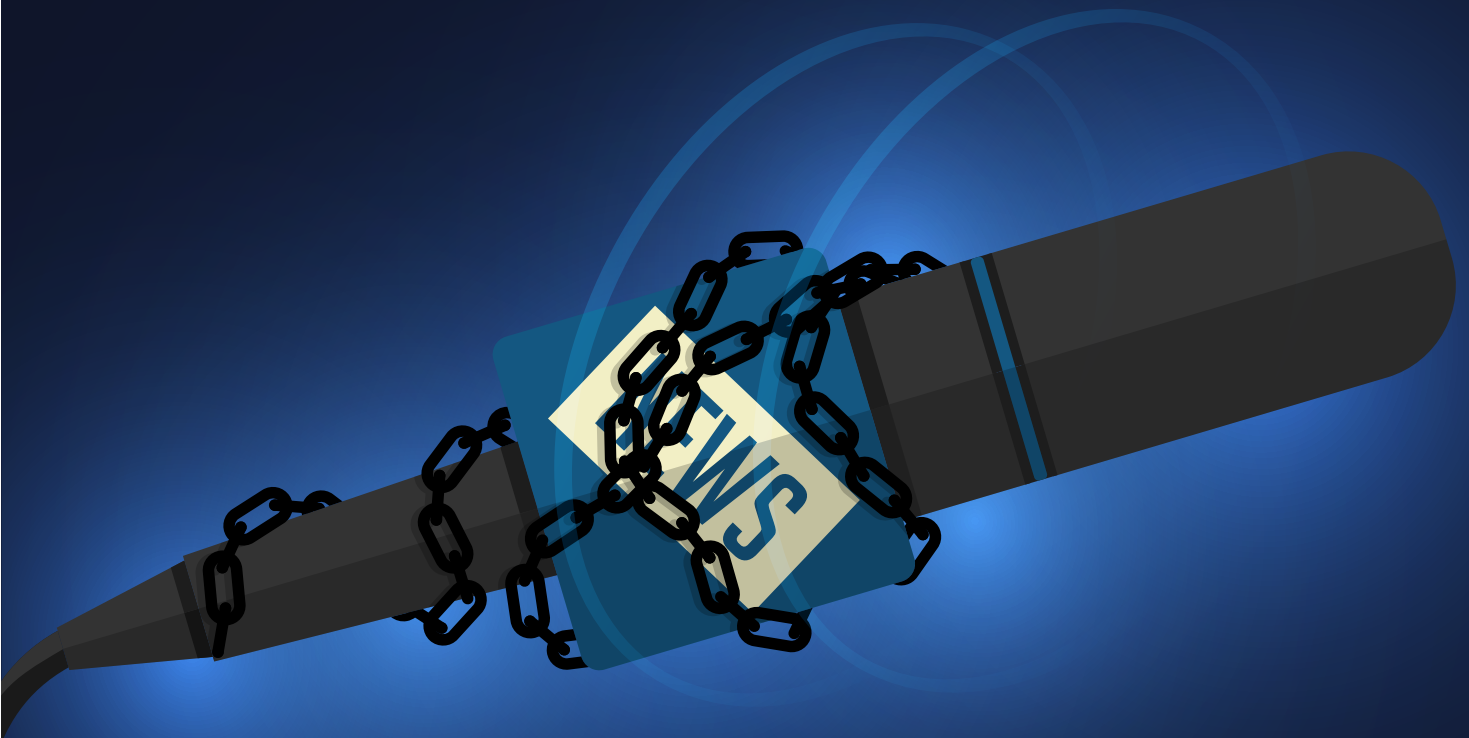


# International Media and the War on Gaza: Modalities of Discourse and the Clash of Narratives

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30-29 November 2025  
College of Humanities and Social Sciences  
Hamad Bin Khalifa University

## Concept Note



Since 7 October 2023, the war on Gaza has reshaped the priorities of news agendas across journalistic institutions and international media networks, and refocused the interests of social media users on events unfolding in the Strip. The course of the war has become the focal point of continuous media coverage, which has taken on diverse forms and styles amid the widening geography of the conflict and the multiplicity of actors involved. The war has evolved into a struggle between regional and international powers (including non-state entities), vying for influence and attempting to shape the future of the region.

The “structural genocide” being inflicted on the Palestinian people – and its unprecedented humanitarian, social and economic consequences – has drawn the attention of audiences and international public opinion to the crimes of war and crimes against humanity. This has been achieved through coverage of Israel’s systematic destruction of all sources of life: demolishing homes over the heads of residents; burning displacement camps and civilian facilities; and destroying vital infrastructure such as healthcare, electricity, water, telecommunications, roads, schools and universities.

The ongoing news coverage of the genocide and war crimes committed by the Israeli military over more than 20 months reflects how Israeli and international media perceive the roots of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and the policy of ethnic cleansing aimed at uprooting the Palestinian people and denying them their civil and political rights. The evolving stages of media coverage also reveal how these media outlets understand the context of the war on Gaza and the broader regional conflict. Their narratives are shaped by these dimensions and influenced by the political and ideological positions of media institutions and their ownership regarding the various actors involved in the war.

As a result, most Western media, and even some Arab media, promoted, especially in the early months of the war, the Israeli narrative and its false reports about “burning children” and “raping Israeli women” during the Hamas attack on settlements surrounding the Gaza Strip. These outlets

justified “Israel’s right to self-defence” and legitimised the war against what they called “ Hamas’s terrorism”. In this context, the propaganda dimension and disinformation in media discourse stand out, competing with the Palestinian narrative, pointing to the “power of narrative” in constructing meaning, shaping reality and guiding public opinion according to the strength of the medium and its political and ideological orientations. Later, this media perspective begins to produce a “spatial conceptual narrative” about Palestinian identity and the objectives and aims of the war, shaped by the discourse structures and markers employed by the narrator. These narratives are built upon the beliefs and ideological frameworks of the speaker, revealing their relationship to their surroundings. Israeli media, along with some international outlets, have sought to construct meanings, concepts and interpretations that redefine Palestinian resistance factions as “terrorist organisations”. They have also worked to strip Palestinians of their civilian status by accumulating narratives that emphasise themes of “animalisation” and “demonisation,” thereby justifying violence against their very existence. Within this frame, Israel’s defeat or “fall” in the war is portrayed as a collapse of Western civilisation and its values.

Media institutions attempt to turn these meanings into grand cultural narratives shared by Western audiences and the international public, ultimately transforming them into dominant popular narratives that reinforce stereotypical images of Palestinians and serve the war’s objectives – narratives that become difficult to amend or reverse later. This dynamic undermines the impact of some Western media outlets that do provide space for the Palestinian narrative, reducing their influence within the broader public discourse dominated by genocidal messaging.

Additionally, transediting plays a role in reproducing dominant discourses by highlighting selective news items and emphasising specific lexical and semantic structures that support Western media’s agenda of reinforcing the Israeli narrative and stripping Palestinians of their civilian character, all while suppressing the Palestinian narrative.

In this context, media, across both traditional and digital platforms, becomes a tool for fuelling the genocide against Palestinians and

legitimising the violations and crimes committed by the Israeli military. It achieves this by spreading hate speech against the Palestinian people and rallying support for the war, framing it as a necessary existential battle for Israel and the Western world against a “common enemy”. Thus, this media justifies calls for mass killings of Palestinians and Lebanese under the pretext of combating terrorism and defending Israel. This indicates the institutionalisation of genocide within public discourse, journalistic practices and intellectual and political stances, as well as efforts to reinforce power dynamics in favour of the perpetrators.

Social media platforms have also become part of this polarised international media environment. Major tech companies have militarised these spaces and allowed discriminatory content management policies that digitally suppress Palestinian content and attempt to erase its digital footprint. However, these policies have had limited impact on the effectiveness of journalists and citizen journalists in documenting the war and exposing the violations committed by the Israeli army. This, in turn, contributed to a surge in traditional media coverage and a shift in international public opinion toward the war, reigniting the question of the media’s relevance and role in fostering peace.

To address these issues, Al Jazeera Centre for Studies and the Department of Language, Culture, and Communication at the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at Hamad Bin Khalifa University are organising an academic conference titled **“International Media and the War on Gaza: Modalities of Discourse and the Clash of Narratives”**. The event will be held on **29 and 30 November 2025** at the **Minaretein Auditorium in Education City, Doha**.

### **Objectives**

- To identify the modalities of discourse and narrative patterns produced by Israeli and international media about the Palestinian and Israeli selves and the trajectories of the war on Gaza
- To understand the role of media during wars and the contexts of symbolic conflict in controlling global public opinion

- To determine the role of translational editing in promoting the Israeli narrative and obscuring the Palestinian narrative
- To highlight forms of Israeli and Western propaganda manipulating international public opinion
- To identify the structure of hate speech in Israeli and international media
- To showcase the role of Israeli media, press institutions and international networks in fuelling genocide in Gaza
- To shed light on the militarisation of social media networks and the incitement of genocidal acts
- To compare genocide media in contemporary experiences (e.g. Rwanda, Cambodia) with genocide media in the war on Gaza
- To determine the role of media in documenting war crimes and its impact on respecting human rights, enforcing international law and peacebuilding
- To recognise the challenges facing international media in adhering to professional ethics and codes of conduct during wars and conflicts

## **Themes**

- The process of news framing of the Gaza war in Western media discourse
- News models in the Coverage of the War on Gaza
- Propaganda in Israeli and international media during the Gaza war
- Patterns of propaganda discourse in international media and its impact on global public opinion
- Decolonising communication and media studies
- Fake news and media misinformation in the Gaza war
- The production of narratives and the battle of stories during wars and conflicts: Methods and objectives
- Transediting and its role in promoting and obscuring narratives
- Lexical and semantic construction in Arabic-language foreign news sites covering the war

- Genocidal media discourse in the Gaza war: Propositions and characteristics
- From hate speech to incitement to genocide: Israeli media as a model
- The role of Western media in institutionalising genocide in public discourse and journalistic practice
- Social networks and content production strategies during the war
- The role of social media networks in the digital genocide of Palestinian content
- Professional ethics in conflict coverage and the documentation of war crimes
- Media and conflict resolution: Methodological and theoretical trends
- International experiences of the media's role in comprehending conflict and enlightening global public opinion
- The role of media in protecting human rights, realising justice and peacebuilding
- The status of media within the framework of international humanitarian law
- The role of media in documenting war crimes and its influence on implementing international law

### **Conference Proceedings:**

- The conference papers and proceedings will be published in Al Jazeera li Dirasat al-Itisal wa al-I'lam [Al Jazeera Journal of Communication and Media Studies] and subsequently in a collective book.

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