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## **NY Times Continues To Show Extreme Bias in Gaza Coverage**



Image by Jakayla Toney.

The United States government has been the primary enabler of the genocide perpetrated by the Israeli war machine against the Palestinian people of Gaza. It has provided essentially unlimited military support and diplomatic cover since October 7, and an important factor in allowing that to occur has been the role played by the mainstream media, whose coverage of Israel-Palestine has been so biased and misleading that it has kept many Americans ignorant about the meaning of the events in the Middle East.

In this article we will examine a recent episode of *The Daily*, a podcast produced by *The New York Times*. On February 26, 2025 it presented an interview with Jerusalem Bureau chief Patrick Kingsley about the end of the first phase of the Israel-Hamas ceasefire and the prospects for the future. The episode is instructive in that the *Times*' bias is revealed clearly in how it dehumanizes Palestinians, conceals the power imbalance between the two parties, whitewashes war crimes, misrepresents ceasefires and other peace efforts, and erases the historical context.

Much has been written about the American mainstream media's pro-Israel bias, especially since October 7.

An analysis by *The Intercept* examined the coverage of Gaza in *The New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, and *The Washington Post*. It found that in the first six weeks after the October 7 attack, these outlets used terms like “slaughter” or “massacre” nearly 200 times when referring to the killing of Israelis, but only five times in reference to Palestinians. This stark contrast in language occurred even as the number of Palestinians killed by Israeli attacks had already reached 20 times the number of Israelis killed in the Hamas attack.

In April of 2024, *The Intercept* revealed a leaked internal memo from *The New York Times* that provided editorial guidance to its journalists covering the Israel-Hamas conflict. The memo instructed reporters to avoid using terms such as “genocide,” “ethnic cleansing,” and “occupied territory” when describing Palestinian land. Additionally, it advised against using the term “Palestine” except in very rare cases and recommended steering clear of the phrase “refugee camps” to describe areas in Gaza historically settled by displaced Palestinians. In addition, the memo claims that words like “slaughter,” “massacre” and “carnage” are often too emotional to describe Israel's bombardment of Gaza. Ironically, the stated purpose of the memo was to issue “guidance like this to ensure accuracy, consistency and nuance in how we cover the news,” as a *Times* spokesman told *The Intercept*.

Protests against both the genocide and Western support for it have succeeded in bringing the topic of Israel-Palestine to light, and Americans are now more aware of the scale of Israel's atrocities—currently and since the beginning of the conflict—than ever before.

The United States' continuing blind support for Israel's repeated violations of international law can be blamed on the weapons industry, the Israel lobby, Christian Zionism and good old-fashioned racism. (After all, one justification for the creation of the Israeli state, as argued by Zionism's founding father, Theodor Herzl, was that it would be “... part of a defensive wall for Europe in Asia, an outpost of civilization against barbarism.”)

But the mainstream media in the West must also bear much of the responsibility. The work of the special interest groups mentioned above would be much more difficult to accomplish were it not for the media's misleading coverage of the events in the Middle East.

The editors of the *Times*, as evidenced in the memo alluded to above, are very much aware of the power of language, and in this episode of *The Daily*, both Kingsley and the interviewer, Rachel Abrams, go to great effort to use terminology that paints Israel in a positive light while demonizing the Palestinians.

There are dozens of examples in the twenty-five minute interview, in which the Israelis captured by Hamas are referred to as hostages, while the Palestinians held in Israeli prisons are labelled prisoners. (*The Times* is far from the only outlet using the same terminology.) The reasons for this choice are obvious. The term “prisoner” has a strong connotation of guilt. Hostages are presumed innocent, but prisoners have likely committed crimes and do not deserve our sympathy. In reality, thousands of the detained Palestinians have never even been charged with a crime, and many were abducted by the IDF after October 7, presumably as trading chips in a future exchange. How could they be thought of as anything other than hostages?

Even the descriptions of the conditions of the Israeli captives differs markedly from those of the Palestinians. Upon their release the Israeli hostages “looked extremely gaunt, malnourished, starved ... emaciated,” while the Palestinians were held in “difficult conditions.” There was no mention of the “widespread torture in custody, including through beatings, starvation and other cruel inhuman or degrading treatment,” or the fact that “at least sixty Palestinian detainees have died while in Israeli custody since 7 October 2023,” as documented by human rights organizations.

The scenes during the release of the Israeli hostages were described by both Abrams and Kingsley as “ghoulish,” while those of the Palestinians’ release were “uncomfortable.”

The low value of Palestinian life is reinforced by the fact that no Palestinian prisoner is treated as an individual throughout the interview. We don’t learn anything about their stories, their names, their work, their families. They are faceless and anonymous.

Meanwhile, nearly four minutes are spent on the tragic story of the Israeli Bibas family, whose bodies Hamas returned last week.

The Bibases are real. They are a family. They have names and faces. Kingsley discusses “the most unsettling and disturbing hostage release ceremony ... when the bodies of three Israeli civilians from the same family, two very young boys, Ariel Bibas and his brother, Kfir Bibas, four years old and eight months old, respectively, at the time of their capture ... and their mother, Shiri Bibas, a thirty-two-year-old accountant.”

The ceremony was “seen in Israel as enormously disrespectful, ghoulish essentially .... This family had been one of the main emblems of Israeli trauma ... and to see the spectacle of these two young children and their mother returned in this way and then on top of that to learn that their mother Shiri was in fact still in Gaza was an immensely triggering and re-traumatizing event.” After the bodies were returned, “that family was finally able to have some degree of closure.”

It is during the discussion of the Bibas family that the first and only mention of the suffering of Palestinians throughout the interview occurs.

“ Hamas claims that Netanyahu was to blame for the deaths of the tens of thousands of Palestinians,” Kingsley says, responding to Abrams’ comment about Hamas’ decision to display images of Benjamin Netanyahu’s face as Dracula on the coffins of the members of the Bibas family.

Another example of language manipulation is the naming of the events in Gaza since October 7. The genocide is referred to as a war, which carries a connotation of two equally strong parties, instead of one of the most powerful (nuclear-armed) militaries in the world backed by its superpower patron versus a guerrilla organization firing homemade rockets constructed despite a brutal seventeen-year siege forced upon the people of Gaza. The IDF tries to propagate this misleading terminology by inflating the ratio of “militants” killed to civilians killed.

Kingsley names October 7 as the beginning of the war, thereby completely erasing its historical context. Gone are the Zionist occupation of 78% of historic Palestine and the ethnic cleansing of 750,000 Palestinians in 1947-1949, the occupation of the remaining 22% of historic Palestine and expulsion of a further 300,000 Palestinians in 1967, and the brutal fifty-seven year-long regime of killing, occupation, military control, home demolitions, Apartheid, incarceration, theft of land and resources, settlement expansion, and enforcement of extensive movement restrictions through checkpoints, roadblocks, and the separation barrier. Gone is the Israeli blockade of Gaza since 2007, restricting the movement of people and goods, which has led to severe humanitarian crises, including shortages of food, medicine, and clean water. Not mentioned are the murderous assaults on the Strip—euphemistically called “mowing the lawn”—that the IDF engages in every year as a deterrent to all Arabs in the region. None of that is relevant for the *Times*’ journalists. The only context, we are told, is that Hamas attacked Israel on October 7.

Kingsley does mention 1948 and 1967, but only in the context of Trump’s plan to expel the residents of Gaza, but he once again uses language absolving the Zionists of any responsibility.

“Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were forced to flee their homes,” says Kingsley, speaking of 1948. He adds, perhaps realizing that he has come perilously close to assigning blame to someone other than the Palestinians themselves, “or fled their homes during the war surrounding Israel’s creation.” The perpetrators of the campaign of ethnic cleansing are not mentioned. Who forced the Palestinians to leave? Did there just happen to be a war as Israel

was being created? No mention of the Zionist plan to ethnically cleanse all of historical Palestine. No mention of the 300,000 Palestinians who were ethnically cleansed by Zionist forces before the war even began.

Kingsley also absolves Israel of any wrong-doing during the current cease-fire.

“Several mini-crises aside,” he says, “it [the cease-fire] has gone roughly to plan,” completely ignoring the violations that Israel has committed. In fact, the Gaza Government Media Office (GMO) has documented over 350 instances of Israeli violations since the ceasefire began, including military incursions, gunfire, airstrikes, heightened surveillance, and the obstruction of humanitarian aid. According to the GMO, Israeli forces have continued to target Palestinians, resulting in numerous deaths and injuries despite the ceasefire. There have also been delays preventing displaced families from returning to northern Gaza and the failure to meet the agreed-upon levels of aid and emergency relief entering the enclave.

In conclusion, *The New York Times*’ coverage of Gaza is a case study in media bias, shaping public perception through selective language, omission of crucial historical context, and a dehumanization of Palestinian suffering. The podcast episode of *The Daily* analyzed in this article exemplifies these tactics, from its asymmetrical language around hostages and prisoners to its erasure of decades of Israeli occupation and violence. By presenting a distorted version of events, the *Times* plays a significant role in sustaining US political and military support for Israel, ultimately enabling further atrocities against Palestinians. As more people become aware of this systemic bias, it is imperative to challenge mainstream narratives and seek out independent and critical journalism to uncover the full truth of the situation in Gaza.

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