

The Role of Palestinian Newspapers in Conflict: A Case Study of 2014 Gaza War

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Abstract: Media plays an important role during and after conflict. It reveals the society sufferings from the conflict, either between different countries or sects. This paper analyzed the role of journalism during the 2014 war in Gaza. It explores the content and the opinion of two newspapers, Al-Hayat Al Jadeeda and Al-Resalah, regarding the conflict and war between Palestinians and Israel. The data collected from the official websites of these two newspapers. The content analysis of conflict related reports was conducted to explain the newspapers roles played during the war. Also, some differences in words were analyzed. The results showed that the 2014 war on Gaza was not the first war. The newspapers were satisfied with publishing facts to inform people of what was happened in addition to standing as a witness to the post-war recovery process. Despite the difference in the views of the two newspapers, they both the main goal, which is to expose the practices of the Israeli occupation towards the Palestinians.

Keywords: Media, journalism, communication, conflict, Gaza

I. INTRODUCTION

Mass communication has spread rapidly and has the society to develop means of obtaining information this is in line with developments in the fields of communication and information ([1]. The role of journalism in conflict is not a new concept in conflict management. It has a negative or positive side depending on the approach used by the journalist. Some researchers had looked at the involvement of media in conflict. For example, the conflict between "people and people" happened between South Sudan and Uganda ([2]. Another type of conflict can also be between "people and government" which happened in Afghanistan ([2]. A similar conflict of the "government and the people" also happened between the Sri Lankan government and the Tamil Tigers movement ([3], and in Yemen as well ([4]. The conflict between "country and country" is another type of conflict. This conflict happened between Iraqi and the US, and between Yemen and Saudi Arabia ([5]. The media have a negative or positive side during the conflict, depending on the approach used by the journalist. Journalism also plays a role in raising awareness among the people by spreading information about the war.

The conflict between Palestine and Israel is long-lasting. It's believed that it begun with the British Mandate's creation of the "Balfour Declaration" in 1917. This decision was the cornerstone of the establishment of a national home for the

Jewish people in Palestine. During the Mandate period from 1922 to 1947, there was widespread Jewish immigration, most of which came from Eastern Europe, and these numbers doubled in the 1930s as a result of Nazi persecution. The Arab demands for independence and resistance to immigration resulted in the revolt of 1937. There were several attempts by the United Kingdom to control matters and achieve independence in a land torn apart by violence but it's failed. In 1947, the United Kingdom transferred the Palestine problem to the United Nations. [6]

During the United Nations General Assembly in 1947, the resolution 181 was approved to partition Palestine by a total of 33 votes to 13, with 10 abstentions, including Britain. The decision stipulated the establishment of a Jewish state on 56% of Palestine, excluding Jerusalem. Since the Jews declared their state on a part of the land of Palestine in 1948, they have been in constant conflict with the Palestinians and the Arabs. Its level has risen to total and destructive wars. Despite the signing of many agreements and peace treaties between Israel and the Arabs, what is certain is that the conflict has not ended to this day. [7]

This study aims to clarify the journalism's role in Palestine during the Gaza war in 2014. It is hypothesises that the journalists exposed the truth on what the Palestinian's suffered from the parallel conflict with Israel in the military and combat aspects.

II. METHODS

This qualitative study analyzes the content of Palestinian newspapers Al-Hayat Al Jadeeda and Al-Resalah, in reporting the news during the 2014 Gaza war. Data were collected from the website of the newspapers. Due to the limited scope of this study, only 10 news articles that are related to the three topics chosen for this study selected. The opinion articles, editorials, and messages addressed to editors were excluded because they did not have a direct impact in the course of the war and did not mention events related to the war. The focus of analysis includes the newspaper orientation, the topic of the report and the overall role of the newspapers during the conflict. We also analyze the reasons that triggers the conflict between the two parties, the course of conflict and the ceasefire agreements between the parties in conflict as reported by the newspapers. Lastly, we also analyze and discuss the different

ideology, attitudes and approaches used as well as the linguistic terminology between the newspapers in reporting the news about the conflict.

III. FINDINGS

The newspapers analysed in this study has a specific orientation and is affiliated with a certain organization, Al-Hayat Al Jadeeda newspaper is close to the Palestinian National Authority and Al-Resalah newspaper is close to "Hamas" in Gaza, so each of them has adopted an approach, policy and discourse that differs from the other in its coverage. Al-Hayat Al-Jadeeda follows a diplomatic method in the process of publishing news and showing facts. The newspaper played its role in being the voice and representative of the leadership of the Palestinian Authority. On the other hand, Al-Resalah used the revolutionary method that rejects the practices of the occupation. They also tend to report the details of any event occurred during the conflict.

Table 1. Analysis of the topics

| Topics | Al-Hayat Al Jadeeda | Al-Resalah | Analysis |
|--|--|---|---|
| The reasons that led to the outbreak of the conflict | Shuafat turns into a battlefield (July 3rd, 2014) The arrest of the killers of the boy Abu Khdeir and demonstrations of anger continue (July 7th, 2014) | The "West Bank" on a gunpowder keg (July 3rd, 2014) The things that (Israel) fear in the event of an escalation in Gaza (July 7th, 2014) | The main reason that led to the war is the kidnapping and burning of the child Muhammad Abu Khdeir (16 years old) from the city of Shuafat in occupied Jerusalem |
| The course of the conflict | Norwegian expert "Israel uses internationally banned weapons (July 14th, 2014) | Justifications for Israel's deliberation in giving the signal to start a ground war (July 14th, 2014) | Some events happened during the war: The occupation used types of internationally prohibited weapons. The Israeli leadership threatened Palestinians to go to a ground war. |
| Ceasefire agreements | Gaza celebrates the cessation of the longest Israeli aggression (August 27th, 2014) After 51 days of the aggression, Gaza is breathing a sigh of relief (August 28th, 2014) | The occupation bombed Gaza with the equivalent of several atomic bombs (August 18th, 2014) Al-Resalah newspaper reviews the details of the cease-fire agreements (August 28th, 2014) | After 51 days of conflict between the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and Israel, a ceasefire agreement was reached |

The second aim of this research was to analyse the topic of the news reported. The articles are divided according to three topics, including the reasons that led to the outbreak of the conflict, the course of the conflict and ceasefire agreements.

Both of newspaper confirm that the main reason that led to the war is the kidnapping and burning of the child Muhammad Abu Khdeir (16 years old) from the city of Shuafat in occupied Jerusalem. Furthermore, the newspapers reported some events happened during the war, which include the use of internationally prohibited weapons by Israeli and the fact that Israeli leadership hinting to go to a ground war. Lastly, in the last phase of the war, the newspapers reported that after 51 days of conflict, a ceasefire agreement was reached. Furthermore, we found no reports or terms inciting hatred or violence were published by the two newspapers but rather Palestinian anger towards what was happening was published and described. The details of the collection of articles for the study and their corresponding analytical topics are outlined in the (table 1).

IV. DISCUSSION

Journalism aims to spread awareness and spread the impact of the disaster and the risks on various walks of life, such as (human losses, injuries, property damage, and disruption of economic activity). During any conflict, the journalist should inform the readers about many issues, which include helping to create a plan to mitigate the impact of the conflict, and contribute to spreading awareness about safety and prevention measures in the event of a war. Meanwhile in the recovery phase, Journalism will have the role of overseeing government actions and equitable distribution of aid to victims. This will make the government do its best to provide support for recovery from the conflict.

Media during the conflicts can take a negative or positive side, and here this study had mentioned some conflicts in which journalism played an important role in keeping the public informed and the damage done to both infrastructure, lives, and livelihood. It was mentioned that journalism played important role in the conflict between South Sudan and Uganda, and the two newspapers covering this conflict were the New Vision and the Daily Monitor. They confirm that the role of journalism during conflict cannot be underrated ([2].

This study found the different newspapers have different ideology in reporting such an event. Such finding has been reported earlier by [8], where they found that the press in Afghanistan and Pakistan showed remarkable differences in the war journalism framing but applied similar thematic strategies of peace journalism. While the Pakistani press called for a military operation against the Taliban, according to [9], the Afghan press has focused more on the consequences of the conflict such as killing, injury, and destruction. But concerning peace journalism, the press of the two countries agreed to calm the situation in rhetoric directed at the people and to provide solutions to the war. The researcher indicated that the reason for the difference in

coverage of the conflict is due to the difference in the journalistic culture between the two countries.

Different attitude in reporting the conflict has also been reported. The study conducted by [10] explained the way of coverage of some foreign media for the war 2014 on Gaza, it was titled that CNN and fox news networks were very partial towards the Israeli side in the framework of the media coverage because of the political context of the state also the political interests between the United States and Israel.

Concerning the role of journalism during the conflict, Watson (2018) ([5] in his research suggest some simple solutions that can reduce or end the war, including giving people a voice. This thing can go a long way in a country that has suffered from levels of poverty and illiteracy. He convinced that when people feel that someone represents them, this is very important for them and makes them feel that they have some kind of indirect democracy.

V. CONCLUSION

Journalism can either help in igniting conflict or help in a peaceful resolution. In this research, it appears that the war in Gaza in 2014 was preceded by many events. Thus, the role of Palestinian journalism was satisfied with the process of publishing facts to inform people about what was happening rather than publishing unfounded stories that can help in fuelling the war. This has shown the important role played by Journalism during and after the war in Gaza. Journalism also tries to expose the practices of the Israeli occupation towards the Palestinians. No reports or terms inciting hatred or

violence were published by the two newspapers but rather Palestinian anger towards what was happening was published and described.

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