocities.

BBC spokesman said: "We are urgently investigating this matter. We take allegations of breaches of our editorial and social media guidelines with the utmost seriousness, and if and when we find breaches we will act, including taking disciplinary action."⁵⁸

No consequences

Following the inquiry, Khoury, Nabil, Shalib and Khattab were advised to undergo training on social media and neutrality policies.

Nada Abdelsamad did not attend the investigation, and said she was considering suing the organisation.

In a letter to BBC Director-General Tim Davie, Board of Deputies president Marie van der Zyl described the decision to take no action as: "unconscionable".

She wrote: "The BBC cannot claim to provide neutral and balanced journalism while effectively letting off employees who appeared to have either written, shared or liked content which justifies, supports or even celebrates mass murder, by an organisation proscribed as a terror group in this country.

"To do so makes an utter mockery of the Corporation and its stated values, as set out in its charter."

A spokesperson for CAMERA, the organisation that unearthed the tweets, said: "This decision is another striking example of the BBC's continued unwillingness to address bigotry and terror apologetics within its ranks."⁵⁹

56 BBC reporters in the Middle East appear to justify killing of civilians by Hamas, [Telegraph](#), 14 October 2023.

57 BBC journalists investigated for posts about Oct 7 massacre still reporting on Israel-Gaza conflict, [Telegraph](#), 2 March 2024.

58 BBC reporters in the Middle East appear to justify killing of civilians by Hamas, [Telegraph](#), 14 October 2023.

59 BBC accused of 'letting off' staff who 'supported Hamas terror attacks', [Jewish Chronicle](#), 29 November 2023.

In the wake of the row, BBC Director-General Tim Davie told MPs that the BBC “should be very proud” of the output of BBC Arabic. He said its journalists were under “enormous pressure” but accepted some of their tweets were “unacceptable”.

He added: “We do not want to see that, and when we see it, we will take action, and look at the appropriate sanction. That will not always be leaving the BBC, it might be the various ways in which you could take action.”⁶⁰

Corrections every two days

The row followed growing concern about the output of BBC Arabic, which is run by the World Service and has long faced criticism of anti-Israel bias.

In July 2023, it emerged that BBC Arabic had been forced to make more than 130 corrections following complaints of bias and inaccuracy in reports about Israel and Jewish affairs since the beginning of 2021.

That amounted to an average of more than one correction every week. The sheer volume of corrections was a signal that recent attempts to “reform” BBC Arabic were a failure, according to CAMERA Arabic.⁶¹

In May 2024, The Telegraph reported that BBC Arabic had been forced to correct its output in the first five months of the war by an average of once every other day.

It is worth noting that BBC CEO News Deborah Turness was dismissive of reporting in The Telegraph during an appearance at a parliamentary Select Committee, describing it as ‘hostile media’. It was subsequently pointed out to Ms Turness that she would be better placed to look at the specific claims made in each instance rather than dismiss criticism because she did not like the source. It appears that Ms Turness gives more credence to the claims of the terrorist group Hamas than the journalists of a UK newspaper.

Of the 80 corrections made, 34 concerned BBC Arabic referring to Jewish communities inside Israel’s internationally recognized territory as “settlements”, which happened 30 times, and to their residents as “settlers”, which happened four times. CAMERA, which had brought forward a number of complaints, said it had flagged this issue as early as October, but BBC Arabic continued using the term “settlers” and “settlements” widely.

It was also forced to correct its description of Hamas and Hezbollah as “the resistance” on three occasions, and references to attacks which targeted and killed civilians as “resistance operations” on two occasions.

BBC Arabic also corrected one reference to the deaths of members of another UK-proscribed terrorist organisation as “martyrdom”.⁶²

The “military expert” who celebrated 7 October

Concerns have also been raised about guests appearing on BBC Arabic programmes.⁶³

In February, the Jewish Chronicle revealed that BBC Arabic had repeatedly interviewed Major General Wasef Eriqat, a former PLO general who celebrated 7 October as a “heroic military miracle”. He had appeared at least 12 times on the channel since the 7 October atrocities, with no mention of his PLO background.

BBC Arabic viewers were told Major General Eriqat was an independent “military

60 BBC Arabic forced to correct its output 80 times in five months of war, [Telegraph](#), 4 May 2024.

61 BBC Arabic issues more than 100 corrections following complaints of anti-Israel bias, [Jewish Chronicle](#), 6 July 2023.

62 BBC Arabic forced to correct its output 80 times in five months of war, [Telegraph](#), 4 May 2024.

63 Wasef Eriqat, [Youtube](#), 3 November 2023.

expert” based in the West Bank’s capital Ramallah.

The broadcasts, monitored and translated by CAMERA Arabic, began on 28 October, when he said: “1,200 resistance fighters defeated 10,000 of Israel’s elite of the elite in their backyard”. Major General Eriqat claimed that Hamas, unlike Israel, did not attack civilians.

The following day he said Israel was “waging a war of genocide against the Palestinian people”.

He added: “Those who planned the 7/10 operation made this heroic military miracle come true, with 1,200 Palestinian fighters superior to 10,000 Israeli soldiers.”

On 7 November, Major General Eriqat told viewers: “Because they (the IDF) could



not face the Palestinian fighters, they try to cover it up by saying that Hamas and the resistance use civilians as a human shield. That is incorrect and a lie.”

On 6 December, he broadcast the wholly unsubstantiated claim that 80 per cent of Palestinian casualties in Gaza were women, children and the elderly. He added that Israel had not attacked “a single military target”. He said that meant “there is nothing worthy of the name ‘military operation’. Rather, we talk about massacres carried out against the Palestinian people.”

On 26 December, Major General Eriqat accused President Biden of being an “accomplice to the genocidal war”, whose aim was “eliminating the Palestinian people”.

On 24 January, he said: “The Israeli military flails on the ground as it carries out acts of payback and revenge, relying on the air force, land-based and naval artillery to destroy infrastructure and kill the highest number of Palestinians possible.”⁶⁴

“Terrorism or resistance?”

In August 2024, CAMERA raised concerns about commentator Hind al-Dawi being invited to appear on BBC Arabic’s current affairs programme Egypt Mean Time.

Ms al-Dawi, just three weeks after the 7 October attack, told Russia Today that it was wrong to describe Hamas as terrorists and that it was a “resistance movement”.

She told RT’s discussion programme Ask More: “Resistance is a legitimate right, enshrined by every law and constitution.”

In early May she told Egyptian satellite channel ON that the Hamas atrocities

were a “necessary pre-emptive measure” to defend Jerusalem’s al-Aqsa Mosque. She was invited on BBC Arabic’s Egypt Mean Time on 18 July to discuss negotiations between Egypt and Israel.

A spokesman for CAMERA warned that these guests were being presented as experts on matters involving Israel despite having clearly biased views. In response, the BBC said it was “committed to hearing from a range of contributors and experts to offer a variety of views and perspectives from the Middle East” but there was “no place for antisemitism” in its output.⁶⁵

The BBC Arabic channel also came under fire for its YouTube channel which asked viewers whether the killing of a 79-year-old Jewish woman by Hamas gunmen was “terrorism” or “resistance”.

A video in January included an item discussing the Hamas terror attack on the village of Ra’anana, which killed Edna Bluestein. A caption shown during this item posed as a “point of discussion”, the question: “How do you view this kind of operation, terrorism or resistance?”

The attack, for which Hamas claimed responsibility, resulted in more than a dozen other people being injured. Some were stabbed, others run over by vehicles.⁶⁶

Violent and antisemitic comments

Comments posted on BBC Arabic’s YouTube channel reportedly appear to have been left unmoderated.

One BBC Arabic YouTube report about the 7 October attacks had 405 comments left by viewers, the vast majority of them offensive and violent towards Jews and Israelis.

Another item which featured an interview with a young Israeli woman who survived the 7 October attacks, included comments of “crocodile tears” while another viewer posted: “It is not your country.” Another wrote: “Enjoy your stay while it lasts or while you draw breath, your reckoning is at hand, and man will it be a sight to burn in memories. You are in for the let-down of your life.”

A BBC spokesman said: “BBC News Arabic reflects debates taking place across the Middle East including on polarising and sensitive subject matters around the Israel-Gaza war. As part of this reporting, we invite a wide variety of contributors to provide differing perspectives and routinely question views on air. BBC News Arabic output is subject to the same Editorial Guidelines as the rest of BBC News and takes its commitment to impartiality incredibly seriously. We always look to remove any offensive comments on YouTube as soon as possible.”⁶⁷

Most respectable media organisations properly moderate their comments, or otherwise turn off the commenting facility.

A platform for an attempted murderer

In March, BBC Arabic was accused of giving an uncritical platform to a convicted teenage Palestinian who attempted to murder an Israeli neighbour in front of her children.

Nufuz Hammad was interviewed on the channel’s ‘Worth Paying Attention’ programme talking about her life following her release as part of a hostage-prisoner

65 BBC accused of inviting ‘anti-Semitic’ commentator onto show, [Telegraph](#), 10 August 2024.

66 BBC Arabic asked whether murder of Jewish woman, 79, was ‘terror or resistance’, [Telegraph](#), 13 July 2024.

67 BBC Arabic asked whether murder of Jewish woman, 79, was ‘terror or resistance’, [Telegraph](#), 13 July 2024.

swap by Hamas and Israel last November.

During the interview Nagham Kassem, the presenter, made no direct reference to the attack in which Hammad stabbed Moriah Cohen, a mother of two, in the back.

In November, Hammad became one of Israel's youngest Palestinian prisoners when, aged 14, she was sentenced to 12 years and fined £10,000 for the attempted murder of 28-year-old Ms Cohen, who lived a few doors from her in Israeli-occupied East Jerusalem.

She was released after two years along with 240 other Palestinian prisoners. In exchange, Hamas released 105 civilian hostages, including 81 Israelis, 23 Thais and one Filipino.

But when Ms Hammad was interviewed, Ms Kassem made no direct reference to Ms Cohen and did not question the teenager about the attack.

Introducing the guest prior to the interview, Ms Kassem told viewers the girl had been imprisoned "under the allegation of trying to stab an Israeli settler".

Ms Hammad appeared to show no remorse for her crime during the interview, instead complaining about treatment from prison guards after the 7 October atrocities.⁶⁸

It's hard to imagine a London based BBC News item interviewing a convicted murderer and treating them as a respected commentator. As far as BBC Arabic are concerned, it seems that the guest falls within the acceptable window.



"No evidence" of Israeli women raped by Hamas

In December, the BBC was forced to distance itself from BBC Arabic freelancer Sarah Magdy, an Egyptian "social media influencer" who produced films and articles for the channel. She claimed there was "no evidence" Israeli women were raped by Hamas on 7 October and accused Israel of lying about the numbers of people killed during the attack.

Magdy posted a video to her 128,000 followers on Instagram in which she said: "Israel is killing its own people. It seems everything we knew about 7 October is a complete lie. Someone call Piers Morgan please."

"The death toll is not 1,400 as we knew. They did a revision and now the number is down 200. The other 200 - they counted Hamas as their own casualties. Now, seems like people who were killed at the Nova festival were killed by Israel from combat helicopters, not Hamas, and Hamas did not target them because they did not know about the festival... Seems like everything we heard about the festival was very inaccurate."

She also claimed that those murdered at kibbutzim, near Gaza, were also killed by Israel. "In Israeli media we heard about some survivors in the 7 October attacks that Israeli civilians were killed by Israeli forces.... Israeli forces shelled houses and killed Israeli civilians. Survivors said at least 112 Be'eri people were killed by the Israeli forces. So now Israel killed its own people at the Nova festival, shelled houses and killed people at the kibbutz."

Magdy added here was "no evidences [sic] that women were raped, but seems to

68 BBC Arabic accused over interview with Palestinian teenager who tried to murder Israeli, [Telegraph](#), 16 March 2024.

me that someone is lying”.⁶⁹

It is impossible to imagine that the BBC would have given a platform to views of this nature if the terrorist atrocity had occurred anywhere other than Israel.

“Settler-colonialism” of Israel

It emerged in October that a senior BBC correspondent had written to Director-General Tim Davie urging the corporation to use words “settler-colonialism” and “ethnic cleansing” in their coverage of Israel.

The letter argued the broadcaster may be “reinforcing Israeli propaganda meant to dehumanise the Palestinians” as the Jewish state commits “genocide”.

When Rami Ruhayem, who has reported for the BBC from across the Middle East, failed to hear from Mr Davie, he forwarded the email to bureaus across the world.

He wrote: “Words like ‘massacre’, ‘slaughter’ and ‘atrocities’ are being used – prominently – in reference to actions by Hamas, but hardly, if at all, in reference to actions by Israel.

“The power of emotive coverage and repetition is well understood. The selective application of emotive repetition is sure to have an impact on audiences, and it is exactly the kind of impact Israeli propagandists are aiming for as they dehumanise Palestinians and set the stage for the mass murder they have pledged – and begun – to carry out.”

The BBC may therefore be complicit in “war propaganda” and “dehumanisation”, Mr Ruhayem claimed.⁷⁰

The fact that someone can hold such a senior role in BBC News, and at the same time demonstrate such a total lack of understanding of impartiality, makes the revelation of this email all the more concerning.

Removals

The BBC has also been forced to remove a number of items completely from its BBC Arabic online output.

This included a video which questioned whether the Kfar Aza kibbutz atrocity actually happened. Women were raped and tortured, parents were murdered in front of their children and infants slaughtered in an orgy of violence by 70 Hamas terrorists that left 52 dead at the kibbutz on 7 October.

Trending, a programme on BBC Arabic, suggested there were different versions of the story and that Jeremy Bowen, the corporation’s International Editor who went to the scene, was simply repeating what he had been told by Israeli forces.

The original BBC headline said: “Hamas rejects accusations that its gunmen carried out atrocities in the Israeli Kfar Aza village.”

The headline was later changed before the entire report was removed from the BBC website and later from YouTube.⁷¹

The BBC also had to remove a video report which appeared to uncritically platform the false claim that the killer of a Palestinian-American child was Jewish.⁷²

Though it is welcome that some of these inaccurate and offensive reports are sometimes removed, there are clearly serious editorial and oversight problems that led to these items being published in the first place.

69 Social media influencer who has worked for BBC says ‘no evidence’ women were raped by Hamas, [Jewish Chronicle](#), 7 December 2023.

70 BBC correspondent advocates using ‘settler-colonialism’ to describe Israel, [Jewish Chronicle](#), 27 October 2023.

71 BBC programme questions whether Hamas massacre took place, [Telegraph](#), 16 October 2023.

72 BBC Arabic forced to correct its output 80 times in five months of war, [Telegraph](#), 4 May 2024.

Lack of grip

Conservative peer Lord Polak told The Telegraph: “There needs to be a wide-ranging independent inquiry into the BBC’s coverage of the Israeli-Hamas conflict and their handling of complaints about it.

“If they keep getting it wrong it suggests there is a fundamental issue with the BBC, with the possibility that the views of individuals within the organisation are more important than their own Charter’s requirement for impartiality.”

A BBC spokesperson said: “BBC News Arabic staff are providing coverage of the Israel-Gaza conflict for audiences in the UK, in English, in addition to Arabic, reporting from Gaza, Israel and the surrounding region in difficult and often dangerous circumstances. Their work adheres to the same Editorial Guidelines and standards as all other BBC News output.”⁷³

Danny Cohen, the former director of BBC Television from 2013 to 2015, is unconvinced.

Writing for The Telegraph in June, he highlighted that Sally Nabil was still working as a BBC correspondent despite liking a tweet that referred to the 7 October attack as a “morning of hope”.

He said: “Many will consider Ms Nabil’s apparent support for a message which described the rape, kidnap, mutilation and murder of innocent people as a source of “hope”, as tantamount to showing sympathy for terrorists at their most inhumane.

“The real question here is why, eight months later, Ms Nabil is still working for the BBC, her salary paid for by us all as licence-fee payers. But she is a symptom of a problem, not the problem itself.

“The fundamental issue is the failure of the BBC’s most senior executives to get a grip on anti-Israel bias and antisemitism in the organisation.

“In this case, it seems clear that senior BBC management have made the decision that it is acceptable for staff to endorse a racist massacre without any impact on their employment. Given these circumstances, how on earth can Britain’s Jewish community believe that the BBC’s leadership takes anti-Jewish racism seriously and is determined to stamp it out?”⁷⁴

73 Calls for inquiry as BBC fails to investigate complaints of anti-Israel bias, [Telegraph](#), 27 January 2024.

74 The BBC has given up any pretence of impartiality, [Telegraph](#), 21 June 2024.

CHAPTER FOUR

Reporting Death

Civilians, Combatants and Journalists

At various times throughout this conflict, news organisations, including the BBC, have set great store by the Hamas casualty figure claims. There is no way the BBC or anybody else can properly verify these figures, not even Hamas themselves. Simply stating that the figure comes from “the Hamas-controlled Health Authority” still implies to audiences that the BBC believe the figures are broadly true.

Civilian casualty numbers, and individual human interest stories including the deaths of “journalists”, all play a significant role in shaping world opinion on the actions of Israel.

It is clear that many of these stories and numbers are either highly speculative or based on unreliable accounts.

“Civilian” casualty numbers

In January 2024, viewer Miriam Rich made her first ever complaint to the BBC.

The complaint concerned BBC One’s News at Ten bulletin on 14 January in which journalist Wyre Davies said: “And the number of civilians killed in Gaza has been huge – very nearly 24,000 dead, according to the Hamas-run Health Ministry, many of them women and children.”

In April her complaint, covered by the Jewish Chronicle, was upheld and the BBC admitted its reporting of “civilian” deaths was inaccurate, as the figure also included the deaths of Hamas fighters.

The BBC’s Editorial Complaints Unit (ECU) concluded the report “fell below the BBC’s standards of accuracy”. In its statement, the ECU said: “The passage gave the unintended impression that the figure from the Hamas-run Health Ministry consisted only of civilian dead, whereas it also included combatants.”

Ms Rich told the JC: “I think the BBC has so much superb output and is very often on the end of unfair criticism. However, I think its coverage of the Israel-Hamas conflict has been inherently skewed against Israel since the beginning and that this has been hugely damaging.

“Conflating civilian casualty figures with those of murderous Hamas militants gives rise to an entirely inaccurate and unbalanced reflection of the reality, which was why I felt it was so important to persist with this complaint. I’m glad that it was eventually upheld and hope it will make a difference to future reporting.”⁷⁵

It is worth noting that alongside the conflation of civilian and combatant fatalities, the BBC also fails to take any account of civilian deaths inflicted by Hamas itself, including through inadvertent explosions and misfiring missiles.

75 BBC admits Hamas ‘civilian’ death reporting was inaccurate, [Jewish Chronicle](#), 26 April 2024.

Statistical double standards

Despite the potential for obvious propaganda motives behind the Hamas-controlled Gaza Health Ministry's publication of a 'civilian' death toll, the BBC has been accused of double standards in how it treats claims and counter-claims on this issue.

In February, BBC Verify sought to check claims by the IDF that 10,000 combatants had been killed in the war.

The article stated: "The toll of at least 30,035 killed, from Gaza's Hamas-run Health Ministry, has previously been described as trustworthy by the World Health Organization's (WHO) regional emergency director Richard Brennan.

"The WHO says the Ministry has "good capacity in data collection" and its previous reporting has been credible and "well developed". But its overall tally of those killed does not distinguish between civilians and combatants."

It continued that "the Gaza authorities" maintain "70 per cent of those killed had been women and children". As elsewhere, BBC Verify did not make clear to audiences that 'the Gaza authorities' are the terrorist group Hamas.

It concluded: "So, with the figures suggesting less than 30 per cent of those killed were men - some of whom are likely to be over fighting age - experts have raised questions about how Israel arrived at its claim of killing 10,000 fighters."

While BBC Verify seems content to accept data provided by "the Gaza authorities" in good faith, information provided by the IDF appears to be held to a more rigorous standard.

In an attempt to cross-check IDF claims to killing 10,000 combatants, BBC Verify trawled 280 videos posted on the IDF YouTube channel over five months, and revealed: "... very few contained visual evidence of fighters being killed.

"Of these just one - posted on 14 December - purports to show dead bodies of fighters. A handful of other videos appear to show fighters being shot at."

The report continued: "We also attempted to count the number of individual claims of Hamas fighters killed on the IDF's official Telegram channel. We found 160 posts claiming to have killed a specific number of fighters, for a total of 714 fatalities.

"But there were also 247 references which used terms such as "several", "dozens" or "hundreds" killed, making a meaningful overall tally impossible."

It goes on to include a series of graphs provided by the Hamas controlled Health Ministry, which, it claims, "shows a sharp increase in the proportion of women and children among the dead compared with previous wars".⁷⁶

Two months after BBC Verify highlighted those graphs which purported to show 70 per cent of those killed as women and children, it published a second article which cast doubt on their accuracy.

It came after the United Nations revised down the 70 per cent figure it published, leading to claims fewer Palestinians had been killed since Israel launched its offensive.⁷⁷

The original article has not been amended or removed. It is not clear why the original misleading article is still available on the BBC website, particularly given the claimed commitment to factual accuracy made by BBC executives in describing the work of BBC Verify.

The change in official UN estimates prompted a furious response from Israeli Foreign Minister Israel Katz who called on the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres to step down.

"The miraculous resurrection of the dead in Gaza. The UN had reduced its estimate of women and children killed in Gaza by 50 per cent and claims that it relied

76 Israel Gaza: Checking Israel's claim to have killed 10,000 Hamas fighters, [BBC News](#), 29 February 2024.

77 Gaza war: Why is the UN citing lower death toll for women and children?, [BBC News](#), 16 May 2024.

on data from the Hamas Ministry of Health,” Mr Katz wrote in a post on X on Monday.

“Anyone who relies on fake data from a terrorist organisation in order to promote blood libels against Israel is antisemitic and supports terrorism. Antonio Guterres, resign!”

BBC website covered this story under the headline: “UN defends casualty tally amid Israeli anger”.⁷⁸

BBC’s day of Hamas casualty figure spin

On 15 August, with increasing rocket attacks by Hezbollah threatening to plunge the entire Middle East region into conflict and mounting domestic pressure on Netanyahu, a high level delegation of Israeli diplomats attended ceasefire talks in Qatar.

As a terrorist organisation, Hamas is not allowed to attend negotiations but normally it takes part indirectly through intermediaries. On 15 August however, Hamas, under the control of Yahya Sinwar who masterminded the 7 October attacks, boycotted the talks. Hamas insisted it wanted to return to a previous deal that was on the table in May.

Instead of striking for peace, Hamas used the day for propaganda: publishing its latest claims about the death toll in Gaza. It was this that became the primary focus of BBC coverage throughout the day.

Ten months into the war, analysis of this day’s coverage shows the BBC still failing to provide the necessary balance on the most emotive subject of war, the toll it takes on innocent people.

Throughout the day presenters and journalists routinely highlighted that the figures were issued by a Hamas-run organisation, were disputed by Israel and were hard to verify because journalists cannot operate in Gaza.

However, not all introductions by presenters, reports from journalists and headlines issued by the BBC about the “grim milestone” made clear that this figure included both civilians and Hamas fighters.

The steps taken by Israeli military to minimise civilian casualties were not outlined and the BBC often failed to highlight the common practice by Hamas of embedding its military hardware and its terrorist command centres within civilian populations – in effect using its own people as human shields.

The coverage also made scant mention of Israeli civilians killed by Hamas in an unprovoked terror attack on southern Israel on 7 October – the ultimate cause of all the current suffering of innocent people in Gaza.

The terrorist group claimed on 15 August that 40,000 Palestinians had been killed since they attacked Israel on 7 October. Israel disputed the figures and said it has killed 15,000 Hamas soldiers during the war.

What distinguishes 15 August was how the BBC gave such a huge amount of airtime and prominence to a clearly contested figure, and one that has in the past been both questioned and revised by the United Nations.

The death toll was the second item on BBC News at One, with the presenter introducing the story saying: “Now, the number of Palestinians killed by Israel’s offensive in Gaza has reached more than 40,000. The Hamas-run health ministry released the figures, which don’t distinguish between civilians and combatants, in the last few hours.” The introduction did not state these figures were disputed.

The broadcast featured a package by reporter Barbara Plett Usher in Jerusalem that focused on the plight of Palestinians in the conflict and the “overwhelming”

78 Gaza war: UN defends casualty tally amid Israeli anger, [BBC News](#), 17 May 2024.

death toll. "Each loss is a raw and individual grief experienced again and again in places that are supposed to be safe," she said with accompanying scenes that viewers were warned they "may find distressing".



"Israel says it hits civilian infrastructure because Hamas is operating there, Hamas says it isn't," the reporter continued.

On BBC Radio 4's *The World at One*, the package by Ms Plett Usher was also featured and the death toll was the second item. The coverage also included a quote from one Israeli Minister that the Hamas death toll was "fake figures from a terrorist organisation" but went on to say the figures were deemed to be "broadly accurate" by the United Nations. The flagship radio programme also covered the politics behind the ceasefire negotiations.⁷⁹

On Radio 4's later magazine programme, *PM*, the "grim milestone" had become the lead item, stressing that while some of the figures included fighters the "vast majority" were civilians. It outlined the troubles the Hamas-run Health Ministry was having compiling figures because at one point it was "unable to function because of overflowing mortuaries and fighting in and around hospitals".⁸⁰

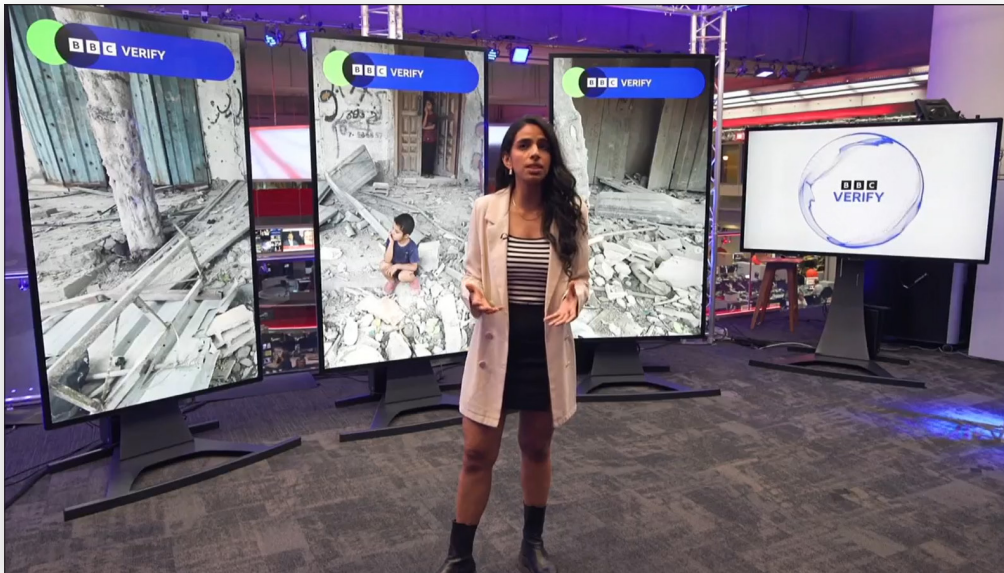
The issue was not covered on *BBC News at Six* but was the third item on *News at Ten*. Introducing the piece, presenter Sophie Raworth struck a more balanced tone, saying: "The number of people killed in Gaza since Hamas launched the attacks on Israel in October last year has now passed 40,000. The figure, which includes armed Palestinian fighters and civilians who have been killed, has been released by the Hamas-run Health Ministry. The death toll is often disputed by the Israeli government."

The accompanying package also included coverage not just of the plight of Palestinians but hostages' families. However, it was followed by a *BBC Verify* piece which revealed that Hamas had changed how the death toll is calculated - from deaths in hospitals to deaths reported by family members and from "reliable media sources".

The *BBC Verify* piece did not mention the practice by Hamas of embedding its terrorist and military equipment within the civilian population, including schools and hospitals, which is a war crime. It did not cover the measures repeatedly outlined by the IDF to minimise civilian casualties; nor did it consider the death toll in comparison with other wars to determine whether IDF measures were having an impact on reducing the civilian deaths.

79 *The World At One*, [BBC Radio 4](#), 15 August 2024.

80 *PM*, [BBC Radio 4](#), 15 August 2024.



The news coverage on the BBC Arabic website focused on the ceasefire discussions and, ironically, is the only coverage on the day to highlight leaflet drops by IDF soldiers to warn civilians of an impending bombing campaign – though it is presented as “demanding the evacuation of neighbourhoods”.

It referred to the death toll being released by “health officials” rather than the Hamas-run Health Ministry and did not include the fact that it encompassed fighters as well as civilian casualties.

On X/Twitter, BBC Breaking News reported: “More than 40,000 people killed in Gaza as a result of Israeli military action since October 7 attack, Hamas-run Health Ministry says.”⁸¹

It linked to a BBC Verify website article which did not state the figure includes Hamas fighters but added that Hamas said the “majority are children, women or elderly people”. It stated that while figures were difficult to verify, “in the past figures from the Gaza Ministry of Health (MoH) were widely used in times of conflict and seen as reliable by the UN and international institutions”. However, it did not make clear that what was different between those previous times and this war, was in previous conflicts, NGOs had a presence on the ground.

“However, by late last year the MoH was unable to function effectively with overflowing mortuaries, fighting in and around hospitals and poor internet and phone connectivity.”⁸²

“Strikes on schools”

Despite the BBC’s own stated inability to verify claims and counter claims, it remains the broadcaster’s practice that casualty claims from Hamas-run organisations or third parties who have demonstrated clear support for the 7 October attacks lead BBC stories and dominate the headlines.

It also remains the standard practice of the BBC to report on Israeli strikes on Hamas command centres based inside or underneath schools as ‘strikes on schools’. This creates a false impression that these are functioning schools filled with children, rather than what Hamas has turned them into – command bases for terrorists to operate from.

On 27 July, Israel’s military struck a Hamas command and control centre

81 BBC Breaking News, [Twitter](#), 15 August 2024.

82 More than 40,000 killed in Gaza, Hamas-run health ministry says, [BBC News](#), 15 August 2024.



Casualties after third Israeli strike on school in a week

Rescuers in Gaza say most of the dead were women and children, but Israel insists it targeted Hamas.

4 August · News ·



Israeli strike on Gaza school killed 30 - health ministry

More than 100 were injured, the Hamas-run ministry said, adding that most victims were children.

27 July · News ·



Israeli strike on central Gaza school reportedly kills 22

Israel's military says it targeted "terrorists" inside the school - the fifth hit in eight days.

15 July · News ·

embedded inside the Khadija School in Gaza City. The BBC News headline read: "Israel strike on Gaza school killed 30 – health ministry."⁸³

The following month, the IDF reported it had struck a Hamas command and control centre that was embedded inside a mosque in the Al-Taba'een school compound. It confirmed "following an intelligence investigation" that at least 19 Hamas and Islamic Jihad terrorists had been killed in the air strike.

The BBC headline on 10 August stated: "Israeli strike in Gaza kills more than 70, hospital head says." It quotes Fadl Naeem, head of al-Ahli hospital, whose social media posts celebrated the 7 October massacre and a separate terrorist attack in which seven Israelis were killed.⁸⁴ Other posts on his account likened Israel to Nazis, and accused the BBC and other "Western media" outfits of building up "lies" to "justify Israeli genocide of Palestinians in Gaza".⁸⁵

In the article an Israeli spokesman reports the casualty figures put out by Hamas controlled organisations - which ranged from 60 to more than 90 - "do not align with the information held by the IDF, the precise munitions used and the accuracy of the strike".

The BBC report stated it "cannot independently verify figures from either side".⁸⁶

To counter the propaganda, the IDF rapidly published the names, pictures, ranks and ages of the terrorists it had targeted in the command centre air strike. In total, the military published details on 38 targeted terrorists from both Islamic Jihad and Hamas. After this Hamas revised down its death toll claims to 40 - meaning very few civilians or none at all had actually been harmed.⁸⁷

This came too late for Foreign Secretary David Lammy who had already posted his outrage: "Appalled by the Israeli military strike on al-Tabeen school and the tragic

83 Israeli strike on Gaza school killed 30 - health ministry, [BBC News](#), 27 July 2024.

84 David Collier, [Twitter](#), 10 August 2024.

85 The sources behind another BBC "targeting schools" report, [CAMERA](#), 12 August 2024.

86 Israeli strike in Gaza kills more than 70, hospital head says, [BBC News](#), 10 August 2024.

87 Has Hamas lost the war?, [Notes on the New Radicalism](#), 13 August 2024.

loss of life.”⁸⁸

On 4 August, BBC News reported: “Casualties after third Israeli strike on a school in a week.”

In the 13th paragraph of this story – or third last – the BBC reports: “In a separate development on Sunday morning two people were killed in a stabbing attack in the Israeli city of Holon. The Palestinian attacker was later shot dead, police said.” That is the BBC’s only coverage of a terrorist attack in Israel which left a 66-year-old woman and an 80-year-old man dead and two others seriously injured.⁸⁹

In this series of incidents where Hamas has described these facilities as schools, and the IDF has described them as Hamas command and control centres, the BBC has repeatedly sided with Hamas, rather than presenting these as contested claims and then carefully examining the evidence – evidence which has since mounted up in favour of the IDF’s account being more accurate than the terrorists’.

This approach by the BBC has drawn criticism from Andrew Fox, a former war studies lecturer at the Royal Military Academy. He has posted on Twitter/X that BBC framing creates the impression this is a military strike on an “ordinary school”. “Hamas use schools as cover for their fighters,” he posted.⁹⁰

Hezbollah

On 27 July 2024, a rocket attack by Iranian-backed terrorists Hezbollah killed 12 children playing on a football field in the Druze community of Majdal Shams in the Golan Heights.

The news was reported on BBC Breaking News with a post on Twitter/X: “Israeli media report at least nine dead and dozens injured in rocket strike on children’s football pitch in Israeli occupied Golan Heights”.⁹¹



BBC Breaking News @BBCBreaking

Israeli media report at least nine dead and dozens injured in rocket strike on children’s football pitch in Israeli-occupied Golan Heights

Golan Heights attack: Israel hits Hezbollah targets after football pitch attack

From [bbc.co.uk](https://www.bbc.co.uk)

6:37 PM · Jul 27, 2024 · 1.2M Views

88 David Lammy, [Twitter](#), 10 August 2024.

89 Casualties after third Israeli strike on school in a week, [BBC News](#), 4 August 2024.

90 Andrew Fox, [Twitter](#), 27 July 2024.

91 BBC Breaking News, [Twitter](#), 27 July 2024.

The attack was the deadliest day in Israel since 7 October.

The original headline to the linked article, “Ten dead in rocket attack on Israeli-occupied Golan”, failed to mention Hezbollah, the Druze community or that the rocket struck children while they played football. It was updated following a slew of complaints.

The BBC reporting drew swift condemnation. Simon Sebag Montefiore posted on Twitter/X: “Its weird culture can’t name Iran-terror-sect Hezbollah as perpetrators. Balance never perfect but we need neutral coverage of complex region. Bias has degraded this institution.”

Investigative journalist and antisemitism campaigner David Collier also took to X, posting: “There are Druze in Majdal Shams with Israeli citizenship. Can you the BBC ever write an article about Israel without skewing it politically against Israel, making factual errors as they do so.” Arabic-speaking Druze were offered Israeli citizenship when the region was annexed in 1981. Many of the community have dual citizenship and identify as both Syrian and Israeli.

Former war studies lecturer Andrew Fox contrasted the headline with another posted by BBC on the same day about an IDF strike which stated: “Israeli strike on Gaza ‘kills 30’”. He called the headlines “utterly despicable”. Posting on X he said: “BBC headline does not mention that the strike in Israel was on a playground and children were killed. Nice cheeky little dig with ‘Israeli-occupied, too.’”⁹²

Since 8 October, Hezbollah has sought to exploit the Hamas attack and weaken northern Israel with repeated rocket assaults. Thousands of Hezbollah missiles and drones fired into Israel have killed more than 30 people and injured many more.

However, during an interview with Jewish People Policy Institute fellow Yaakov Katz on 17 July, BBC News Channel presenter Martine Croxall gave credence to Hezbollah claims their terror attacks were a protest over Palestinian deaths.

She said: “We know that Hezbollah are acting out in this way, acting in this way – they’ve said so – because they are so concerned about the sheer number of Palestinian civilians who have died as a result of Israel’s actions and the consequences.”

Mr Katz rubbished the suggestion as “ridiculous”.

“They are bent simply on Israel’s destruction, and they want to kill Israelis and Jews, that is their purpose.”⁹³

Denials

According to CAMERA research, the BBC published eleven articles covering the attack between 27 and 29 July, and most contained denials by Hezbollah that it was behind the killings. The articles do not refer to Hezbollah as a terrorist group proscribed in the UK and many other countries.⁹⁴

One of the first BBC News website articles, ‘Thousands mourn children killed in Golan Heights strike’ stated: “Hezbollah denied it had anything to do with the strike, but had earlier on Saturday claimed responsibility for four other attacks, including one on a military base around 3km away.”⁹⁵

Israeli military said this strike had not happened but confirmed the football field had been struck with a Hezbollah Falaq missile.

Hezbollah denials began after it emerged that children had been killed by the surface-to-surface rocket that carries a 53kg warhead.

92 Outrage over BBC reporting of Hezbollah attack which killed 12 children and teens , [Jewish Chronicle](#), 28 July 2024.

93 BBC News Channel presenter editorialises on Hizballah motives, [CAMERA](#), 23 July 2024.

94 Reviewing BBC coverage of the Hizballah attack on Majdal Shams – part two, [CAMERA UK](#), 4 August 2024.

95 Thousands mourn children killed in Golan Heights strike, [BBC News](#), 28 July 2024.

On the evening of 30 July, Israeli forces eliminated the senior Hezbollah commander responsible for the attack in a suburb of Beirut, Fuad Shukr.

Only one article published by the BBC following the assassination of Shukr stated that he was wanted in the US for his role in the 1983 terrorist attack which killed 241 American service personnel at the Marine Corp barracks in Beirut.

Rather than being portrayed as a wanted terrorist, he is described variously as a “senior advisor”, “senior commander”, “military advisor” and “close advisor” to Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah.

After Israeli’s strike took out Shukr, the BBC opened a live page which, by the time it closed five hours later, included ten denials from the terror group about involvement in the Majdal Shams attack.⁹⁶

The first posted story stated: “Israel says Hezbollah carried out the attack with an Iranian-made rocket, fired from a short distance away in Lebanon. The US also says Hezbollah was to blame. Hezbollah has strongly denied involvement.”⁹⁷

Another story, entitled ‘UK nationals urged to leave Lebanon over war risk’ refers to Hezbollah not as terrorists but as a “heavily armed militant and political movement”.⁹⁸

Further stories on 31 July also included Hezbollah denials of its involvement in the rocket attack and downplayed its bombardment of Israel since 7 October. The near daily assaults have resulted in the deaths of 26 civilians and 18 members of the security forces but were described in one BBC article as “a limited second front”.⁹⁹

The death of “moderate” Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh

When the news broke of Israel’s assassination of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran, the BBC News website opened a live page. Reporting from Jerusalem, the BBC Middle East correspondent Yolande Knell cited unnamed analysts who paint Haniyeh as more “moderate and pragmatic” than his “hardline” successor, Yahya Sinwar.

Rushdi Abualouf, the BBC’s Gaza correspondent, also refers to the Hamas leader as “more pragmatic” while a later profile by Middle East analyst Sebastian Usher said he was “widely regarded as a pragmatist” who had played a “key role in negotiations over a ceasefire deal in Gaza”.¹⁰⁰

The profile does not mention that in 2018, the US Department of State imposed sanctions on Haniyeh and others “determined to have committed or pose a significant risk of committing acts of terrorism that threaten the security of US nationals or the national security... of the United States”.¹⁰¹

The same year he was videoed taking part in a protest where demonstrators shouted ‘Death to Israel’.

“Palestine is from the sea to the river. And we shall never, never, never recognise Israel,” he said.¹⁰² He is also filmed doing the “prostration of gratitude for (the) victory” following the 7 October terror attack.¹⁰³

Haniyeh was killed in Tehran which he had visited to attend the inauguration of

96 BBC News website coverage of strike on Hizballah commander, [CAMERA UK](#), 15 August 2024.

97 Israeli military says Beirut strike killed senior Hezbollah commander Fuad Shukr, [BBC News](#), 30 July 2024.

98 UK nationals urged to leave Lebanon over war risk, [BBC News](#), 30 July 2024.

99 BBC News website coverage of strike on Hizballah commander, [CAMERA UK](#), 15 August 2024.

100 Iran vows to avenge killing of Hamas political leader Haniyeh, [BBC News](#), 1 August 2024.

101 State Department Terrorist Designations of Ismail Haniyeh, Harakat al-Sabireen, Liwa al-Thawra, and Harakat Sawa’d Misr (HASM), [US Embassy in Israel](#), 31 January 2018.

102 Amid Antisemitic and “Death to Israel” Chants, Hamas Political Bureau Chairman Ismail Haniyeh Vows: We Shall Never Recognize Israel – Scenes from Gaza “Return March”, [MEMRI TV](#), 11 May 2018.

103 In Video, Ismail Haniyeh And Other Hamas Leaders Watch Al-Jazeera Coverage Of Hamas’s Invasion, [MEMRI TV](#), 9 October 2023.

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian. At this ceremony, chants of 'Death to America and Israel' were also made.

But the BBC's Diplomatic Correspondent Paul Adams writes an article suggesting Israel's actions have torpedoed hopes of a ceasefire.

"It's extremely hard to see how any progress can be made in the immediate wake of the assassination of Haniyeh. All of which begs the question: if this was, as everyone assumes, an Israeli operation, why was it carried out?"

"Beyond the desire to exact revenge on anyone associated with Hamas, what was Israel hoping to achieve?"¹⁰⁴

Israel's military objectives have been clearly stated – not as revenge, but self-defence following an unprovoked terror attack, and the need to destroy the military capability of Hamas to ensure the security and safety of its citizens.

The article does not point out that Haniyeh could have brought an end to the hostilities at any point over the last ten months by ordering the release of the remaining 116 hostages captured by Hamas on 7 October and declaring its surrender.¹⁰⁵

Hamas-affiliated "journalists"

Two Israeli photographers, Roei Idan and Yaniv Zohar, and members of their families were killed when Hamas attacked kibbutzes Kfar Aza and Nahal Oz on 7 October.

Two Israeli reporters, Shai Regev and Ayelet Arnin, were killed during the Hamas attack on the Nova music festival on the same day.

The atrocity which plunged Israel into war has also seen Palestinian and Lebanese journalists killed in the course of covering the conflict, including prominent Reuters reporter Issam Abdallah.¹⁰⁶

However concerns have been raised about the BBC's uncritical reporting of other 'journalist' deaths in Gaza. Fears have been expressed that the BBC is too quick to describe Palestinian militants and activists killed in the conflict as reporters.

In June of this year, the Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting and Analysis (CAMERA), which campaigns for a fair representation of Israel, issued a complaint to the BBC about its coverage of journalists killed in Gaza.

The complaint outlined that 55 of the 69 Gazans and Lebanese described as journalists killed in the current conflict in a BBC Arabic article, appeared to either support Hamas or work for the terror group.

Two of these, Mohammad Jarghoun and Assaad Shamlakh, were described by friends on social media as members of the "resistance" and "jihad fighters".

A third, Mustafa el-Sawaf, had been a member of Hamas's political leadership for nearly two decades.

In response to CAMERA's complaint, Richard Hutt, the complaints director of the BBC's Executive Complaints Unit, said: "BBC Arabic have said that the article was a list of journalists and media workers killed in the conflict (on both sides) regardless of their political affiliations.

"Beyond this, they make the point that such reporting is legitimate notwithstanding any such affiliations or connections between their employers and proscribed groups, given that journalists are nonetheless civilians in a category of worker which is particularly vulnerable in a war.

"Moreover, they make the point that reporting the deaths of journalists is not to put them in a positive light or to comment on the quality of their work."

104 Iran vows to avenge killing of Hamas political leader Haniyeh, [BBC News](#), 1 August 2024.

105 BBC News website live page framing of Haniyeh assassination, [CAMERA UK](#), 1 August 2024

106 Gaza journalist killed alongside 42 relatives, news agency says, [BBC News](#), 7 November 2023.

He added: "In general I would expect BBC Arabic online audiences to understand that those working in the media in Gaza may have their own views and may work for outlets with particular positions or political affiliations.

"The purpose of the piece is not to pass judgment, but to record the loss."

A BBC spokesman said: "Our report covers the deaths of journalists over the course of the conflict, in Gaza, Lebanon and Israel, regardless of their media outlets' political affiliations, and takes no account of their views or assessments of their journalism. We reported on journalists who have died who were not BBC staff and therefore not subject to our impartiality guidelines."

Israel's Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Centre believes more than half the journalists the Hamas-controlled media office says were killed in Gaza in the first five months of the war were affiliated to terrorist organisations. This included 44 from Hamas and 19 from the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ).¹⁰⁷

Hostages held by 'journalist'

In June it emerged that three Israeli hostages were being held captive in the home of a Palestinian 'journalist' and his father, a doctor, before they were rescued by Israeli troops.

The IDF said Abdallah al-Jamal, was a " Hamas terrorist" who had detained Almog Meir Jan, Andrey Kozlov and Shlomi Ziv in his family home.

Jamal wrote for The Palestine Chronicle, a news website based in Washington, and contributed to Al Jazeera. He was killed along with his father, Ahmed, and his wife, Fatima, in the raid that freed the hostages.¹⁰⁸

Al Jazeera has been accused of publishing pro-Hamas propaganda.

Two days after the raid, which came on the same day the Israeli military rescued Nova festival hostage Noa Argamani, the BBC website ran an article under the headline: "How Gaza hostage raid ended with Israel striking crowded streets."

The second and third paragraphs state: "The Hamas-run health ministry says at least 274 Palestinians were killed and almost 700 injured in the assault.

"Israeli special forces freed female hostage Noa Argamani using the element of surprise - but another team which had freed three male hostages came under attack prompting the Israeli military to launch massive air strikes on crowded nearby streets as covering fire, killing scores of Palestinians."

However, it is not until the 23rd paragraph of the article that the BBC reveals the 'journalist' whose house was raided had been a " Hamas spokesman".¹⁰⁹

This reporting was another failure of the BBC to accurately and consistently explain to audiences that it is the strategy of Hamas to hide its fighters and weaponry in civilian areas including hospitals, schools, mosques and UN facilities. This fact is crucial to an understanding of the conduct of the war but this basic context is rarely provided in the BBC's reporting.

Terror drone operators described as "journalists"

In January the BBC News website was embroiled in a row over claims two journalists had been killed by Israeli military.

In its initial report on 7 January, the BBC News website reported: "The eldest son

107 BBC accused of not disclosing that killed Palestinian journalists were Hamas supporters, [Telegraph](#), 22 June 2024.

108 BBC accused of not disclosing that killed Palestinian journalists were Hamas supporters, [Telegraph](#), 22 June 2024.

109 How Gaza hostage raid ended with Israel striking crowded streets, [BBC News](#), 10 June 2024.

of Al Jazeera's Gaza bureau chief has been killed in an Israeli strike in southern Gaza.

"Hamza al-Dahdouh, an Al Jazeera network journalist and cameraman, was driving in a car with other journalists along a road between Khan Younis and Rafah on Sunday when it was hit.

"Freelance journalist Mustafa Thuraya was also killed."¹¹⁰

The IDF in a statement said that Hamza Al-Dahdouh, the son of Al Jazeera's chief correspondent in Gaza, Wael Al-Dahdouh, and Mustafa Thurya were drone operators and members of Gaza based terrorist organisations.

They published documents in Arabic found by Israeli troops revealing Thurya's role as a Squad Deputy Commander in Hamas' Gaza City Brigade while Al-Dahdouh served in the Islamic Jihad electronic unit.

The documents also said that Al-Dahdouh had previously served as a terrorist battalion leader for the Zeitoun area of northern Gaza and that was still currently responsible for firing Islamic Jihad rockets in that area.¹¹¹

A day later the BBC News website published a report questioning the military's claims.

Headlined "Gaza journalists' families reject Israeli military's 'terrorist' claims", it opened: "The families of the two Palestinian journalists killed in an Israeli air strike in Gaza have rejected as 'fabricated' and 'false' a new claim from Israel's military that they were 'terrorists'."

It seems incredible that, despite this acknowledgment that there was a dispute over whether these people were actually journalists, the BBC still saw fit to describe them as such in their headline and include them in their statistics of journalists killed in the war.



Vigil

In February, a vigil was held by BBC staff outside the BBC Radio Lancashire offices in Blackburn in memory of the journalists killed in Gaza.

The flag of Palestine was lit up with candles and those attending placed blue press vests and helmets, similar to those worn by journalists in war zones, on the street.¹¹²

Yet claims about the role of some Palestinian journalists in their support for Hamas raises questions about how much they can be regarded as independent and objective reporters working for recognised media organisations.

A spokesman for CAMERA Arabic has said: "Evidently, BBC staff members are still under the impression that they share the same profession with people who spent their careers disgracing it for the sake of murderous ideologies – a fact which suggests that their own journalism is compromised. This should be cause for concern to both fellow journalists and the corporation's funding public."¹¹³

¹¹⁰ Al Jazeera bureau chief's son Hamza al-Dahdouh among journalists killed in Gaza, [BBC News](#), 8 January 2024.

¹¹¹ IDF, [Twitter](#), 10 January 2024.

¹¹² Vigil held at BBC offices for journalists killed in Gaza, [Lancashire Telegraph](#), 22 February 2024.

¹¹³ BBC accused of not disclosing that killed Palestinian journalists were Hamas supporters, [Telegraph](#), 22 June 2024.

Committee to Protect Journalists

Investigative journalist and campaigner against antisemitism David Collier published a 150-page report researching the claims made about journalists who died since 7 October. He warned Hamas was pushing false claims as propaganda, which have been spread by western NGOs, and creating an impression that Israel is deliberately targeting reporters.

Hamas has listed 107 'journalists' killed since 7 October.

Seventy names on the Hamas list are the same as those named by the Committee to Protect Journalists, which has been cited by the BBC as well as other media outlets.

Mr Collier found social media accounts for 93 per cent of those listed by Hamas, and found its list to be riddled with errors, with many of those cited including members of Hamas and Islamic Jihad, and others who had no demonstrable connection to any news organisation.

Half of those listed by the CPJ – 35 – were openly associated with proscribed terrorist groups. Of the total, 54, 70 per cent, also posted support for the murder of innocent civilians. This included Mohammed Jarghoun who, following the murder of seven Israelis outside a synagogue in January 2023, posted: "No sound is louder than the sound of a gun". The post was accompanied by a victory salute emoji and the Palestinian flag.

Mr Collier said many of those listed as journalists at best could not be viewed as impartial and at worst "would face arrest in almost every country in the west for their support of radical Islam terrorism". Under the CPJ's own guidelines, anyone working for a terrorist group should not be listed as a journalist.

In addition 19 names listed, 27 per cent of the CPJ total, did not seem to be journalists at all. They included a builder, a freelance graphic designer, the unemployed, and administrative employees of news organisations. In addition, 45 individuals on the CPJ list, 68 per cent, appear to have died at home, including during air strikes on Hamas targets, rather than in the field.¹¹⁴

Mr Collier branded the CPJ research as "consistently amateurish and significantly compromised" yet it has been given unquestioning coverage by the BBC.¹¹⁵

Mr Collier warned: "The BBC is working backwards. Rather than needing to prove a story is true, we have entered an age where the BBC will push any old lie – as long as it cannot be proven to be false."¹¹⁶

114 Exposing the lie about Palestinian journalists, [David Collier](#), 9 January 2024.

115 Journalists call for foreign media access to Gaza in open letter, [BBC News](#), 28 February 2024.

116 Red-handed: Catching the BBC pushing fake news, [David Collier](#), 23 June 2024.

CHAPTER FIVE

“Failing in the most basic of journalistic practices”

Social Media

In March, a former BBC director accused the corporation of “failing in the most basic of journalistic practices”.

The charge came after the BBC used an anti-Israel journalist bankrolled by Iran as a key source in its reporting of events surrounding the rush on an aid convoy in Gaza that led to the deaths of more than 100 Palestinians.

The report cited an eyewitness account from Mahmoud Awadayah, who was described as a journalist on the scene.

But research by campaigner against antisemitism David Collier revealed that Awadayah worked for Tansim News Agency, an Iranian outlet with links to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, which has vowed to destroy the Israeli state.

Mr Collier also revealed that Awadayah’s social media posts had included praise for a terrorist attack in January 2023 that left seven Israelis dead. He also posted a photo of himself at a restaurant with Khalil Al Bahtini, the leader of paramilitary group Islamic Jihad.

Danny Cohen, a former director of BBC Television, accused the corporation of failing to check the background of its key sources.

Writing in *The Telegraph*, he said: “The BBC has a habit of accepting at face value what they are told by people who present as Palestinian civilians or officials from civic authorities and either don’t understand or don’t care that they are representatives of terrorist organisations.

“Our publicly-funded broadcaster seems to believe that ‘balance’ and objectivity means treating a genocidal terrorist group and a democratically-elected government in the same way.”

Cohen said the failure to verify the source was further evidence of inherent bias against Israel by the BBC.

He added: “It also appears evermore the case that stories BBC reporters receive from Palestinian sources align with their negative assumptions about Israel, meaning that the corporation’s journalists don’t challenge or robustly investigate accounts that come from highly flawed and disreputable sources.”

The report about the aid convoy was published by BBC Verify, an investigative arm of BBC News aimed at fact-checking information and countering fake news.

Announcing the launch of the unit in May 2023, BBC News chief executive Deborah Turness had said the service would “pull back the curtain” on the work of BBC journalists to produce “radical transparency”.

A BBC spokesman said: “We stand by our journalism and reject the allegations in this piece.

“The BBC is not allowed access into Gaza, but we use a range of accounts from eyewitnesses and cross-reference these against official statements and footage, including from the IDF. The fact that someone has expressed an opinion on social

media doesn't automatically disqualify them from giving eye-witness testimony."¹¹⁷

Concealed affiliations

The BBC has also been accused of failing to provide "appropriate information" about the affiliations of its contributors.

The Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting and Analysis (CAMERA), which campaigns for accurate and balanced coverage of Israel, cites one such report by the BBC's Global Population Correspondent Stephanie Hegarty.¹¹⁸

Hegarty frequently shares posts by Ahmed Al-Naouq, and he featured in a human interest piece about deaths within his own family during the war.¹¹⁹

BBC editorial guidelines state: "We should not automatically assume that contributors from other organisations (such as academics, journalists, researchers and representatives of charities and think-tanks) are unbiased. Appropriate information about their affiliations, funding and particular viewpoints should be made available to the audience, when relevant to the context."

While Hegarty's report stated her source was working for an NGO in London, it did not specify that he was an outreach and advocacy officer for EuroMed Monitor.

EuroMed Monitor's chairman is Richard Falk, who gave a cover endorsement for *The Wandering Who*, a book by notorious antisemite Gilad Atzmon, which describes Jews as "the only people who managed to maintain and sustain a racially orientated, expansionist and genocidal national identity that is not at all different from Nazi ethnic ideology".¹²⁰

Falk has also spoken out in support of activists for the anti-Israel BDS movement, given interviews to massacre denier George Galloway, anti-Israel outlet Electronic Intifada and the pro-Hamas outlet MEMO.¹²¹

Mr Al-Naouq has also written for the notorious anti-Israel website 'Mondoweiss'.

His brother Ayman, who was killed during Operation Protective Edge in 2014, was referred to on that site as "a resistance fighter with the [Hamas] Al-Qassam Brigade".

"Israel's lies"

The article also cites "additional reporting" by BBC freelancer Husna Wahid. Her personal X/Twitter account leaves no room for doubt about her views regarding the war.

The BBC guidelines on personal social media use state: "Everyone who works for the BBC should ensure their activity on social media platforms does not compromise the perception of or undermine the impartiality and reputation of the BBC, nor their own professional impartiality or reputation and/or otherwise undermine trust in the BBC.

"Individuals working in news and current affairs (across all divisions) and factual journalism production, along with all senior leaders have a particular responsibility to uphold the BBC's impartiality through their actions on social media and so must abide by specific rules set out in this guidance."

Research by CAMERA has revealed that on 17 October 2023, Wahid retweeted a post which wrongly condemned Israel for the blast at Al-Ahli hospital.

117 BBC uses account of journalist working for Iran-backed news agency in Palestine deaths article, [Telegraph](#), 4 March 2024.

118 Gaza casualties: 'Most of the children in my family photo are dead', [BBC News](#), 11 November 2023.

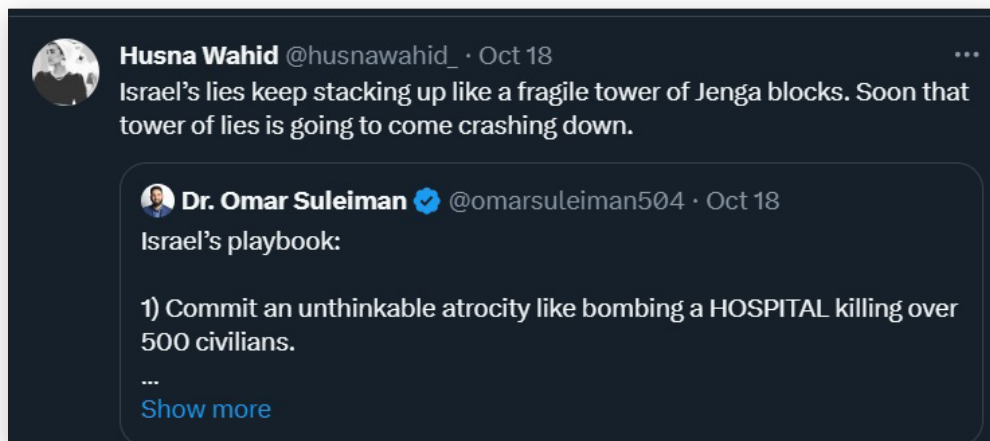
119 BBC journalists continue to ignore impartiality and social media guidelines, [CAMERA](#), 14 November 2023.

120 UN's 'Israel apartheid' report written by 9/11 truther who promotes antisemitism, [Jewish Chronicle](#), 16 March 2017.

121 MEMO in conversation with Prof. Richard Falk, [Middle East Monitor](#), 19 May 2021.

It stated: "Israel just committed another massacre bombing at Gaza's central hospital..." Above the post, Wahid wrote: "THIS STOPS NOW."

The same day she reposted a tweet accusing the British, American, German and French governments of "aiding and abetting genocide".



A day later she posted: "Israel's lies keep stacking up like a fragile tower of Jenga blocks."¹²²

These posts have since been deleted. However several posts remain on her X account. This includes the re-posting of a video of an interview with Jacob Rees-Mogg about a pro-Palestine march taking place on Armistice Day last November. During the interview the former Cabinet Minister is asked by pro-Palestine activist Barnaby Raine if he is "ok with bombing refugee camps". The post states: "He didn't answer."

However, Mr Rees-Mogg's actual response to Mr Raine was: "You are on the streets supporting, giving succour, to people who carried out the worst massacre of Jews since the Holocaust. Are you ok with that?"¹²³

A second re-post last October features a video clip of Jeremy Corbyn's former spokesman James Schneider which states: "Israel announced it was going to commit acts that are war crimes. It then carried out these war crimes. And after two weeks of these war crimes, British media says: What are these war crimes? The Israel Defence Force says there aren't any."¹²⁴

A third re-post is about a call to bring Prime Minister Netanyahu before the International Court for war crimes.¹²⁵

These were the only three posts still remaining on her account at the time of this report going to press in the second half of 2023. There were none for 2024.

"Nazi parasites"

Chapter Three details the suspension and investigation into the social media posts of six BBC Arabic journalists who endorsed anti-Israel posts and tweets celebrating the massacre on 7 October as a "morning of hope".

Since 7 October just one employee has been sacked for their views on Israel: a senior BBC staffer who ranted about the "holohoax" and called Jews "Nazi parasites", among scores of other antisemitic and conspiratorial messages on Facebook.

Dawn Queva, a schedule coordinator at BBC Three who had worked in children's programming, was placed under investigation for posts dating back years.

¹²² BBC journalists continue to ignore impartiality and social media guidelines, [CAMERA](#), 14 November 2023.

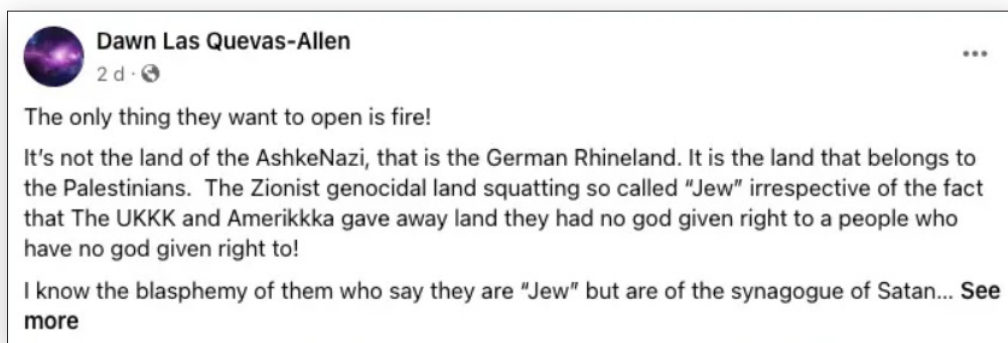
¹²³ Husna Wahid, [Twitter](#), accessed 21 July 2024; Saul Staniforth, [Twitter](#), 6 November 2023.

¹²⁴ Husna Wahid, [Twitter](#), accessed 21 July 2024; James Schneider, [Twitter](#), 25 October 2023.

¹²⁵ Husna Wahid, [Twitter](#), accessed 21 July 2024; Lone Bellara, [Twitter](#), 16 October 2023.

On 25 January 2024, the then BBC employee attacked Jews as “Nazi apartheid parasites who have zero right, historical connection to or blood ties to the land of Palestine.”

Another of her messages peddled the conspiracy theory that the Rothschild family was behind the “holohoax”, a term commonly used by Holocaust deniers to suggest the Nazi genocide was fabricated.



In another post, she wrote: “It’s not the land of the AshkeNazi, that is the German Rhineland. It is the land that belongs to the Palestinians. The Zionist genocidal land squatting so called ‘Jew’ irrespective of the fact that the UKKK and Amerikkka gave away land they had no god given right to a people who have no god given right to!”

In October, Queva wrote: “Karma is coming for the japhetic invader Israelis”.¹²⁶

The Lineker clause

In September 2023, the BBC again revised its social media guidelines to include what was commonly known as the ‘Lineker clause’.¹²⁷

It came after one of its highest paid sports presenters, Gary Lineker, was temporarily taken off air in March 2023 over his comments about the then Government’s immigration policies. The BBC backtracked on his suspension after other presenters went on strike and refused to return to air without him.

The review, conducted by television executive John Hardie, made a series of recommendations.

It concluded that “high-profile presenters outside of journalism should be able to express views on issues and policies - including matters of political contention - but stop well short of campaigning in party politics or for activist organisations”.

Hardie said: “It’s appropriate to set the highest expectations for social media conduct of the main presenters of its flagship brands and craft specific, proportionate guidance for them”.

He concluded: “It is clear that the British public expect BBC non-news presenters to maintain high standards on social media and respect an appropriate balance between impartiality and freedom of expression. It is timely for the BBC to clarify where that balance lies.”¹²⁸

The former England footballer and Match of the Day host has almost nine million followers on his X/Twitter account.¹²⁹

¹²⁶ BBC staffer ranted about the ‘Holohoax’ and called Jews ‘Nazi parasites’, [Jewish Chronicle](#), 2 February 2024.

¹²⁷ BBC updates ‘Lineker clause’ to restrict presenters airing political views, [Guardian](#), 28 September 2023;

Guidance: Personal Use of Social Media, [BBC Editorial Guidelines](#), 28 September 2023.

¹²⁸ New social media guidance strikes balance between freedom of expression and impartiality, [BBC Media Centre](#), 28 September 2023.

¹²⁹ Gary Lineker, [Twitter](#), accessed 22 July 2024.

Lineker's support for an Israel sports ban

In January Lineker faced a torrent of complaints after re-posting a tweet calling for Israel to be banned from sporting tournaments. It was posted by the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic & Cultural Boycott of Israel, a supporter of the anti-Israel BDS boycott movement.

His tweet was picked up by The Quds News Network, a Palestinian youth news agency affiliated to Hamas. It published a story on its website under the headline: 'Renowned English broadcaster calls for Israel to be banned from international football'.¹³⁰



It prompted a furious response from politicians who called for fresh sanctions against the presenter.

At the time, Conservative MP Andrew Percy said: "Gary Lineker is an ill-informed, ignorant commentator on the Middle East.

"The BDS movement [to boycott Israel] is a racist, antisemitic campaign and nobody who receives taxpayers' money working in the BBC should be endorsing a campaign that is widely understood to promote Jew hate."

Stephen Crabb, a former Cabinet minister and then Parliamentary chairman of Conservative Friends of Israel, said: "This is a deeply inappropriate tweet for any BBC figure to endorse, and especially for someone of Lineker's prominence.

"The BDS movement is riddled with antisemitism from top to bottom, and deepens the divisions in our own society."

A Campaign Against Antisemitism spokesperson said: "Gary Lineker has a lot to say about a lot of things, but antisemitism does not appear to be one of them.

'At a time of record levels of racism against Jews, not a peep. But he has found the time to amplify a call to suspend the world's only Jewish state from international sports. His priorities are clear.'¹³¹

Lineker: "I can't think of anything worse in my lifetime"

The sports personality insisted he was not fully aware of what he was sharing – believing it was a news item about Israel being banned rather than a call for it to be banned.

In May, Lineker reflected on the criticism he received in an interview with Guardian columnist and journalist Medhi Hasan for news site Zeteo.

"The minute you raise your voice against what they're now doing there, you get accused of being a supporter of Hamas," he said.

"There is a lot of heavy lobbying on people to be quiet so I understand why most people refrain but I'm getting on a bit now, I'm fairly secure and I can't be silent about what's happening.

"So I don't see how you can be – it's not antisemitic to say that what Israel is doing is wrong. I just can't see how everybody doesn't see it that way now.

"But whatever the cause, whatever started it – we all know that the history of this area of the world goes way before 7 October. But it's truly dreadful what's

¹³⁰ Gary Lineker hailed by Hamas mouthpiece as he says anti-Israel post was 'misunderstanding', [Express](#), 16 January 2024.

¹³¹ Gary Lineker retweets call for Israel to be banned from international football, [Telegraph](#), 14 January 2024.

happening.”

The sports presenter added that he cried “on a regular basis” at “certain images on social media.” He insisted he viewed the war “from a neutral perspective”.

And added: “And I can’t think of anything that I’ve seen worse in my lifetime. The constant images of children losing their lives, day in, day out.”¹³²

Telegraph columnist Michael Deacon described that as a “remarkable statement” from a man born in 1960, and listed some of the wars which had raged in the presenter’s lifetime.

“The world has endured quite a large number of brutal conflicts,” he said, “Take the Second Congo War (1998–2003), which claimed an estimated 5.4m lives. And the Vietnam War (1955–75), which claimed an estimated 3.5m. And the Soviet-Afghan War (1979–89), which claimed an estimated 2m. To name but a few.

“Indeed, far from being the bloodiest conflict since 1960, the war in Gaza isn’t even the bloodiest being fought right now. The Syrian civil war, which began in 2011, has so far killed more than 600,000 people. Then there’s the small matter of Russia’s war in Ukraine... the ongoing conflict in Sudan. To give just one small glimpse of the horror: a 17-year-old Sudanese boy told Human Rights Watch that he’d witnessed paramilitaries shooting children and then flinging their corpses into a river.”¹³³

Lineker left female Jewish journalist ‘shaking with anger’

In February 2024, journalist Nicole Lampert wrote in the Jewish Chronicle about her row with the sports presenter over his anti-Israel bias at a lunch to discuss Mr Lineker’s podcast empire.

The Match of the Day host praised the BBC’s impartiality – prompting the journalist to ask why he flouted social media guidelines by re-tweeting the BDS post demanding Israel be banned from sporting event.

Ms Lampert detailed a “strange exchange” in which the presenter insisted the BDS post was a news story.

“I told him it wasn’t, it was a demand. He continued to say it was a news story and I continued to tell him it was a demand, not a news story. The host was getting annoyed by me, and the rest of the room was watching with a mixture of horror, amusement and (I hope) some admiration that I wasn’t letting this go.

“And then he dropped in the fact that the BBC – despite having hundreds of complaints about the tweet – had not talked to him about it.”

She then quoted Lineker saying: “I took it down because people were reading into it that it was my opinion. They thought that it was my view. I retweeted a news story. I think it was a news story. I took it down because people were you know, they seemed unhappy. It was nothing to do with the BBC. They didn’t contact me. I hadn’t breached the guidelines.”

At the end of the dinner, Mr Lineker sought Lampert out, who told him this X/ Twitter feed “only showed one side of the issue. He’d never once condemned Hamas on X or sent a message about the hostages.”

She continued: “He said that he wasn’t tweeting on October 7 – and when he looked at Twitter on October 8 he was surprised to find that he was trending. He made out that he was trying to only retweet neutral things. I explained that people whose tweets he’d liked had red triangles in their names and that signified a support

¹³² Gary Lineker insists he WON’T stop speaking out on Gaza saying: ‘There’s a lot of heavy lobbying on people to be quiet but I can’t be silent’, [Mail Online](#), 11 May 2024.

¹³³ Gary Lineker’s latest outburst about Israel is his worst yet, [Telegraph](#), 14 May 2024.

for Hamas. He didn't know, he said."

The journalist said: "He told me that he believed Jewish people were suffering because of the actions of the Netanyahu government; I told him that no government would behave differently when so many members of their nation had been killed, whatever one thought of Netanyahu."

"I told him how much I was hurting at the way he – so powerful with his nine million followers – was encouraging a narrative that the weekly hate marches feed on. I also said that, as someone who has interviewed many hostage families, I could not understand why they did not seem to warrant a single mention."

Ms Lampert concluded that time would tell whether her exchange had made a difference to the personality's views expressed on social media.¹³⁴



Gary Lineker's highly selective take on the conflict

In the seven months since that reported exchange (up until 22 August) Lineker has posted or re-posted 33 tweets condemning Israel's actions.

He has referred to the plight of Palestinians as "heartbreaking" and "awful".

But in March he did not post or re-post a report from the UN's Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict that documents the atrocities committed by Hamas terrorists against women on 7 October.

The report also concluded there was "clear and convincing information" of rape and sexualised torture committed against hostages seized during the 7 October attack.

The Match of the Day host did not post anything in June to welcome the freeing of four Israeli hostages, including 26-year-old Noa Argamani who was among those kidnapped by Hamas after the Nova Festival massacre in which terrorists slaughtered 364 young men and women.

Ms Argamani's mother died three weeks after she was rescued in a dramatic raid by Israeli forces in June. Her partner Avinatan Or, who she was separated from when she was abducted, remains in Hamas captivity.

Speaking about her ordeal for the first time last month she said: "Although I'm home now, we can't forget about the hostages who are still in Hamas captivity, and we must do everything possible to bring them back home."

Since Ms Lampert urged Mr Lineker to tweet about the hostages still held by Hamas, he has not posted, or shared any tweets about those still held captive or the agonies experienced by their families.¹³⁵

There are 101 hostages still being held by Hamas. As of 23 September 2024 they had been held in captivity for 352 days.

¹³⁴ I just asked Gary Lineker about his Israel tweets and I'm still shaking with anger, [Jewish Chronicle](#), 6 February 2024.

¹³⁵ Gary Lineker, [Twitter](#), accessed 22 July 2024.

CHAPTER SIX

An Anatomy of ‘Genocide’

The ICJ and UN Reports

The ICJ and UN Reports

When forced to hold their hands up for errors, the BBC are determined to not only play down the error but to insist that they are standalone mistakes rather than the result of systemic bias.

There is a pattern of complaint handling: to be indignant that anybody is questioning their journalism; then go quiet; then begrudgingly accept there might be a problem; then sneak something out a few weeks or months later when it becomes clear they have no leg to stand on.

The BBC is meant to be the best in the world and should not, as it so often does, rush to follow others, and broadcast inaccuracy.

Below we set out four recent examples.

The ICJ genocide case: “plausible”

In December last year, South Africa launched an attempt at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to prove that, in its view, Israel was committing genocide in relation to how it was perpetrating the war against Hamas.

It alleged the way Israel had prosecuted the war was “genocidal in nature” because, according to the South African case, there was an intention to “destroy Palestinians in Gaza”.

Israel absolutely rejected these allegations as entirely false, said the country had a right to defend itself and South Africa’s argument misrepresented what was happening on the ground.

In January, the ICJ, the United Nations’ highest court, delivered an interim judgement.

It stated: “In the Court’s view, the facts and circumstances... are sufficient to conclude that at least some of the rights claimed by South Africa and for which it is seeking protection are plausible.”

This was interpreted by many to mean that the court had concluded that the claim that Israel was committing genocide in Gaza was “plausible”. That interpretation spread quickly across campaign groups, social media and media outlets including the BBC.

It was, however, wrong.

The BBC covered the case extensively, including detailing South Africa’s arguments in court and posting the whole of the ICJ interim finding is on its website.¹³⁶

136 ‘Israel has genocidal intent in Gaza’, says lawyer representing South Africa, [BBC News](#), 11 January 2024.

The court's ruling was also the lead item on the evening news.

Reporting from the Hague, BBC correspondent Anna Holligan said: "While judges acknowledged there was a plausible case under the Genocide Convention, a final verdict on the allegation is probably years away."

The report also quoted the reaction of Hamas to the ruling, without clarifying it is a terrorist organisation.

The piece also included International Editor Jeremy Bowen who stated that Israel had wanted the court to throw out the case. "Instead," he said, "the court has decided that there is a plausible case to answer; that is a significant ruling."¹³⁷

However in April, Joan Donoghue, the President of the ICJ at the time of the ruling, said in a BBC interview that this was not what the 17 judges on the court had ruled.

In Britain, lawyers had been battling it out over the interpretation of the ruling. The UK Lawyers For Israel (UKLFI) – a 1,300-strong group, wrote an open letter to stress the ICJ ruling was, in effect, an abstract legal argument.

The legal war of words prompted Donoghue – by then retired from the ICJ – to appear on the BBC's HARDtalk programme to set out what the court had done.

All her court had ruled, she said, was that South Africa had established a plausible right to take Israel to the next and much more substantial phase of a genocide trial.

"It did not decide – and this is something where I'm correcting what's often said in the media... that the claim of genocide was plausible," said the judge.

"It did emphasise in the order that there was a risk of irreparable harm to the Palestinian right to be protected from genocide. But the shorthand that often appears, which is that there's a plausible case of genocide, isn't what the court decided."¹³⁸



To prove its case, South Africa would next need to show the court clear and hard evidence of an alleged plan to commit genocide. Israel, for its part, would have a right to examine those claims and argue its actions were legitimate self-defence against Hamas. That full case could take years to prepare and argue.

The BBC has not apologised for its inaccurate reporting¹³⁹ and effectively buried the article that corrected the original error – even though it had led national broadcasts.

On 16 May 2024, Home and Legal Correspondent Dominic Casciani wrote an

137 Six O'Clock News, [BBC Radio 4](#), 11 January 2024.

138 Hardtalk, [BBC News](#), 26 April 2024.

139 ICJ did not rule there was a 'plausible' claim of Israeli genocide in Gaza, [Jewish Chronicle](#), 28 April 2024.

article that admitted the BBC had misinterpreted the ICJ's ruling.

The article details how the ICJ ruling was misinterpreted to mean the court found there was a "plausible" case of genocide to answer – rather than the actual finding that Palestinians had plausible rights to protection from genocide.

The article explains how the wrong interpretation "spread quickly appearing in UN press releases, statements from campaign groups and many media outlets, including the BBC."¹⁴⁰

The ban on UN special rapporteur Francesca Albanese

In February, Israel announced a ban on Francesca Albanese, the United Nations special rapporteur on the "occupied Palestinian territories," from entering the Jewish state.

It followed comments by Ms Albanese, who blamed the slaughter of Jews by Hamas terrorists on Israeli "oppression."

Foreign Minister Israel Katz and Interior Minister Moshe Arbel announced the decision on Monday, following the UN envoy's offensive tweet on Saturday.

Katz tweeted: "The time for Jewish silence is past. For the UN to regain its credibility, its leadership Antonio Guterres must unequivocally renounce the anti-Semitic statements made by their 'Special Envoy' Francesca Albanese and remove her from her position immediately."

In an article for BBC News a month later, Geneva correspondent Imogen Foulkes covered a report by Ms Albanese to the UNHRC in which she accused Israel of "acts of genocide".¹⁴¹

However, the article made no mention of Albanese's long record of reportedly antisemitic statements and anti-Israel bias.

Ms Albanese has frequently courted controversy among Israel supporters for singling out Israel for blame. She has made frequent comparisons between Israel and Nazi Germany.

When Jewish News Syndicate asked Ms Albanese in December whether Hamas was justified in invading Israel and killing Israeli security personnel, she said: "Why is this so unbelievable? You seem to be puzzled by this. What is the right to resist?"

She also accused Israel and American evangelical Christians of weaponising antisemitism to silence her and other critics of Israel.

"Israel occupies the Palestinian territory illegally, continuing to colonize the land, to brutalize the people, to let its armed settlers go around and terrorize everyone," Ms Albanese told Jewish News Syndicate. "The Palestinians have no recourse to justice, because the Israeli army is not there to protect the Palestinians. It is there to protect the settlers, who are illegal."¹⁴²

In February, Albanese was criticised by both France and Germany for claiming that "the victims of 7/10 were not killed because of their Judaism, but in response to Israel's oppression" or that in the same month she described Israelis as "colonialists" who have "fake identities".¹⁴³

Ms Albanese is also on record as having equated the displacement of Palestinians in 1948 with the Holocaust.¹⁴⁴

Given the documented evidence of Ms Albanese's antisemitic statements, the

140 What did ICJ ruling mean in South Africa's genocide case against Israel?, [BBC News](#), 16 May 2024.

141 Gaza war: UN rights expert accuses Israel of acts of genocide, [BBC News](#), 26 March 2024.

142 Israel to issue ban on UN official who blamed country for October 7, [Jewish Chronicle](#), 12 February 2024.

143 BBC News whitewashes 'UN rights expert' behind genocide accusations, [CAMERA UK](#), 4 April 2024.

144 UN Palestinian rights official's social media history reveals antisemitic comments, [Times of Israel](#), 14 December 2022.

failure of the BBC to put her report within its proper context is a significant omission. Critics say this is part of a wider pattern of the BBC giving uncritical coverage to the UN and its agencies.

UNRWA

Among the UN aid agencies is UNRWA, an agency accused by Israel of having employees who participated in the 7 October atrocity.

Israel alleged that 12 UNRWA staff took part in the Hamas attacks on southern Israel. UNRWA subsequently fired nine employees following an investigation.

However initial reporting by the BBC significantly downplayed the serious nature of Israel's claim – focusing on the vetting procedures of UNRWA, rather than claims from Israel the organisation had been infiltrated by Hamas and Islamic Jihad members and some had even taken part in the deadly massacre.

A UN report into UNRWA allegations urged the agency to improve its vetting procedures. In response to the UN conclusions, Israeli authorities warned the agency was not a problem of “of a few bad apples: it is a rotten and poisonous tree whose roots are Hamas”.

Israel has also said more than 2,135 employees of the agency – of a total of 13,000 in Gaza – are members of Hamas or Palestine Islamic Jihad, proscribed as terrorist organisations by Israel, the UK, US and others. It has also suggested a fifth of UNRWA school administrators are Hamas members.¹⁴⁵

Although several donors including Japan, Sweden, Finland, Canada and the EU have resumed funding to UNRWA, the US has not, and the UK only recently did following a change of government.



Acts of rape

The BBC was also accused of tone deaf reporting over its coverage of horrendous acts of rape committed by Hamas terrorists.

It covered a report by the Association of Rape Crisis Centers in Israel (ACCRI) that found the 7 October attacks included “brutal acts of violent rape, often involving threats with weapons, specifically directed towards injured women”.¹⁴⁶

These findings were supported by a subsequent report by Pramila Patten, the UN's Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict. She reported her team had “found clear and convincing information that sexual violence, including rape, sexualised torture, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment” had been committed against hostages.

There were “reasonable grounds” to believe such violence could be “ongoing against those still held in captivity”, she added.¹⁴⁷

The ACCRI report states: “Many rape incidents occurred collectively, with collaboration among the perpetrating terrorists. In some cases, rape was conducted in front of an audience, such as partners, family, or friends, to increase the pain and

¹⁴⁵ Palestinian UN agency must improve neutrality – report, [BBC News](#), 22 April 2024.

¹⁴⁶ Israeli report says Hamas sexual violence ‘systematic and intentional’, [BBC News](#), 21 February 2024.

¹⁴⁷ UN: ‘Convincing information’ sexual violence committed against hostages in Gaza, [BBC News](#), 5 March 2024.

humiliation for all present.”

“Some Hamas members pursued victims who escaped the massacre, dragging them by their hair with screams. The majority of victims were subsequently killed during or after the sexual assault.”

It also cites various sources as indicating that many victims’ bodies were “found mutilated and bound, with sexual organs brutally attacked, and in some cases, weapons were inserted into them”.

The report concludes that there is “a clear picture of identical patterns of action repeated in each of the attack zones” – the Nova festival, homes in kibbutzim and villages near the Gaza border, and Israeli military bases.

Several Nova festival survivors reported cases of gang rapes, “where women were abused and handled between multiple terrorists who beat, injured, and ultimately killed them.”

Despite documenting the horrific findings in its report, the BBC news story goes on to add: “On Monday, several independent UN experts put out a statement expressing concern about reports of violence by Israeli forces against Palestinian women and girls in Gaza and the occupied West Bank.

“They said the “credible allegations” included that women and girls had been killed extrajudicially in Gaza, and that others detained in Gaza and the West Bank had been subjected to multiple forms of sexual assault.”

Israel has rejected the claims as “despicable and unfounded”.¹⁴⁸

148 Israeli report says Hamas sexual violence ‘systematic and intentional’, [BBC News](#), 21 February 2024.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Enough is Enough

Staff and Jewish community fears

The Community Security Trust's Antisemitic Incidents Report for January to June 2024 recorded 1,978 instances of anti-Jewish hate in the first six months of this year. This is the highest January to June total ever reported to the CST and represents a 105 per cent increase on the same six months in 2023. More than half the total, 1,026 reports, related to Israel, Palestine and the Hamas terror attack.¹⁴⁹

The National Jewish Assembly met with the BBC's Director of News Content Richard Burgess in July. He faced a range of questions about the BBC's coverage of the conflict and whether it had played a part in fuelling antisemitism in the UK – something he strongly denied. He was quizzed about the BBC's failure to describe Hamas as a terrorist organisation. He was also asked why the BBC had failed to cover more widely the impact of the war on Israelis, with more than 22,000 rockets fired into Israel and 123,000 people displaced since 7 October.

Mr Burgess said: "I don't think stats like that are a good way of judging the impartiality of coverage... it's about the totality of coverage." Although it is true that one set of statistics does not itself prove the case, his comment failed to address that many supporters of Israel are not relying on one or two statistics – but instead a relentless drumbeat of errors and bias from the BBC, which cannot remotely be replicated by those that claim the BBC is biased towards Israel.

Mr Burgess also stressed the difficulties of verifying information because BBC journalists were not allowed into Gaza but said inaccuracies would always be corrected. Mr Burgess said he had conversations with Muslim groups that had raised similar concerns that BBC coverage was actually too pro-Israel.¹⁵⁰

Hamas apologist at BBC Sport

However, the relationship between the broadcaster and its own Jewish staff has become increasingly strained in recent months. More than 100 BBC staff and contributors wrote directly to the BBC to protest their "disbelief" that a cricket pundit who sought to justify the 7 October attack on social media was hired as a sports commentator for the broadcaster.

The letter, sent to Director-General Tim Davie and Chief Content Officer Charlotte Moore, condemned the platforming of former cricketer and sports commentator Qasim Sheikh who was part of the BBC's coverage of a T20 match between Scotland and England. Social media



149 Report reveals record levels of hatred towards British Jews as Hamas attacks drive up antisemitism, [Daily Mail](#), 8 August 2024.

150 National Jewish Assembly Hosts Exclusive Q&A with BBC's Richard Burgess, [National Jewish Assembly](#), 18 July 2024.

posts from the pundit included his suggestion the 7 October attack was to “defend” Palestinians, while another post likened world leaders including Rishi Sunak and Israel’s Netanyahu to Hitler, branding them collectively as the ‘Kids Killers Union’.

The letter warned of “monumental double standards” in the application of editorial guidelines, highlighting how the BBC dropped ex England cricket captain Michael Vaughan after he was accused of making racist comments – something he was later cleared of.

The BBC responded saying it had spoken to the commentator, who issued a statement apologising for “any offence caused”. Signatories, including former director of television Danny Cohen and Panorama presenter John Ware, dismissed the apology as “weak”.¹⁵¹

The BBC’s catalogue of scandals

Jewish staff employed by the BBC and across the broadcasting industry wrote a second letter to the BBC leadership to complain about bias and antisemitism both on screen and within the workplace. It catalogued extensive broadcasting mistakes on the Israel and Gaza conflict as well as a list of BBC contributors and staff using antisemitic tropes or appearing to celebrate the 7 October massacre.

The letter, signed by more than 200 people, urged urgent action, but BBC Board chairman Samir Shah refused calls for an investigation, urging staff to use the grievance or whistleblowing procedures in place if they had concerns.

The decision was slammed by BBC staffers who spoke to the Jewish Chronicle to warn the broadcaster risked another scandal on a par with Huw Edwards and Strictly Come Dancing if it failed to act. One said there was a “growing feeling, especially since 7/10 that BBC management simply does not take our feedback seriously”. The staffer added: “Never before have Jewish staff been made to feel so marginalised”.

Another warned of “groupthink” which was failing to heed warnings from Jewish staff about coverage of the war or a lack of rigour in researching guests or eyewitnesses. Another staffer said: “There is a feeling that Jews don’t count but there is a fear for everyone to speak up – it is endemic on all issues.”

A further BBC staff member said “listening, watching and reading the loaded output about events in the Middle East and colleagues’ partial and often offensive social media posts” every week made it “a little harder being a Jew at the BBC.” Another warned: “The hardest thing of all is seeing how BBC stories are adding to antisemitism – you can see it in the social media responses to our stories. And there is nothing we can do about it.”

Leo Pearlman, whose company Fullwell 73 Ltd has made shows for the BBC, condemned Mr Shah’s response as dismissive and “gaslighting”. “No other minority has been or will be treated with this level of disdain,” he said.¹⁵²

Call for action

The BBC’s failure to act on the concerns of staff and contributors prompted a letter in August from the chairman of the All Party Parliamentary Group against Antisemitism.

In a letter to Director-General Tim Davie, Joani Reid MP warned that Jewish staff at the BBC “have felt continuously dismissed” and that their fears and views were

151 Over 100 BBC contributors and staff slam corporation for platforming antisemitic sports pundit, [Jewish Chronicle](#), 5 June 2024.

152 Furious Jewish staff say BBC’s handling of antisemitism echoes the Huw Edwards scandal, [Jewish Chronicle](#), 1 August 2024.

“clearly not being listened to or treated with the level of severity and urgency that is required”.

The intervention came just days after Phil Rosenberg, the President of the Board of Deputies, met with Tim Davie to warn about growing concerns about the BBC coverage of the conflict. Among the concerns raised was the failure to describe Hamas as terrorists and the description of killed Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh as a “moderate”. Concerns about BBC Arabic were also highlighted.

In a statement after the meeting, the Board warned of “deep anxieties ... about the possibility that the BBC is now institutionally antisemitic, in addition to institutionally biased against Israel.” Rosenberg tweeted that his team had been “absolutely clear” about the “unacceptable state of affairs” within the BBC.¹⁵³

¹⁵³ MPs and Board of Deputies call for urgent action by BBC on ‘bias’, [Jewish Chronicle](#), 8 August 2024.

CONCLUSIONS

This report sets out, in a dispassionate and properly referenced way, objective examples of BBC bias and inaccuracy in its coverage of the Israel-Gaza war.

It does not address some of the more subjective issues relating to tone, story selection, story prominence and approach to interviews, but it is clear from other research that the BBC has failed in this regard as well.

We recognise that reporting complex stories in a war zone and verifying claims and counter-claims can be difficult, but it is clear there is systematic bias against Israel across all BBC platforms, with the vast majority of that bias pointing in the same direction.

The seriousness of this failure to deliver content that is consistent with the BBC's editorial mission and guidelines has fuelled anti-Jewish hate in this country and around the world and has seriously damaged the BBC's reputation as an impartial provider of news and information.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

When the BBC strays from its core mission, it is imperative that those who believe in its value as a trusted news source call out the Corporation's errors. This report is a tribute to all those who have done so in the last eleven months, and an appeal to the BBC management to act on the clear and detailed evidence contained within it.

It also pays tribute to BBC staff, current and former, who have spoken out both on and off the record to draw attention to growing concerns about how the broadcaster is covering the war.

The research contained within this report is indebted to the investigative articles of journalists and the spotlight shone on the BBC's coverage by a wide range of media outlets.

The report would not have been possible without the meticulous research of the Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Report and Analysis (CAMERA), David Collier and a range of other contributors.

None of the contributors to this report are opposed to the BBC. On the contrary: their work is motivated by an understanding of the vital role the corporation plays, not just in the UK but across the world.

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