[**Western media and the war**](https://www.dawn.com/news/1781742/western-media-and-the-war)

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THE brazen one-sided account of the conflict justifying Israeli aggression against Palestinians living in the occupied Gaza Strip has exposed the mainstream Western media’s claims of objectivity in reporting. Truth has been a major casualty in the ongoing war.

While disproportionately highlighting the Hamas assault, the destruction of Gaza and the killing of thousands of Palestinians, mostly children in Israeli airstrikes, has received little coverage in the US and other Western media.

Israel’s war crimes are being justified on the pretext of the ‘right to self-defence’. There is no word of protest on the killing of a dozen Arab journalists in the relentless bombing that has turned Gaza into rubble. The double standards of those who claim to be the champions of freedom and democracy is appalling.

While scores of Western journalists are covering the war from Israel, there are few on the ground to report on the unfolding humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza. For them, there is only one side of the story and that’s what they are projecting.

Much of their reporting of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict show a dominant pattern biased in favour of the Zionist colonisers. The events of Oct 7 are reported in isolation without going into the genesis of the Palestinian struggle for freedom.

[Unconfirmed reports](https://www.dawn.com/news/1780518) of the beheading of Israeli children have been used to whip up sentiments in the West and to build a narrative for the annihilation of 2.2 million people living in a narrow strip of land. Israeli leaders and some Western media commentators have compared the Hamas attack to 9/11.

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Indeed, the killing of women and children by any side cannot be condoned, but what is happening in Gaza is without any parallel in recent history. Nothing is worse than the genocide of a subjugated population by a colonising power.

In its recent report, Human Rights Watch has [confirmed Israel’s use of white phosphorus](https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/10/12/questions-and-answers-israels-use-white-phosphorus-gaza-and-lebanon) in military operations in Gaza and Lebanon, putting civilians at risk of serious and long-term injuries. “The use of white phosphorus in Gaza, one of the most densely populated areas in the world, magnifies the risk to civilians and violates the international humanitarian law prohibition on putting civilians at unnecessary risk,” the report said.

Meanwhile, according to a [Unicef report](https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/gazas-children-pay-heaviest-price-hundreds-dead-enar), hundreds of children have been killed and injured in the latest Israeli airstrikes: “The images and stories are clear: children with horrendous burns, mortar wounds, and lost limbs.” The number of such cases is rising every minute, with overwhelmed hospitals unable to treat them. The dead and injured are not only numbers; each and every one is a human tragedy.

But the ongoing tragedy seems to have been ignored by the Western media that has continued to justify the Israeli military action. Such distortion of facts has virtually turned the media into a propaganda tool for warmongers. It appears that their ‘objective’ journalism is meant to serve their respective governments’ policy of unequivocal support for Israel.

It is as if there is virtual censorship, particularly on electronic media. There is shrinking space for rational views.

For instance, it has been reported that [three Muslim anchors were suspended](https://www.dawn.com/news/1781278) by *MSNBC*, a leading American TV network, for apparently trying to present the other side of the story regarding the plight of the people in besieged Gaza. One journalist has been quoted by the *Arab News* as saying that “the mood is very similar to what had happened post 9/11 with the whole you are either with us or against us argument”.

This mindset is very much apparent in the way some media groups have been reporting the protests against Israeli aggression and the wholesale massacre of the Palestinian population, across the Western world. A *BBC* TV report described massive pro-Palestinian marches across Britain as “pro-Hamas”. The network later confessed to misleading the public but it stopped short of apologising.

Many European countries, including France, Germany and Italy, have banned the protest rallies, but defying the restrictions, people are coming out in large numbers to express their solidarity with the Palestinian people who have been subjected to Israeli war crimes. The worsening humanitarian situation in Gaza will only intensify the public’s outrage.

While the severity of the Palestinians’ plight is mostly missing from Western mainstream reporting, the destruction inflicted by the Israeli bombardment has been widely relayed through social media and some media networks such as *Al Jazeera*. But there is now a move to block reports and commentaries on the Gaza massacre even on those forums.

Azmat Khan, a Pulitzer Prize-winning investigative reporter for the New York Times and a professor at Columbia University, has reported that her account was “shadowbanned” after she posted an Instagram story about the war in Gaza. “It’s an extraordinary threat to the flow of information and credible journalism about an unprecedented war,” she posted on X (formerly Twitter).

In the midst of Israel’s relentless bombing of Gaza, forcing over a million people out of their homes and turning the territory into a killing field for Palestinian children, the *New York Times* in its [editorial](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/14/opinion/israel-gaza-war.html) declared: “What Israel is fighting to defend is a society that values human life and the rule of law.”

Nothing could be more bizarre than the defence of an apartheid regime, which has constantly been accused of committing war crimes, by the editors of a newspaper that takes pride in upholding the cause of democracy and human rights. There is no mention of Israeli colonising Palestinian land and regularly forcing the inhabitants out of their homes in the editorial.

And what rule of law is the *NYT* is talking about? While condemning Hamas for its Oct 7 attack and the kidnapping of Israeli women and children, the editors deliberately ignored the fact that Israel is holding some 5,000 Palestinian prisoners.

Is the use of white phosphorous on civilian populations and starving millions of people an attribute of a country that values human life? Such duplicity and support from the West have emboldened Israel and destabilised the situation further.

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*Published in Dawn, October 18th, 2023*