



# The Asserson Report

The Israel-Hamas war and the BBC

Executive Summary and Schedules

by Trevor Asserson

with RIME data science

**“The need for impartial and trusted news  
with no agenda has never been greater.”**

BBC Annual Report 2023/24

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### INTRODUCTION

The report into the BBC's coverage of the Israel-Hamas War (the **Report**) covers BBC reporting from October 7, 2023, to February 7, 2024 (the **Reporting Timeframe**). The Report assesses whether the BBC adhered to its legal obligations concerning accuracy and impartiality, as mandated by its Royal Charter, the Ofcom Broadcasting Code and the BBC Editorial Guidelines. The report concludes that the BBC has materially breached these obligations in its English and Arabic-language content. It makes recommendations to the BBC.

### ABOUT THE AUTHORS

The Report was written by Trevor Asserson, a well known litigation Solicitor, founder of Asserson Law Offices, a UK law firm of c. 75 lawyers together with a team of data scientists, led by Dr Haran Shani-Narkiss, working with other leading data scientists organised through RIME (Research for Impartial Media).

### SIGNIFICANCE

The findings of this report raise serious concerns about the BBC's role as a trusted news source. If the BBC cannot report on controversial stories in a balanced and impartial way, it potentially forfeits its right to the public funding of c. £4bn pa which it presently enjoys.

### DATA AND REPORTING PERIOD

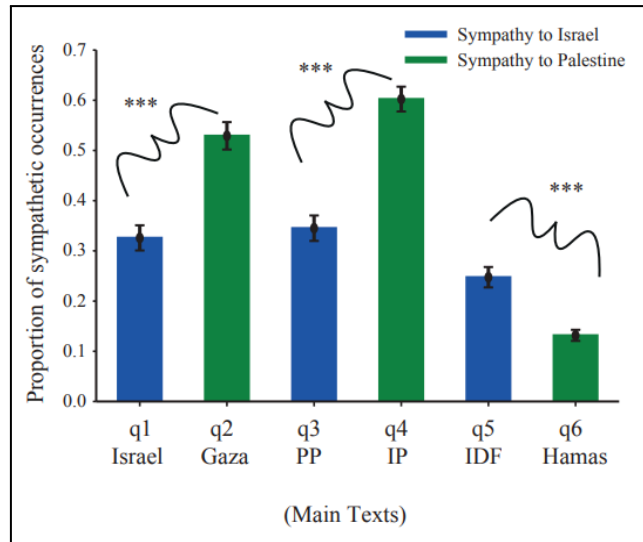
The dataset analysed in this report spans four months of BBC coverage in both English and Arabic, comprising over 9 million words. We sought to cover principal news output of the BBC on television, radio, website and podcasts in both English and Arabic for the period 7 October 2023 - to 7 February 2024.

### SYMPATHY ANALYSIS

The sympathy analysis was conducted using both human reviewers and AI to assess the tone and sympathy of the BBC's coverage. For web content, headlines and body text were separately analysed.

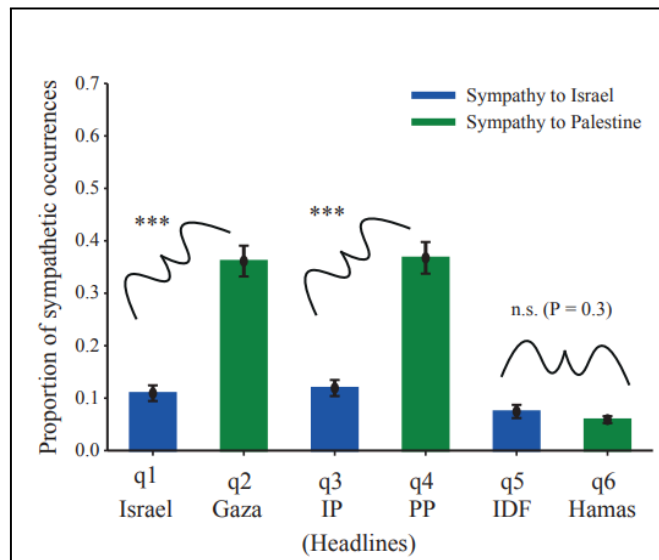
**BBC English Language Web Articles - sympathy for Palestinians is close to twice as high as for Israelis:**

**THE ISRAEL-HAMAS WAR AND THE BBC**



BBC English-Language Web Articles: sympathy for Palestinians was significantly higher than for Israelis. For example, even in the first few weeks following the October 7th attack, pro-Palestinian sentiment was nearly double that of pro-Israeli sentiment.

**BBC English Language Web Headlines - almost equal treatment of the IDF and Hamas:**

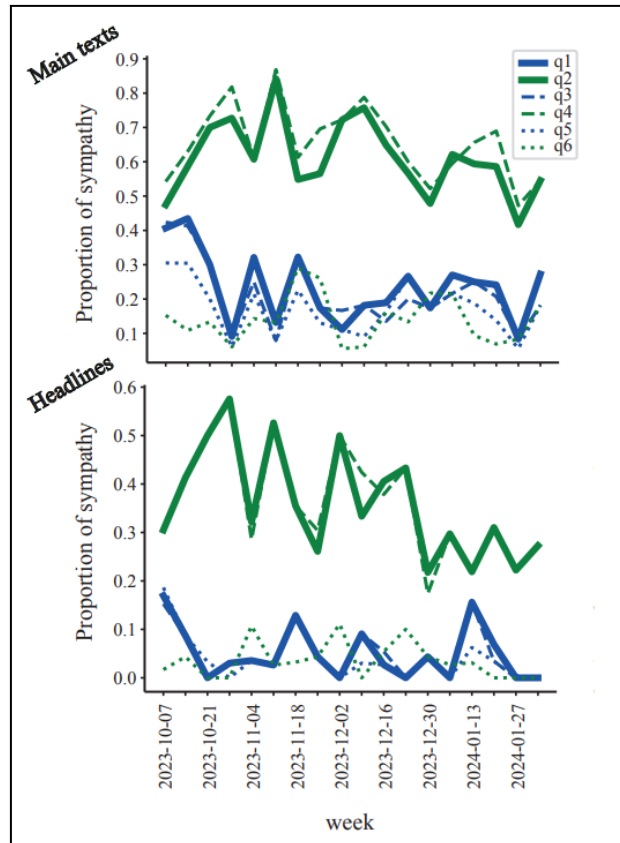


Note in the above graph, where only headlines were analysed, the almost identical treatment of Hamas – a proscribed terrorist organisation – with the IDF – an army subject to scrutiny by an external legal service and subject to other external checks and balances, including a free press.

## THE ISRAEL-HAMAS WAR AND THE BBC

The disparity between sympathy in the body of BBC English-Language Web Articles and that shown in their headlines indicates a further layer of bias in selection/drafting of headlines.

**BBC Arabic Web Articles and Headlines - imbalance in each and every time-point, even the week of the October 7 Hamas attack**

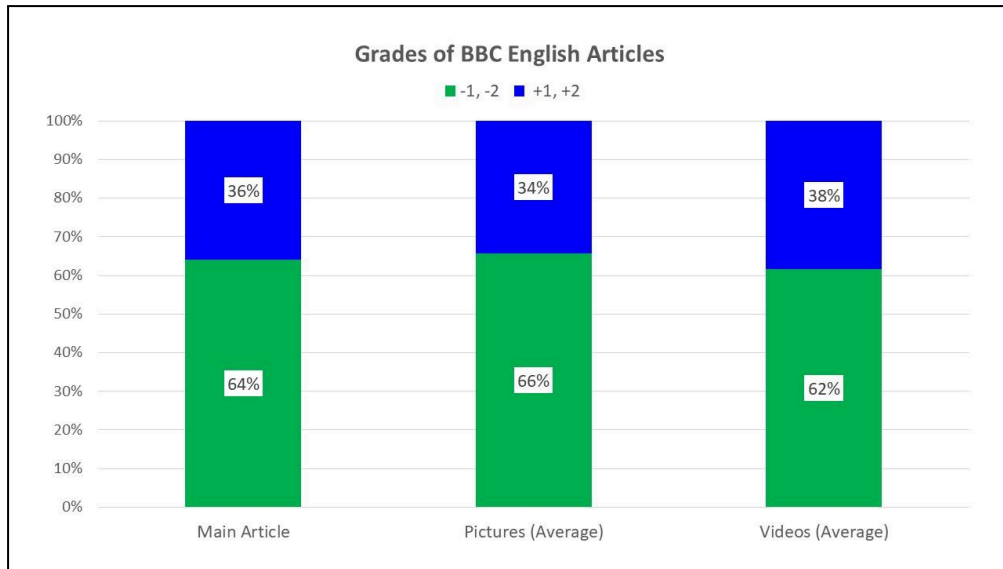


BBC Arabic Web Content: the bias in favour of Palestinians is far more marked than with English Language articles. Hamas and the IDF are treated as evoking similar levels of sympathy.

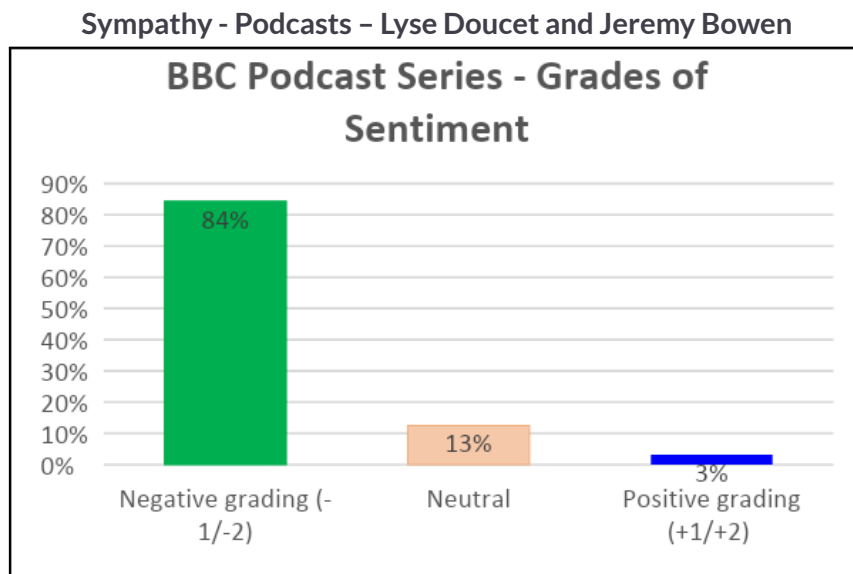
## HUMAN SYMPATHY ANALYSIS

### Sympathy - English Language Web Articles

The graph below shows a breakdown of the human analysis of the 1,529 English Language Web Articles:



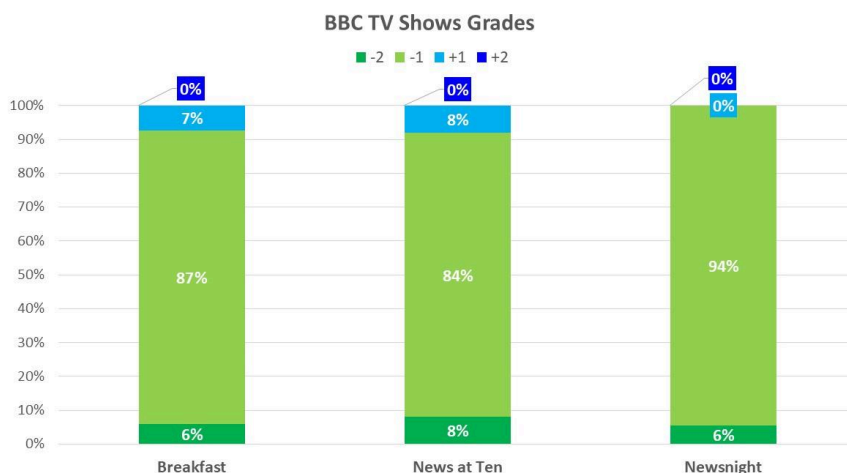
The imbalance favouring Palestinians was at a similar level throughout, ranging from - 62% - 66%. This was similar to the AI result.



The above graph shows our analysis of the BBC Podcast series hosted by Lyse Doucet and Jeremy Bowen, which aired from 7 October 2023 until 23 December 2023. We found a 90% of the non-neutral programmes displayed an anti-Israeli/pro-Palestinian bias.

### Sympathy - BBC Television

The graph below compares the sympathy imbalance across the three BBC TV news programmes analysed.



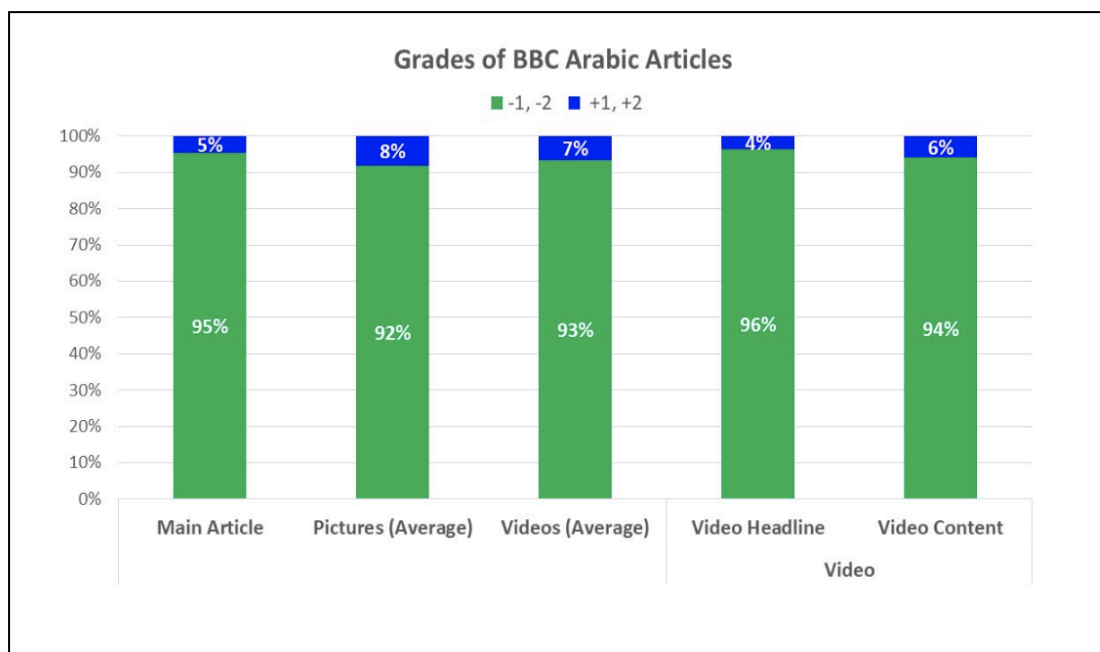
We identified a very marked pro-Palestinian/anti-Israeli imbalance across all principal television news programmes. Newsnight broadcast no programmes positive to Israel; Breakfast TV broadcast 93% and News at Ten 94% pro-Palestinian/anti-Israeli programmes.

The above table omits the c. 50% of programmes marked, by our reviewers as neutral.

### Sympathy – BBC Arabic Web Articles and videos content

The graph below shows a breakdown of the human analysis of BBC Arabic Web Articles and headlines.

The results show a material imbalance favouring Palestinians, across all categories analysed, by a factor of c. 92% to 96%.



### INTERVIEWEE ANALYSIS

The report analysed the selection and treatment of interviewees across BBC content during the Reporting Timeframe. The findings revealed:

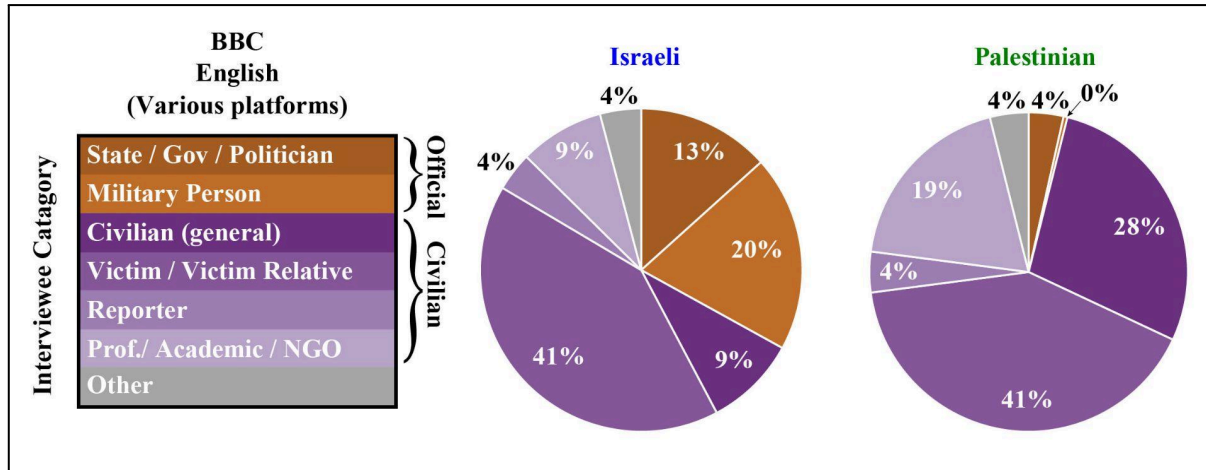
**Bias in Selection:** Palestinian-affiliated individuals were more frequently interviewed. In BBC Arabic content the ratio of Palestinian to Israeli interviewees was more than 2:1.

**Interviewees with Hamas connections or affiliations:** Many interviewees were either members of Hamas, or had posted on social media in support of terrorism against Jews, including celebrating 7 October 2023. These affiliations were rarely disclosed by the BBC.

**Civilian/Authority Figures:** There was a heavy bias in favour of interviewing civilians amongst Palestinians, with few government or army figures. Far more Israeli interviewees were government or army representatives.



## THE ISRAEL-HAMAS WAR AND THE BBC

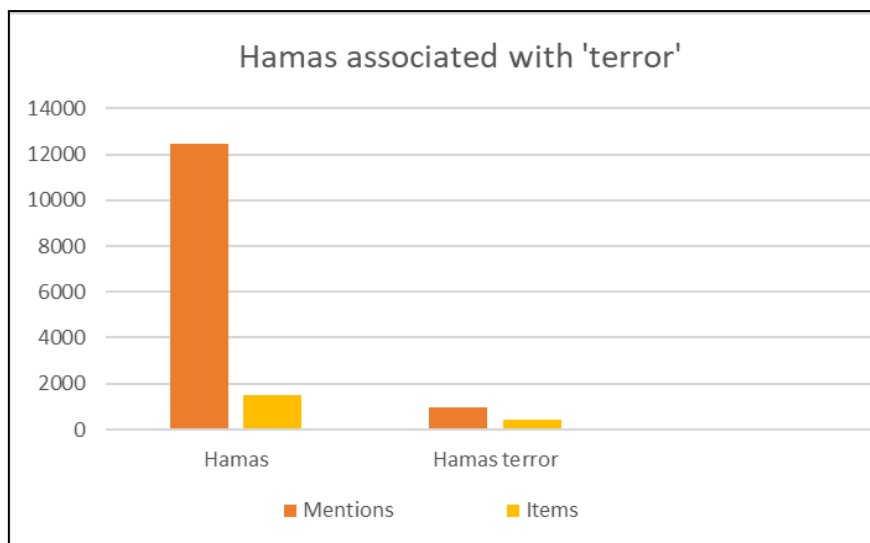


### OMISSIONS AND ACCURACY

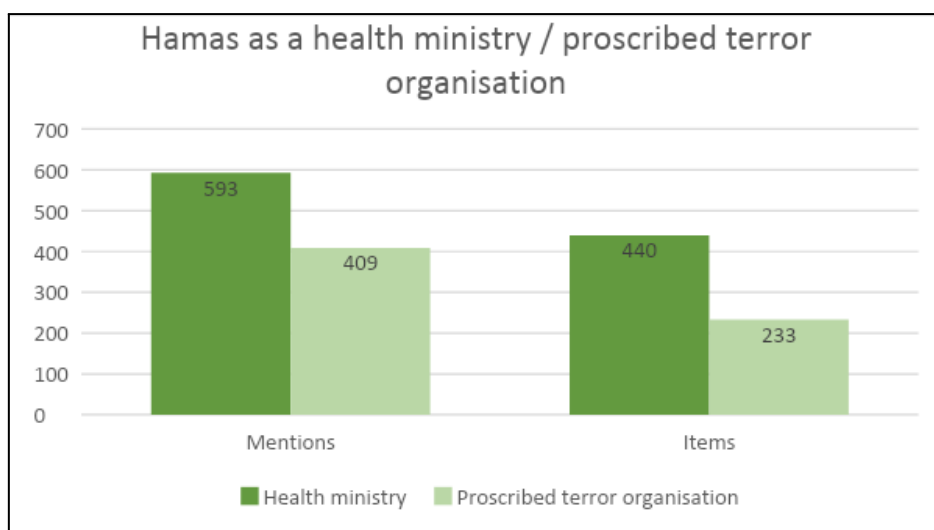
The BBC has an obligation to ensure that “no significant strand of thought is under-represented or omitted”(Guidelines s.4).

Whilst the BBC has editorial freedom as to how to frame the story, it is obliged not to omit or under report significant strands of thought. We detect numerous breaches. The omissions we have identified all tend to be stories which might evoke pro-Israeli or anti-Palestinian sympathy.

**Omission 1 – Hamas as a Terrorist Organisation** - Hamas is referred to as a terrorist organisation in approximately 7.7% of times when Hamas is mentioned, and in less than 30% of articles which deal with Hamas.



As the graph below shows, Hamas was more likely to be referred to as a Health Ministry than as a terrorist organisation.



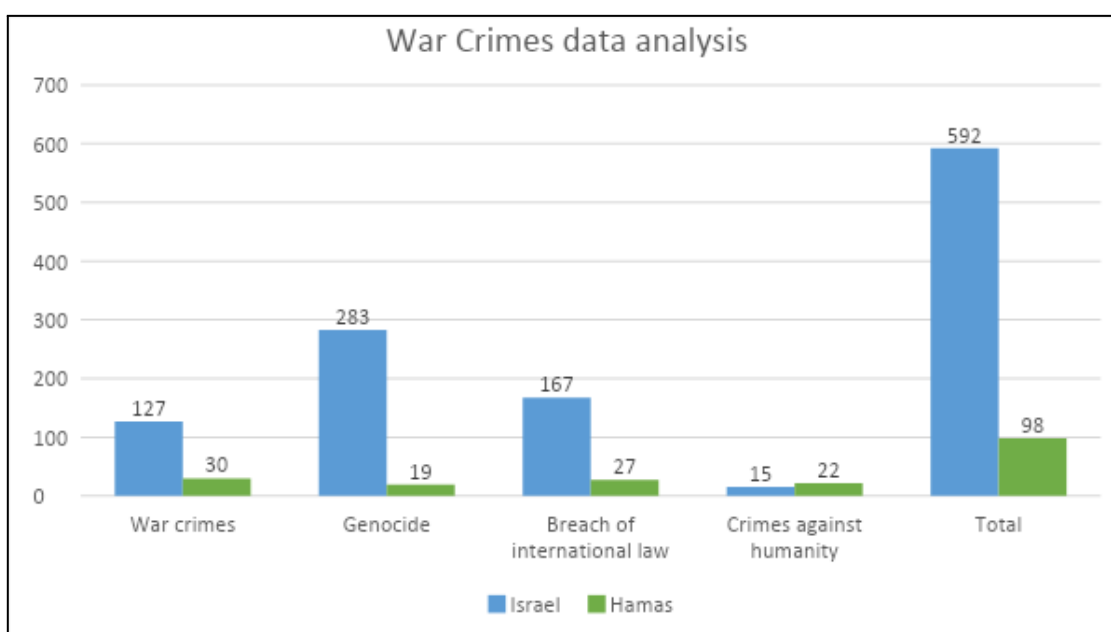
**Omission 2 – Failure to Mention Hamas as a Dictatorship** - There is plenty of evidence to demonstrate that Hamas rules Gaza as a violent dictatorship. This is a relevant part of the story, but goes almost entirely unmentioned.

**Omission 3 – Journalistic Freedom** - The BBC is obliged to tell its audience when reporting under restrictions. There is a lot of evidence that Hamas strictly controls journalism in Gaza. This is largely ignored. The BBC accuses Israel of press restrictions, even though Israel is praised for press freedom by independent organisations, e.g. Freedom House.

**Omission 4 - The Hamas Charter** - The fact that Hamas has a charter which calls for the destruction of Israel and the killing of Jews is barely mentioned. We show that it is a significant motivator for Hamas.

**Omission 5 – War Crimes** - With both sides being accused of war crimes and denying liability, we would expect the BBC to treat the allegations of war crimes with some balance. Yet we find that Israel is associated with war crimes in BBC reporting 592 times, and Hamas only 98 times – a material disparity of c. 6:1.

Various other omissions are highlighted in the Report including the failure of the Red Cross to get access to Hostages; failure to deal with the socio-economic context of the war; failure to explain the military challenges facing Israel and its military aims. These are all strands of thought we consider important for understanding the story, yet which the BBC omits or fails to give any material time.



### INACCURATE REPORTING

**BBC Corrections** - The BBC rarely admits error and thus rarely makes public corrections.

Some corrections were judged 'material.' These included incorrect statements which excited widespread anti-Israeli feeling, such as the incorrect story that Israel had executed many Palestinian civilians; or that Israel had killed 500 people by attacking Al Ahli hospital.

100% of the "material" errors corrected by the BBC were corrections/retractions of stories which were originally anti-Israeli.

**Accuracy in reporting casualty numbers** - There has been a most regrettably high death rate of civilians in the Israel-Hamas war. This has predictably and understandably raised emotional responses. The reporting of deaths is thus controversial.

The BBC has relied heavily on evidence from Hamas to report numbers of deaths in Gaza, without raising concerns about such a source, as required by the Guidelines.

We analyse and comment on published material, including from UKLFI, demonstrating that the figures are highly misleading and where the BBC breaches its Guidelines in the manner of reporting them.

**Obscure and Ambiguous Language** - Our data science team demonstrated that obscure and ambiguous language resulted in obscuring the reporting of Israeli deaths, but not of Palestinian deaths.

The difference between the language used regarding Palestinian deaths as compared to Israeli deaths indicates conscious or subconscious bias.

**BBC Arabic – Failure to Mention Sexual Offences** - The data science team noted that sexual assaults were barely ever mentioned in BBC Arabic:

### JOURNALIST PERSONAL OPINIONS

BBC Journalists are meant to 'leave their personal opinions at the door' and not to express personal opinions on air or elsewhere. We looked at Jeremy Bowen, probably one of the BBC's most senior and influential Middle East journalists.

We analysed his recent book, the Making of the Modern Middle East, and all of his work in the dataset for this Report. We selected a number of quotations which are representative of his views generally.

He is found frequently to express his personal opinion, in breach of the Guidelines. He is found to express strong negative views about Israel and strong positive views about Palestinians, including Hamas. For example:

*"this is the thing about this military operation [of] the Israelis...it's going to be very nasty."*  
(Jeremy Bowen, 'The Conflict: Israel-Gaza. Confusion at the Rafah Crossing' [Podcast], BBC, 16 October 2023)

Bowen's 7 October BBC article fails to report unambiguously that Hamas killed any Israelis and omits any mention of the brutality of the Hamas attack. He does dwell on the suffering caused to Palestinians, even on 7 October.

The Hamas attack is described in almost glowing terms:

*“Hamas blindsides Israel... the most ambitious operation Hamas has ever launched....Serious cross-border attack ... The complexity of the Hamas operation ... No one expected Hamas to conceive and meticulously plan such a complex and coordinated operation out of Gaza..... Israeli intelligence was blindsided by the Hamas operation.” (Jeremy Bowen, ‘Hamas blindsides Israel with most serious attack in a generation’, BBC News, 7 October 2023)*

We found that this initial response to October 7 set the tone for his journalism for the BBC during the Reporting Timeframe.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Overall Conclusions:

The BBC was found to have materially breached its obligations for due impartiality and accuracy in its portrayal of the Israel-Hamas War.

By almost every vector the BBC Arabic coverage was far more biased in favour of Palestinians. An AI headline of analysis of BBC Arabic placed BBC close to Al Jazeera on a global scale.

### Recommendations:

**Exploding Myths:** BBC Management must abandon the myth that its journalists can or do ‘leave their personal opinions at the door’. Unless and until BBC management, including editors and journalists, admit there is a problem and resolve to get a grip, solutions will elude them.

**Thematic Review:** The BBC should conduct a Thematic Review into its coverage of the Israel-Hamas war and the Middle East generally, as recommended by the 2021 Serota Review, concentrating on identifying breaches of its Editorial Guidelines in controversial matters, to prevent biased reporting in the future.

**Monitoring and Oversight:** Our research reveals that no proper management tools exist within the BBC to ensure compliance with its obligations. We recommend that:

- a. the BBC implement internal systems to monitor and track content for impartiality;
- b. the BBC set targets including measurable key performance indicators (KPIs) for impartiality and accuracy;

- c. the BBC monitor achievement of KPIs and deal effectively with non-compliance.

**Editorial Complaints Unit (ECU):** We find the ECU unfit for purpose, thus denying BBC management, editors and journalists useful feedback. It needs to be rendered truly independent of the Director General, as editor in chief, and be overhauled to become an effective organisation.

### FINAL REMARKS

The BBC receives c £4bn pa from the British public, which trusts it to provide accurate, fair, balanced and impartial news. Constant failure will and should forfeit the trust which has been placed in the BBC to comply with its own obligations. Our findings underscore the need for immediate reforms within the BBC to restore public trust and ensure that its reporting meets the high standards of journalism which the BBC sets for itself, but which it consistently fails to achieve.

TREVOR ASSERSON

SEPTEMBER 2024

# SCHEDULES

## Schedule 1 - List of Contributors

Name	Contribution	Further Information
Anonymous	<i>Senior Reviewer</i>	Former Senior Partner of a major UK law firm.
Anonymous	<i>Senior Reviewer</i>	Retired solicitor
Anonymous	<i>Senior Reviewer</i>	Former Barrister and Chief Legal Adviser in Media & Advertising organisations.
Itamar Aharoni	<i>RIMe contributor</i>	Data Science
Itay Alon	<i>RIMe contributor</i>	Data Science
Jane Altshuler	<i>Initial Reviewer</i>	Lawyer
J Thom	<i>Initial Reviewer</i>	Lawyer
Freddie Assor	<i>Research analyst</i>	Legal Intern
George Balint	<i>Research analyst</i>	Legal Intern
Dr. Brian Berenblut	<i>Senior Reviewer</i>	PhD physicist with interests in technology and business innovation.
Liel Binyamin	<i>RIMe contributor</i>	Data Science
Blueskai	Supplied item transcripts	Blueskai is a pioneering generative AI company that transforms businesses with bespoke AI solutions <a href="https://www.blueskai.com/">https://www.blueskai.com/</a>
Clive Boxer	<i>Senior Reviewer</i>	Retired solicitor. Founder and senior partner of a leading litigation law firm; subsequently a consultant to one of the largest international law firms in the world.
CAMERA UK and CAMERA Arabic	Research	Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting and Analysis - <a href="http://www.camera-uk.org">www.camera-uk.org</a>

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Name	Contribution	Further Information
Max Cohen	<i>RIMe contributor</i>	Data Science
David Collier	<i>Research</i>	MSc ethics, Investigative journalist <a href="http://www.david-collier.com">www.david-collier.com</a>
Eliana Drescher	<i>Research analyst and AI coordinator</i>	Law student
Jonathan Easton	<i>Initial Reviewer</i>	Attorney
Dr Ariel Goldstein	<i>RIMe member</i>	Data Science
Sara Hadas	<i>RIMe contributor</i>	Research Analyst
Nir Hamou	<i>RIMe contributor</i>	Data Science
Dr Reut Harari Misgav	<i>RIMe member</i>	Data Science
Khaled Hassan	<i>RIMe member</i>	Data Science
Jade Jachir	<i>Research Analyst</i>	Legal Intern
Michael Kan-Tor	<i>RIMe contributor</i>	Data Scientist
Milka Kaplan	<i>RIMe contributor</i>	Data Scientist
Dr Renana Keydar	<i>RIMe contributor</i>	Data Scientist
Gye Kuglovich	<i>RIMe contributor</i>	Data Scientist
Oded Maor Landaw	<i>RIMe contributor</i>	Data Scientist
Chen Laster	<i>RIMe contributor</i>	Data Scientist
Noa Lubin	<i>RIMe contributor</i>	Data Scientist
Nitzan Luxembourg	<i>RIMe contributor</i>	Data Scientist
Tom Marzea	<i>RIMe contributor</i>	Data Scientist
Roni Matzkin	<i>RIMe contributor</i>	Data Scientist
Guy Niran	<i>RIMe contributor</i>	Data Scientist



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Name	Contribution	Further Information
Simon Olswang	<i>Senior Reviewer</i>	Founder and former Senior Partner of a leading UK law firm
Gili Rolland	<i>RIMe contributor</i>	Data Scientist
Eitan Rothenberg	<i>RIMe contributor</i>	Data Scientist
Elliot Sacks	<i>Senior Reviewer</i>	Retired solicitor who spent several years working at one of the UK's top law firms, and subsequently served for many years as a partner in Israel's leading law firm
Hadar Sela	<i>Research</i>	Co-editor at CAMERA UK
Jonathan Siegel	<i>Data Analyst</i>	
Sapir Shapira	<i>RIMe contributor</i>	Data Scientist
Michael Shatzkes	<i>Research analyst</i>	
Dr Robin Stamler	<i>Senior Reviewer</i>	
Yakov Tajtelbaum	<i>Software Engineer</i>	Designed and developed bespoke software used in data collection and analysis. <a href="mailto:yakovtajtelbaum@gmail.com">yakovtajtelbaum@gmail.com</a>
Tony Thwaites	<i>Senior Reviewer</i>	
Dr Oren Tsur	<i>RIMe member</i>	Data Scientist
Jonathan Turner	<i>Report on Casualty Figures</i>	UKFLI <a href="https://www.uklfi.com/">https://www.uklfi.com/</a>
Dr Jonatan Zalcman	<i>RIMe contributor</i>	Data Scientist

## Schedule 2 – Establishing the Dataset

The following data forms the Dataset for the studies carried out in the Report.

### **BBC English Website**

All articles on BBC website (including short video pieces and excluding BBC Live page), relevant to Israel-Palestine for 07.10.2023 to 07.02.2024.

'Relevant' for these purposes being defined as:

1. Coverage that appears on BBC News page 'Israel-Gaza war'; and
2. Coverage on BBC website that contained the following terms:
  1. Israel\* (to cover Israel, Israeli, etc.)
  2. IDF
  3. Gaza
  4. Hamas
  5. Palestin\* (to cover Palestine, Palestinian, etc.)
  6. Antisemi\* (to cover antisemitism, anti-Semitic, etc.)

The second criterion for identifying 'relevant' coverage was included because we reviewed the BBC website and noted that many items that appeared prima facie relevant were not appearing on the 'Israel-Gaza war' page. The six key words were chosen because they commonly appeared in prima facie relevant coverage. We used key words to provide an objective test for 'relevancy' that did not require human judgement calls on the point which could have resulted in an inaccurate/'cherry-picked' data set for articles.

### **Podcast – Bowen and Doucet**

Lyse Doucet and Jeremy Bowen BBC podcast: 07.10.23 to 20.12.23 (podcast ended so nothing after 20.12.23)

- 33 episodes (original audio and transcripts)

### **Radio – Today program**

BBC Today Program: 14.11.23 to 07.02.24 (we were unable to get the recordings for pre 14.11.23)

- 73 episodes (original audio and transcripts)

### **TV - Breakfast**

BBC Breakfast: 07.10.23 to 07.02.24

- 124 episodes (original video and transcripts)

### TV - News at Ten

BBC News at Ten: 07.10.23 to 07.02.24

- 86 episodes (original video and transcripts)

### TV - Newsnight

BBC Newsnight: 07.10.23 to 07.02.24

- 77 episodes (original video and transcripts)

### BBC Arabic Website - Articles

Articles from BBC Arabic website relevant to Israel-Palestine for 07.10.23 to 07.02.24.

'Relevant' for these purposes being defined as:

1. Written coverage on BBC Arabic website that contained the following terms (in Arabic) in the articles' title/text:
  1. Israel\* (to cover Israel, Israeli, etc.)
  2. IDF
  3. Gaza
  4. Hamas
  5. Palestin\* (to cover Palestine, Palestinian, etc.)
  6. Antisemi\* (to cover antisemitism, anti-Semitic, etc.)

This list was initially compiled for us by RIME.. We then refined the list removing incorrectly included video entries or mistakenly included entries that did not fit our definition of 'relevant' above.

The list originally contained ChatGPT translations. We checked the ChatGPT translations against the original articles as they appeared on the website - we compared the ChatGPT translations against the original Arabic text (assisted by Arabic proficient team members) and against the automatically generated Google translated versions. We found that the ChatGPT translations provided by RIME were on average incomplete (i.e. sections of the articles' text was missing) and inaccurate (they appeared to take interpretive licence). The Google Translate option appeared to be a more complete and more accurate direct translation than that by ChatGPT and we therefore determined that we would only use the version of the text translated by Google for the articles in our Arabic articles data set.

### BBC Arabic Website - Video

Videos from the BBC Arabic website relevant to Israel-Palestine for 07.10.23 to 07.02.24.

'Relevant' for these purposes defined as:

1. Coverage on BBC Arabic website that contained the following terms in the Google translated version of the video's title/caption/text summary (immediately below the video):
  1. Israel\* (to cover Israel, Israeli, etc.)
  2. IDF
  3. Gaza
  4. Hamas
  5. Palestin\* (to cover Palestine, Palestinian, etc.)
  6. Antisemi\* (to cover antisemitism, anti-Semitic, etc.)

We also have translations of the audio from the videos and have saved transcripts of the translated audio. The translation tool used was not always able to completely translate the relevant audio in the Arabic videos, so transcripts are not always complete and we do not have transcripts for every Arabic video in our Dataset. In cases where the translation tool did not produce a complete transcript or where we do not have a transcript, we used online translation tools to understand the audio.

## Schedule 3 – Note on the BBC Complaints Framework

There are five types of complaint delineated in the Complaints Procedure. The most relevant to this Report is the Editorial Complaint, which deals with alleged breaches of duties, inter alia of accuracy or impartiality.<sup>1</sup>

The essentials of the procedure mapped out in the Complaints Framework and Procedures are as follows.<sup>2</sup>

1. “All editorial complaints should be made to BBC Audience Services”
2. “The BBC aims to reply within 10 working days”
3. “If you are dissatisfied with the reply at Stage 1a, please write back to BBC Audience Services”
4. “The BBC aims to reply within 20 working days”

No information is given as to who anyone is within “BBC Audience Services”; how they are selected; what steps they take to analyse the complaint; nor what principles they apply in reaching their decision.

In the event of a further appeal, complaints are then taken to the Executive Complaints Unit (ECU). Again, no information is given as to who comprises the ECU and how it reaches its decisions. This gives little confidence that fresh eyes will see the complaint.

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<sup>1</sup> “Editorial Complaint that a particular item broadcast or published on the BBC’s services has fallen below the standards expressed in the BBC’s Editorial Guidelines [BBC Complaints Framework s. 2]”

<sup>2</sup> BBC Complaints Framework and Procedures’, BBC, June 2020.

[https://www.bbc.co.uk/contact/sites/default/files/2020-06/BBC\\_Complaints\\_Framework.pdf](https://www.bbc.co.uk/contact/sites/default/files/2020-06/BBC_Complaints_Framework.pdf), last accessed 1 September 2024’

### i. Rules of Natural Justice

The rules of natural justice do not enjoy a single definition. They constitute a shorthand for “a fair judicial process.” Some examples are quoted below.<sup>3</sup> Two basic principles appear in almost every definition:

1. The Judge must be independent; and
2. A person must have a chance to know and answer the case against them.

The BBC fails both of these tests.

#### a) No Independent Judges

The BBC Complaints Procedure is entirely operated by anonymous BBC employees, whose identity is concealed from the public behind the label of “BBC Audience Services”. It is a basic feature of any fair system that one should not be a judge in one’s own case. Yet the BBC is precisely that, marking its own homework. What we do know is that the ECU is ultimately answerable to the Director-General of the BBC, who is the Editor-in-Chief. Thus the ECU lacks independence.

#### b) No knowledge of the case against, or option to answer

The BBC boasts, both on its website<sup>4</sup> and in its responses to complaints, that it consults with “producers and managers” when examining a complaint. These are all people who can be expected to defend their own work, which is the subject of the complaint.

But the complainant has no opportunity to hear what questions are put to those people; to know how they replied, or to probe the credibility of those replies. They

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<sup>3</sup> “Natural justice comprises two basic rules. First, that no man is to be a judge in his own cause; and second, that no man is to be condemned unheard. These rules are concerned with the manner in which the decision is taken (that is, procedural fairness) rather than with whether or not the decision is substantively correct.” LexisNexis.

“Natural justice and fairness require that the person complained against:

- a. shall be judged by a person who is both independent and impartial and who hears all sides of the argument;
- b. shall have fair notice of the case being made against him or her; and
- c. shall have a fair opportunity to answer to the complaint.” House of Lords, Erskine May <https://erskinemay.parliament.uk/section/4549/procedural-fairness>.

<sup>4</sup> ‘How we handle your complaint’, BBC. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/contact/how-we-handle-your-complaint>

have no opportunity to know the arguments against their complaint, or to deal with them.

### ii. Complaints are Almost Always Rejected

The BBC boasts, of the Complaints Procedure, that *“We greatly value this feedback about our work and use it to help make our services better.”* [ ]

In reality few complaints are accepted. In the five-year period between 2018 and 2022, there were 1.7 million complaints received by the BBC. Ofcom research in 2022 found that 39% of complaints were about bias. Extrapolating this number, over 5 years there were c.663,000 individual complaints about bias. Of these, just 25 were upheld<sup>5</sup>, a tiny percentage. A complaint about bias or accuracy is close to pointless.

By having a defective complaints process the BBC is denying itself a feedback loop that might assist it to identify and possibly even address defects. By rejecting almost all complaints, the BBC Complaints Procedure provides a closed loop echo chamber providing self-affirmation and deafness to criticism. This encourages complacency about its own shortcomings.<sup>6</sup>

### iii. What the Complaints Process is Intended to Achieve

*“We aim to resolve complaints about the BBC fairly, quickly and satisfactorily.”*<sup>7</sup>

The BBC Guidelines correctly state that it is *“required by the BBC Charter to have a complaints framework that provides “transparent, accessible, effective, timely and proportionate methods”*<sup>8</sup>

In fact the complaints procedures are neither transparent, effective nor satisfactory, for the reasons set out above.

In the Complaints Framework the BBC declares that the purpose of the Complaints procedures is to make *“sure that the BBC is meeting its obligations and fixing problems.”*<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> ‘BBC Upheld just 25 claims of bias in five years’, *The Telegraph*, 5 May 2023. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2023/06/05/bbc-coimplaints-bias-25-upheld-out-of-17m-report/>, last accessed 1 September 2024

<sup>6</sup> BBC Complaints Framework and Procedures’, BBC, June 2020. [https://www.bbc.co.uk/contact/sites/default/files/2020-06/BBC\\_Complaints\\_Framework.pdf](https://www.bbc.co.uk/contact/sites/default/files/2020-06/BBC_Complaints_Framework.pdf), last accessed 1 September 2024

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

This Report argues that the BBC is not meeting its obligations, or fixing its problems. Insofar as the Complaints Procedure is intended to assist the BBC in achieving those aims, the Complaints Procedure is failing.

#### iv. Concluding Remarks

The BBC Complaints Procedure is opaque, is controlled by the BBC Editor-in-Chief, is in breach of the rules of natural justice, and is no longer fit for purpose.

The BBC needs a compliance procedure which sits entirely outside the BBC and is run by truly independent people with proven track records for intelligent and impartial public service.



## Schedule 4 – Human Reviewer Guidance and Findings

### i. Senior Reviewers

As one of the precautions taken in our Human Sympathy analysis, a randomly selected sample amounting to approximately one in five of our Initial Reviewers' gradings were analysed and moderated by 'Senior Reviewers'. Our Senior Reviewers are identified in Schedule 1, and are primarily composed of leading English lawyers.

### ii. Guidance to Reviewers

The following guidance, produced by Trevor Asserson, was provided to Initial Reviewers carrying out the first- and second-line reviews, as well as to Senior Reviewers for use in their review. The guidance was intended to highlight the awareness of the reviewers to areas of potential relevance.

#### Introduction

*The following table contains potential categories for analysis of the BBC Material which we have collated.*

*We understand that you will analyse material in English and Arabic which constitutes the entirety of BBC coverage from the period 7 October 2023 until the date shortly before your carrying out your analysis.*

#### Notes

*We consider that words or images can be used to promote or to reduce empathy for one party to a conflict.*

*In the below table (Figure 1), we use "pro Palestinian" as shorthand for words or images which either promote empathy for Palestinians or which reduce empathy for Israelis.*

*We use "pro-Israel" as shorthand for words or images which either promote empathy for Israelis or which reduce empathy for Palestinians.*

*We recognise that many words and images will not clearly evoke or reduce empathy for either side to the conflict and might be judged neutral.*

*Members of Hamas will generally be associated with Palestinians, although many Palestinians will not be members of Hamas. We assume that words or images which reduce empathy for Hamas should be considered pro Israel for the purpose of this study, unless the context makes that clearly inappropriate. Words or images which increase empathy for Hamas should be classified as pro Palestinian, again unless the context makes that clearly inappropriate.*

*Not all Israelis are Jewish, and not all Jews are Israeli. Nevertheless, in many cases it will be legitimate to read the words 'Jew' or 'Jewish' as a form or shorthand for 'Israeli', and should be so read, where the context makes that clearly appropriate.*

**Figure 1<sup>10</sup>.**

<b>Category of Analysis</b>	<b>Details</b>
<b>Omissions</b>	Identify stories that should be covered but which are largely/completely ignored. For instance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reliability of Hamas evidence/Reliability of Israeli evidence</li> <li>Freedom of journalists in Gaza/in Israel</li> <li>Corruption of Hamas/of Israeli government</li> <li>Relevant conduct of parties to the conflict – e.g.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Deliberately targeting/or not targeting civilians;</li> <li>b. Mis-fired missiles eg Israelis hitting the 'wrong' targets; Hamas rockets hitting Gaza;</li> <li>c. Using civilians as human shields; laws of war regarding human shields;</li> <li>d. Enabling or assisting or/blocking civilians from leaving targeted areas;</li> <li>e. UN supplies and humanitarian aid – reasons for refusing/granting entry; actual use of;</li> <li>f. Adherence to law of war relating to 'protected' buildings such as hospitals, schools, mosques;</li> <li>g. Involvement/or not/of legal advice on military operational decisions;</li> <li>h. Care by each party of citizens/combatants of the other party.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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<sup>10</sup> Transcribed from a circulated PDF.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Civilian evacuation from combat zones in Israel/in Gaza</li> <li>j. Position of Arab Israelis in Israeli society and their response to the war</li> </ul> <p>Frequency of reporting Israeli casualties / Palestinian casualties</p>
<b>Inaccuracy</b>	Reporting incorrect information – e.g. Al Ahli blast, Al Shifa operation, etc.
<b>Descriptive Wording and Adjectives</b>	Stories can be emphasised/made more emotive/diminished through the choice of wording or the inclusion of adjectives. E.g. “horrific”, “massive”, “cruel”, “tragic”, etc. We need to see whether there is a greater use of adjectives and/or emotive phrasing in relation to stories about Gaza and/or those describing Israel.
<b>Health Warnings</b>	<p>Health warnings are literary devices used to increase or decrease the reader’s belief in a report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Inverted commas around the words cited from a party might be a health warning that the BBC does not consider the words to be reliable or true. The context needs to be checked on each occasion to determine whether the inverted commas simply indicate a quote or act as a health warning.</li> <li>b. Description of source. Words such as “reported”, “alleges” and “claims” when used in relation to statements from a side or official representing a side constitute a health warning that the BBC does not consider the words to be reliable or true.</li> <li>c. Where in the sentence the BBC places attribution for statements or information they cite can imply greater or lesser credibility to the source. e.g: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. “[STATEMENT], Palestinian officials say” – this places the statement first implying it is credible as the source is placed at the end as simple attribution.</li> <li>ii. “Palestinian officials say [STATEMENT]” – this places the source first, highlighting it, implying the statement is not necessarily credible and ensuring the identity of the source is in the reader’s mind before they read the statement. If the word “say” is</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	substituted with a 'health warning' word such as those in point (b) above, the effect of the positioning is further accentuated.
<b>Personal Views</b>	When a reporter expresses personal views on a topic, provides their personal opinion, or offers non-objective analysis of an issue based on their personal views or speculation, this can indicate bias and impact the accuracy of their reporting.
<b>Interviewee Selection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Number of Interviewees. How many pro-Palestinian / pro-Israeli individuals or organisational representatives does the BBC interview and provide quotes from?</li> <li>b. Number of minutes/words per interviewee. How many minutes of TV/radio/podcast time or words in written coverage do pro-Palestinian / pro-Israeli interviewees get?</li> <li>c. Identity of Interviewees. Who the BBC chooses to interview – i.e. what are the known views of the chosen interviewees – e.g. posts on social media, publications, known associations, etc.</li> <li>d. Description of Interviewees. How does the BBC describe the chosen interviewees and, in particular, is there a disparity between the way they are described and their actual views as established by posts on social media, publications, known associations, etc?</li> <li>e. Categorisation of Interviewees. Is there a balance between the categories of interviewees on both sides of the conflict – e.g. similar number of civilians, politicians, military, etc?</li> </ul>
<b>Interruptions (audio and video)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Interruptions - quantum. Number of interruptions per minute by BBC journalists of interviewees for pro-Palestinian / pro-Israeli speakers.</li> <li>b. Interruptions - subject matter. Are interruptions more or less common when certain topics are explored? If so, which topics get more/less interruptions.</li> </ul>
<b>Images</b>	<p>Pictures in article, or video in TV coverage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Images - quantum. How many pro-Palestinian / pro-Israeli images are there?</li> <li>b. Images - subject matter. Can we quantify the subject matter of "pro-Palestinian" / "pro-Israeli" images – e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. human suffering/casualties;</li> <li>2. destruction of buildings/infrastructure;</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<p>3. forceful military personnel/equipment;</p> <p>4. domestic/rural scenes;</p> <p>5. other?</p>
<b>Human interest articles/reports</b>	Pro Palestinian or Pro-Israel or mixed. Consider quantity in number of articles/reports and in minutes/words.
<b>Leadership strategy</b>	<p>a. Quantum by time/words. What is the quantum of explanation of leadership strategy which is pro-Palestinian / pro-Israel.</p> <p>b. Quality of Explanation. To what extent is the explanation of leadership strategy treated in a sympathetic or unsympathetic / contemptuous manner.</p>
<b>Headlines</b>	<p>Headlines are often the only thing readers of the BBC read. The body of an article is often not read fully or carefully. Headlines also form push notifications from the BBC and are used for BBC social media updates.</p> <p>To what extent can we run a separate search re all of the above categories aimed at only the headlines of articles and none of the other text. If so, is there a disparity between the results of the headline analysis as opposed to the results of the full text analysis.</p>
<b>International Law</b>	References to / warnings regarding international laws of war – when and how are these used?

All reviewers were asked to grade articles accordingly in line with the categories of analysis.

*Strongly pro-Israel/anti Palestinian* +2

*Pro-Israel/anti Palestinian* +1

*Balanced* 0

*Anti-Israel/pro Palestinian* -1

*Strongly anti-Israel/pro Palestinian* -2

*(Note that the +/- 2 should be reserved for 'extreme' examples.)*

Senior Reviewers were given further instructions.

*“The aim here is not to substitute your views for the views of the first line reviewer. Rather, we are looking for you to say where you disagree materially with the first line reviewer decisions, and to provide brief reasoning.”*

iii. Initial Reviewer Findings (First-line)

A systematic sample of our Initial Reviewers’ comments and gradings is set out below. Gradings for the 2,616 media items in our Dataset were ordered by item date (earliest to latest), and then by content type (in alphabetical order). We have set our sample size at half of one percent, selecting every 200th media item with comments from our first-line review, for a total of 13 media items.

Item 200/2616

061223	What are the most prominent incidents targeting ships in Bab al-Mandab and the Gulf? <a href="https://www.bbc.com/arabic/articles/c3g26q139zro">https://www.bbc.com/arabic/articles/c3g26q139zro</a>	
	Picture 1: 0	Photographs of Palestinian flags on a boat captured by the Houthis with the caption: The Houthis say that the detention of the ship in Bab al-Mandab comes because of the war on Gaza
	Main article: 0	<p>The article concerns Houthi attacks on commercial ships in the Red Sea. It discusses the importance of the passage for international trade, and reports on attacks against various ships. It reports on Houthi rationalisations for the attack (“The spokesman, Brigadier General Yahya Saree, added that the attacks "came in response to the demands of the Yemeni people and the calls of Islamic countries to stand by the Palestinian people, in conjunction with the war on Gaza.”) and reports of ships being attacked. The article makes attempts to link the attacks to Israeli-owned ships, but also notes that the Houthis detained shipping crews who were not Israeli. The article contains a number of justifications of the attacks published by Houthi representatives and several statements condemning their actions. The responses published are less emotive than the justifications published by the Houthis.</p> <p>The article recounts former Houthi attempts to commandeer ships prior to the aftermath of October 7.</p> <p><b>Explanation of Grade:</b> Overall, the article presents the Houthi’s actions in fairly neutral terms, including comments from opponents of the Houthi’s actions such as the US and Saudi Arabia. The war in Gaza is not the main focus of the article.</p>

Item 400/2616

240205	Saudi Arabia appoints first ambassador to Damascus after 12 years of embassy closure <a href="https://www.bbc.com/arabic/articles/cxer084zzrmo">https://www.bbc.com/arabic/articles/cxer084zzrmo</a>
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## THE ISRAEL-HAMAS WAR AND THE BBC

	Picture: 0	Picture of Saudi-Syrian flags
	Main article: 0	Saudi appointment of ambassador to Syria; history of and current relations between the countries

### Item 600/2616

<b>231113</b>	Suella Braverman. The dismissal of the British Home Secretary, who described a pro-Palestinian demonstration as "Messy" <a href="https://www.bbc.com/arabic/tv-and-radio-67409850">https://www.bbc.com/arabic/tv-and-radio-67409850</a>	
	Video content: -1	<b>Explanation of Grade:</b>  News report celebrating Suella Braverman's removal from her post as Home Secretary. This was the culmination of events surrounding her criticism of the pro-Palestinian protests and the government's allowing the hate rallies. After the outbreak of violence and attacks on police, London Mayor Sadiq Khan blamed Home Secretary Suella Braverman for motivating the far right, saying the scenes of unrest at the memorial were a direct result of the Home Secretary's words, and the task of policing had become more difficult. In short, an anti-Suella Braverman news report.

### Item 800/2616

<b>240112</b>	The Gaza War: The story of a Palestinian neurosurgeon who lives and works in the same hospital <a href="https://www.bbc.com/arabic/articles/c4nyyggr1r3o">https://www.bbc.com/arabic/articles/c4nyyggr1r3o</a>	
	Video content: -1	An image of a surgeon that lives and works at the same place – a situation impossible to imagine. A young woman speaking to the camera about her experience as a doctor in Gaza, she is filmed while treating patients in the hospital. She was saying that the situation is very difficult as she is forced to work around the clock, sometimes while she is with her young child.  <b>Explanation of Grade:</b> a very difficult situation in Gaza which increases sympathy with the Palestinians.

### Item 1000/2616

<b>231012</b>	Land, air and sea: Video analysis shows how Hamas coordinated huge Israel attack <a href="https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-middle-east-67096316">https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-middle-east-67096316</a>	
	Picture:	<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> NB: This entry was originally incorrectly labelled as containing a picture, in addition to a video - as reflected in the entry.

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	Video: 0	<p>Caption: Israel is still reeling from Saturday’s attack, when members of Palestinian militant group, Hamas - designated as a terrorist group by countries including the UK - infiltrated the country from Gaza. But how did they manage to carry out such a brazen operation? The BBC's security correspondent Gordon Corera looks at Hamas' own videos, to find out what it tells us about the shock attack.</p> <p>Watch: The BBC’s Gordon Corera examines what Hamas footage tells us about its coordinated attack on Israel</p>
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### Item 1200/2616

231020	Saudi prince slams Hamas, Israel and the West <a href="https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-67177684">https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-67177684</a>	
	Picture 1: 0	Photo of Prince Turki al-Faisal who has publicly condemned both Hamas and Israel for attacking civilians
	Main article: 0	Saudi Price Turki al Faisal publicly condemned both Hamas and Israel for attacking civilians. Prince Turki, a careful, thoughtful ex-diplomat and spy chief, balanced his condemnation of Hamas with that of Israel, which he accused of "indiscriminate bombing of innocent Palestinian civilians in Gaza" and the "indiscriminate arrest of Palestinian children, women and men in the West Bank".

### Item 1400/2616

231010	Scotland's papers: Hamas hostage threat and Yousaf's family trapped <a href="https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-67061227">https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-67061227</a>	
	Picture 1: 0	<p>Paper 1 - The picture is a cover of a magazine where you can see Israeli soldiers standing by missiles with the caption “Hamas threatens to execute hostages as Israel prepares ground invasion”.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Caption: Many of Tuesday's newspapers continue to report on the attacks on Israel by the militant group Hamas. The i newspaper leads with reports that Israel is preparing a ground invasion as the armed wing of Hamas "threatens public execution of Israeli hostages". The paper says over 300,000 Israeli army reservists were called up as the country's prime minister reportedly told US President Joe Biden that he would launch a ground invasion "amid fears of high casualties</li> </ul> <p>This is factual – <b>I would grade this caption 0.</b></p>
	Picture 2: 0	<p>Paper 2 - An image of the front cover of the Daily Telegraph with what looks like Gaza burning down. The headline reads “Israel: No choice but to seize Gaza.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Caption: The Daily Telegraph reports on a televised address from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu who pledged to "crush" Hamas as he compared the group to the Islamic State group. The paper</li> </ul>



		<p>quotes Netanyahu as saying "the atrocities committed by Hamas have not been seen since Isis [Islamic State] atrocities".</p> <p>The caption is factual. <b>I would grade this caption a 0.</b></p>
Picture 3: 0		<p>Paper 3 - An image of the front cover of the Scotsman newspaper which shows an image of a Jewish mother comforting a young boy. The headline reads "Israel mourns as Netanyahu warns "our retaliation has only just begun".</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Caption: Mr Netanyahu has said the siege on Gaza is "only the beginning" of retaliation against Hamas, reports the Scotsman.</li> </ul> <p>The caption is factual. <b>I would grade this caption a 0.</b></p>
Picture 4: 0		<p>Paper 4 - An image of the front cover of the Scottish Daily Mail. The headlines read "How can the British Left make excuses for a terrorist group that murders women and children?" and "Hamas: we'll kill hostages for each Israeli attack".</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Caption: The Scottish Daily Mail has more quotes from Israel's prime minister who reportedly told Joe Biden: "We have to go in, we can't negotiate now. We need to restore deterrence."</li> </ul> <p>Caption is factual. <b>I would grade this caption a 0.</b></p>
Picture 5: 0		<p>Paper 5 - An image of the front cover of the Scottish Daily Express which states in the headline "Bloodbath" showing an image of Gaza full of rubble and a man carrying a baby full of blood. There is a small image of Israelis in the corner.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Caption: The Scottish Daily Express front page is dominated by images of children caught up in the conflict.</li> </ul> <p>The caption itself does not specify if the children are Israeli or Gazan. <b>I would grade this caption a 0.</b></p>
Picture 6: 0		<p>Paper 6 - An image of the cover of The Times Scotland showing an image of an entire Israeli family that was killed in the Kibbutz and a small image of Gaza full of smoke.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Caption: The Times reports that Hamas has threatened to murder a hostage for "every unannounced Israeli strike on Gaza" and to publish a "recording of each execution". The paper quotes the spokesman for the al-Qassam Brigades - its armed wing - who uses the nom de guerre Abu Obeida. The paper says Obeida issued the threat in response to intense air raids on the strip and an Israeli decision to cut it off from water, electricity, food and other supplies.</li> </ul> <p>The caption is likely to shock an objective reader given the threat made, however it goes on to state that this is in response to Israeli air strikes and cuts, <b>so I would grade this caption a 0.</b></p>
Picture 7: 0		<p>Paper 7 - An image of the cover of the Scottish Sun with the massive headline "HELL ON EARTH" and an image of Gaza surrounded by smoke and a woman holding her child.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Caption: The Scottish Sun highlights that First Minister Humza Yousaf's in-laws are trapped in Gaza, which the paper calls "hell on</li> </ul>

		<p>earth". The paper also pictures a grandfather who was confirmed as the first Scottish victim of the Hamas assault on Israel.</p> <p>Caption mentions both sides <b>so I would grade this caption a 0.</b></p>
Picture 8: -1		<p>Paper 8 - An image of the cover of Metro newspaper which includes a picture of the destruction of Gaza and states that Scottish minister Humza's family is trapped in Gaza war hell.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Caption: The Metro carries a similar headline, picturing rubble after an Israeli air strike at a refugee camp in Gaza. The paper also highlights Mr Yousaf's family situation after he said no-one could guarantee his in-laws safe passage.</li> </ul> <p>BBC Caption is one sided portraying the suffering in Gaza only. <b>I would grade this caption a -1.</b></p>
Picture 9: -1		<p>Paper 9 - An image of the cover of The National (Scottish newspaper) which shows an image of Gaza being bombed titled "FM's agony as wife trapped in Gaza".</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Caption: The National reports Mr Yousaf saying he "cannot sleep" for worry about his family trapped in Gaza as he called for innocent civilians to be given safe passage out of the war-zone.</li> </ul> <p>BBC Caption is one sided portraying the suffering in Gaza only. <b>I would grade this caption a -1.</b></p>
Picture 10: +1		<p>Paper 10 - An image of the cover of The Herald newspaper which shows a young Israeli boy in his fathers arms and fire fighters and underneath an image of the Scottish victim of Hamas – however the headline states "Scott killed in Israel attack" which is unclear. He was killed by Hamas not by Israel.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Caption: The Herald leads on tributes to Bernard Cowan, who grew up in Glasgow and settled in Israel where he lived with his wife and three children. The paper says Mr Cowan is among more than 10 British citizens feared dead, or missing.</li> </ul> <p>This caption is likely to make an objective reader feel sympathy for Israeli victims. <b>I grade this caption +1.</b></p>

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Item 1600/2616

231110	Three women deny showing pictures in support of Hamas <a href="https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-london-67379321">https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-london-67379321</a>	
	Picture 1: 0	Picture of Westminster magistrates court - Caption: The three women appeared in court earlier and were granted unconditional bail
	Main article: +1	Article about women that were charged in inviting support for Hamas.  <b>Explanation of Grade:</b> Showing the support of Hamas even by portraying images will be punished.

Item 1800/2616

231124	Lockheed Martin: Palestine protesters install blockade <a href="https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-beds-bucks-herts-67519517">https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-beds-bucks-herts-67519517</a>	
	Picture 1: 0	Photo of protest by Lockheed Martin: Protestors attempted a blockade outside Lockheed Martin's facility in Ampthill, Bedfordshire
	Main article: 0	Approximately 20 protesters attempted to block one of the UK sites of military aircraft that works with Israel. The group in Ampthill said the protest was "in solidarity with the Palestinian people, who have experienced almost seven straight weeks of unrelenting bombing", and it began at about 08:00 GMT.
	Picture 2: 0	Photo of protesters: about 20 protestors were outside the facility, waving flags and chanting

Item 2000/2616

231212	Israel Gaza: 'Where is mum? Where is grandma? Where did they go?' <a href="https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-67688422">https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-67688422</a>	
	Picture 1: -2	A very sharp contrast to the imagery used in the more "pro-Israel article" above. An image of Gazans including little children and a baby badly injured covered in blood. - Caption: Casualties arrived at the hospital in Deir al-Balah after fresh Israeli strikes on central Gaza on Monday
	Main article: -1	The article primarily talks about a 4-year-old boy whose family was killed (35 members supposedly killed in an air strike) and his injuries were so bad that he had to have his arm amputated.  The article opens with a very emotive eye-catching line " <i>When he asks me about his family I can't answer. Instead, I take a deep breath and try to avoid the question in a childlike way by changing the subject.</i> "

		<p><i>"Moein told BBC Arabic that Omar and his family had been visiting his grandmother's house in Nuseirat camp, just to the north of Deir al-Balah, when it <b>was bombed without any prior warning from the Israeli military.</b>" – <b>Fact check?</b></i></p> <p><i>"<b>There are no painkillers</b> so we have to joke around and try to make him laugh in order to calm him." Moein conceded that this method only worked some of the time but added: "We don't have any other option."- this is likely to shock a reader</i></p> <p><i><b>Emotive language and very detailed encounters</b> - Lena Shakora, her husband and three young sons have so far survived the Israeli bombardment, but she said they were still living a "nightmare". "My family and I are sitting with 40 individuals in one room and all the windows are [blown out] because of the bombing. We are basically sitting outdoors... <b>and it is very cold and people are humiliated.</b>"</i></p> <p><i>Lena said her sons had hurt their backs because they were having to carry containers of water. <b>And to make matters worse</b>, the water is not clean because treatment plants and pumps are not working because of a lack of fuel.</i></p> <p><b>Explanation of grade:</b> the article includes emotive language and very sad stories as well as shocking imagery which is very likely to make an objective reader feel sympathy for Gazans.</p>
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Item 2200/2616

<p><b>240113</b></p>	<p>Iran must tell Houthis to cease and desist, says Grant Shapps  <a href="https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-67967372">https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-67967372</a></p> <p>Picture 1: 0 Joe Biden making a determined expression</p> <p>Video: 0 Biden insists that there will be continued bombings of Houthis until they quit their 'outrageous behaviour'. He insists America is not at a proxy war with Iran.</p> <p>Picture 2: 0 Map showing Middle East, with Houthi area in purple highlight</p> <p>Main Article: 0 British Defence Secretary Grant Shapps calls on Iran to reign in its proxies because the 'world is running out of patience'.</p> <p>'Houthi attacks in the Red Sea increased 500% between November and December last year.'</p> <p>' The threat has become so great that major shipping companies have ceased sailing in the region and insurance costs have risen 10-fold since early December.'</p> <p><b>Explanation of Grade:</b> Not enough Israel-Gaza specific information to bring article in either direction</p>
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Item 2400/2616

30.10.23	<b>BBC Podcast - Bowen and Doucet 30th October 2023</b>	
	-1	<p>Co-hosted by diplomatic editor <b>Mark Urban</b>.</p> <p>Describes “night of a rollercoaster of emotions for Israelis” as an Israeli hostage “rescued” from Hamas captors. Describes hostage video featuring three Israeli female hostages as “chilling”.</p> <p>States that BBC will not show the video as a matter of policy, but still discusses its contents in depth. Describes Danielle Aloni as becoming “very, very irate with PM Netanyahu, says ‘do something now’.” Says that she addresses the camera “so powerfully”. Whilst they concede that it was likely filmed under duress, they quote the video: “Danielle Aloni very, very angrily says ‘there was supposed to be a ceasefire. You were supposed to let all of us go. And then she makes reference at the end to free us now, free their citizens, free their prisoners.’ So she seems to be alluding to what Hamas has been demanding, which is a ceasefire in exchange for the release of at least some of the hostages, at least the civilian hostages, as well as the release of Palestinian prisoners. Does that how it seems to you?”</p> <p>This is double downed on in discussion: states that there are “competing versions” of how close a hostage deal was prior to Israel’s ground invasion. It is strongly suggested that negotiations broke down because Israel would not agree to Hamas’s demand for a ceasefire, and includes excerpt of a speech from Netanyahu stating that this is a time for war.</p> <p>“...even though many Western governments, including Britain, designated Hamas as a terrorist organisation, there are countries like the Gulf state of Qatar which has relationships with Hamas. Most of Hamas's political leaders are based there and they and others are arguing that they're space needs to be created to free more hostages. And some of the hostages, the families of the hostages are had been calling for a ceasefire because they fear that their loved ones could be...their lives to be endangered in ground operations, absolutely. What's your view on that?”</p> <p>Discussion of political “schism” between hostage families and the government. Presents hostage families as being opposed to ground invasion and concerned that this endangers the hostages.</p> <p>Reports on special operation to free Ori Megidish-speculate that “clearly, from the point of view of Prime Minister Netanyahu, that’s how he wants to be dealing with the hostage issue” - presumably by carrying out more such operations. State that Netanyahu believes that the only way of returning the hostages is through military pressure. Speculation of how the hostages are being held - alone or in small groups.</p> <p>They discuss a video circulating of Israeli tanks firing on a white car. Describe the video as “extraordinary”.</p> <p>Immediately move onto a discussion of how Israel has moved into Gaza City and cut off various roads, and whether civilians who had not yet evacuated from the North would be able to travel South.</p> <p>Discussion of possible displacement of Palestinians: “for a lot of Palestinians, there was a very</p>

	<p>obvious echo of 1948 and dispossession and the idea that the Israelis were going to drive them all into the Sinai desert and take over the whole Gaza Strip.” States that Egypt has made it clear that no Gazans will be allowed into Egypt.</p> <p>Discussion of evacuation of hospitals, particularly Al Shifa. State that there is “every possibility that those hospitals could be hit” and strongly imply that this would be a war crime, as it raises issues of the Convention. Pose the question “can hospitals, as civilian infrastructure, be bombed?”</p> <p>“Well, it would take a very, shall we say, unusual interpretation of the laws of armed conflict to think that you could ever really do that and and hope to retain, you know, the legal high ground. I mean, evidently, you know, they've made this case. They've also made appeals to the authorities in both hospitals to evacuate. But what they haven't done, for example, is to create a pause or a ceasefire or indeed to facilitate with the use of medical personnel or, you know, inviting in NGO's or by any other means the safe evacuation of the patients in those hospitals. So you know that simply hasn't been done, and without that attempt to actually. In good faith, facilitate the evacuation of the hospital. I think that the mere fact of stating that you think in the case of Shifa, I think it is that it's got this command centre underneath used by Hamas is not going to swing it. I mean it's a, it's a deeply believed, received wisdom I think in the Israeli political discourse that Hamas has used the Shifa hospital as a sort of cover for it, its main operational headquarters in Gaza. But you know, as far as the wider world is concerned, they'll see a hospital being bombed if that's what it comes to.”</p> <p>Dramatic descriptions from hospital. States that windows shattered at Al Quds hospital and rooms “enveloped in dust”. Extract of interview with <b>Marwan Abu Sada</b>, senior surgeon at Al Shifa describing being “overwhelmed” with casualties.</p> <p>States that the US keeps reminding Israel of the need to protect civilians, and speculates when the US will “tell Israel: enough”, as they claim it did in past conflicts. States that the situation this time is different due to 7/10 “atrocities” but that “I think from about two days after those terrible events, the Americans were starting even publicly to give suggestions to Israel about observing the laws of armed conflict. I think four days after the events Lloyd Austin said, you know, revenge was not the way to do it and there will come a moment where I think they will try to contain the damage.”</p> <p><b>Comment on grade: -1</b></p> <p>The podcast strongly suggests that Israel may commit war crimes by carrying out operations in hospitals, and that it intends to bomb them. It also implies that Israel is obstructing hostage deals. Discussion of hostage video implies that the comments made by Aloni are genuine, whilst acknowledging that they may have been made under duress.</p>
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Item 2600/2616

240125	BBC Breakfast 25 January 2024, hosted by Nina Warhurst and Charlie Stayt	
	0	<p>The program focused on Lord Cameron's visit to the Middle East in an attempt to increase the humanitarian aid sent to Gaza and help negotiate a ceasefire. The report was accompanied by descriptions of the desperate need for humanitarian aid in Gaza and the effect the war had on the Gazans.</p> <p><b>Explanation of Grade:</b> It seems as a straightforward report of Lord Cameron's visit to the region, but the sympathy with the Palestinians is still felt during the reporting. That said, it is not significant and therefore the grade is 0.</p>

iv. Senior Reviewer Findings

An anonymised summary of the comments and analysis of each of our nine Senior Reviewers are available below.

Reviewer	Output Reviewed	Changes Proposed	Overarching Comments
Senior Reviewer A	TV - News at Ten, 16 episodes	Total - 3 (19%) 2 to be more +ve (13%) 1 to be more -ve (6%)	<i>"Although we mainly agreed with the ratings, sometimes we feel that the ratings are too harsh if for example there is apparent negative questioning but it is in the context of an ICJ ruling which inevitably means that reporting on this will be negative. Where we struggled with the bias was the emotive language - 'devastating' - and emotive reporting and constant backdrop of rubble or scenes of apparent destitution with no context nor direct relevance to the discussion."</i>
Senior Reviewer B	Radio Today, 8 episodes	Total - 2 (25%) All more +ve	<i>"I have broadly agreed with your initial reviewer"</i> <i>"...there appears to be a general failure in the reporting to explore relevant context, such as Hamas'/PIJ's control of Gaza, their links with UNWRA and with journalists that are cited by the BBC and the anti-Israel bias in many international organisations."</i>

<p><b>Senior Reviewer C</b></p>	<p>Podcast, 10 episodes</p>	<p>No changes</p>	<p><i>"I have marked comments on the attached document. Overall, I think the grading is fair. A few times I disagreed with the comments and thought they were unconvincing, but on more occasions I thought the grading was overly generous to the BBC. Overall, therefore, I thought the grading was fair."</i></p>
<p><b>Senior Reviewer D</b></p>	<p>TV - Newsnight, 9 episodes. BBC News, 46 articles</p>	<p>No changes</p>	<p><i>"I reviewed the material you sent. Seems to me to be a well-constructed analysis and I don't have much to add."</i></p> <p>Re Newsnight:</p> <p><i>"I felt that on the whole the review ratings were too generous to the pro-Palestinian side ie I would have given more minus ratings."</i></p>
<p><b>Senior Reviewer E</b></p>	<p>BBC News, 52 Articles</p>	<p>Total - 4</p> <p>All changes to be more +ve</p> <p>1 headline (2%)</p> <p>3 pics/videos</p>	<p><i>"The [Initial Reviewers] show slight bias, through sympathy with Israel. Often this is displayed as frustration: when a focussed subject under discussion fails to mention the wider context."</i></p> <p><i>However, I do agree with most of the assessments."</i></p>
<p><b>Senior Reviewer F</b></p>	<p>TV - BBC Breakfast, 10 episodes</p>	<p>No changes</p>	<p><i>"I reviewed the doc and feel comfortable with the grading."</i></p>
<p><b>Senior Reviewer G</b></p>	<p>BBC News, 71 articles</p>	<p>No changes</p>	<p><i>"I have now looked over all the reviews you sent me in sample 5"</i></p>



## THE ISRAEL-HAMAS WAR AND THE BBC

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			<i>They look good and I don't disagree with any of them. I'm assuming these form part of a much wider statistical analysis"</i>
<b>Senior Reviewer H</b>	BBC News, 55 articles		<i>"I broadly agreed with the gradings" (Oral Report)</i>
<b>Senior Reviewer I</b>	BBC News, 23 Articles	No changes	<i>"I have read most of the articles in detail with the comments and I think it is a fair and frank commentary on the BBC's attitude"</i>

## Schedule 5 - LLM Study (RIME)



# Using Large Language Models to Measure Impartiality in the Media: ChatGpt-4 and the BBC's Coverage of the Israel-Gaza War as a Case Study

Haran Shani-Narkiss

## Acknowledgments

Following the events of October 7th, 2023, and amid controversy over the coverage of the Israel-Hamas war by global news outlets, a group of researchers, lawyers, analysts and assistants formed RIME - Research for Impartial Media - to empirically test for bias in media reporting. They contributed to this work, as well as to other similar attempts, in numerous ways, including data collection, data clearing, data labelling, engaging in discussions, exchanging ideas, and framing the research questions and methodologies needed for rigorous analyses. Their meticulous work and precise scrutiny were invaluable for a comprehensive assessment of this complicated question. These people, marked by diligence and integrity, played a crucial role in highlighting the complexities of quantifying media bias. Their dedication and support have significantly impacted the understanding of this issue, as reflected in the current work.

These are the people of RIME:

**Founder and Group Leader** - Dr. Haran Shani-Narkiss

**Members** - Dr. MS, Dr. Oren Tsur, Dr. YKT, Reut Harari-Misgav, Dr. Ariel Goldstein, Khaled Hassan, Dr. MF, Dr. SG.

**Contributors** – NC, Michael Kan-Tor, Avia S., Nitzan Luxembourg, Sapir Shapira, Eitan Rothenberg, Oded Maor Landaw, Dr. Renana Keydar, Roni Matzkin, Max Cohen, H. Ashkenazi, Gili Rolland, Dr. Jonatan Zalcman, Noa Lubin, Dr. LL, Milka Kaplan, Chen Laster Alon, Liel Binyamin, ID, Tom Marzea, Itamar Aharoni, Nir Hamou, Itay Alon, Guy Niran, Gye kuglovich, Ariel Kirtchuk, IG, Omer Neu, Ouri Levy, IA, IH.

# Introduction

## The BBC

Some media outlets do not even pretend to be impartial. The public voice of dictatorships is biased, and has limited influence on the public debate, because it is easily dismissed. On the other hand, quality journalism strives for credibility, and so seek to write in an impartial, accurate and balanced manner. The BBC serves as a particularly good subject for studying media-impartiality and media-bias, for several reasons; first, it is legally bound<sup>1</sup> to be impartial and bases its strong reputation on a claim that it complies with that obligation. Second, the BBC is highly influential; having more than a billion monthly visits to its English website alone, it is the most popular news outlet in the world, leading by a wide margin<sup>2</sup>. Lastly, the BBC broadcasts across several languages and formats, enabling experimental research over various settings.

## The Importance of Sympathy and Impartial Framing in the Media

Impartial media aims to provide balanced and unbiased reporting, offering comprehensive perspectives on any given issue. Bias can take many forms in media coverage (Rodrigo-Ginés et al., 2023). Still, one of the most insidious is the unequal sympathy extended to the various parties in a conflict, which undermines the principle of journalistic impartiality.

Evoking sympathy for both sides of a conflict does not mean condoning or justifying harmful actions. Instead, it means acknowledging the humanity and experiences of all parties involved. This approach promotes a more profound understanding, fosters empathy, and supports the ethical standards of journalism, ultimately contributing to a more informed and less polarized public.

Creating equal sympathy for different sides in a conflict ensures that all voices and perspectives are represented and acknowledged (Entman, 2007), allowing a nuanced understanding and reducing dehumanization (Haslam, 2006). This is important for illuminating the root causes of conflicts and fostering a dialogue that promotes peaceful resolutions.

Conversely, by promoting a specific agenda or aligning with one group, the media perpetuates negative stereotypes and prejudices that may exist between different groups involved in the conflict. This may promote false narratives and misinformation, which can further escalate tensions and hinder efforts towards resolution, enforcing an "Us vs. Them" mentality (Entman, 2007; Haslam, 2006).

Media which is sympathetic to the different sides of a conflict is also beneficial in and of itself: Impartial and balanced media that reflects sympathy for both sides in a conflict, provides the public with fair, accurate and honest information. As a result, it maintains credibility and public trust

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<sup>1</sup> See BBC Guidelines [here](#)

<sup>2</sup> See ranks and stats [here](#)

(Turcotte et al., 2015). Furthermore, balanced sympathy generally aligns with journalistic ethics, ensuring accuracy and integrity in reporting (Ward, 2009; Galtung, 1969).

Thus, balanced sympathy towards different parties involved in a conflict is essential for fostering an environment of understanding and trust, which is necessary for both the resolution of the conflict and the integrity of journalistic practice.

### **Measuring Sympathy as a Proxy for Gauging the Degree of Impartiality**

Measuring sympathy is an effective way to estimate the degree of impartiality for several complementing reasons:

1. **Direct Indicator of Emotional Tone:** Sympathy is evoked by the emotional tone of the coverage, indicating which side is portrayed more favourably.
2. **Reflects Underlying Bias:** Disparities in sympathetic coverage often reveal underlying biases, whether conscious or unconscious.
3. **Influences Public Perception:** Sympathetic coverage has very 'real' consequences, as it has a great impact on audience attitudes and perceptions, making it a critical factor in assessing actual media influence.

Kwak and An (2014) suggest that news coverage that evokes sympathy can lead to increased compassion for those affected, which can prompt support and collective public action. This is significant due to the media's influential role in shaping public discourse and perceptions of global events (Price & Tewksbury, 1997)

Moreover, measuring the tendency of sympathetic framing given to each side in a conflict encapsulates the essence of the coverage's degree of bias and partiality. By quantifying this aspect, researchers and media analysts can more accurately assess whether a media outlet is maintaining true impartiality or favouring one side, thus providing critical insights into the integrity and balance of conflict reporting.

It is important to note that moderately varying degrees of sympathy and sympathetic framing, in and of itself, are not necessarily a violation of impartiality or evidence for systematic bias. In this report we use systematic framing differences as a proxy. We first use state-of-the-art AI tools to study systematic differences in sympathetic framing. We then compare the framing discrepancies were there should be none, e.g., headlines compared to the main text, stories that cover the same events in different languages (BBC English and Arabic reporting) or different mediums. These systematic discrepancies do demonstrate that the commitment for impartiality is violated and suggest that the BBC actively promotes a heavily biased perspective in a way that misinforms its audience and manipulates public opinion.

### **The Challenges in Measuring Sympathy in Media Coverage**

Measuring sympathetic framing and evocations in media coverage is challenging for several reasons:

1. **Subjectivity of Sympathy:** Sympathy is inherently subjective, making it difficult to define and measure consistently. What one person perceives as sympathetic coverage, another might not. There is no ‘ground truth’.
2. **Nuances of Language:** Language is nuanced and complex. Sympathy can be conveyed through subtle cues such as tone, word choice, and framing, which are not easily quantifiable. These subtleties can vary widely between different contexts and cultures.
3. **Contextual Dependence:** The context in which information is presented can greatly affect its perceived sympathy. The same statement can be seen as sympathetic or neutral depending on the surrounding content and the broader narrative in which it is embedded.
4. **Variability Across Media Type and Genre:** Different media platforms (print, broadcast, online) and formats (news articles, opinion pieces, social media posts) convey sympathy in different ways. This variability complicates the creation of a standardized measurement method.
5. **Interpersonal Differences:** Audience interpretations of sympathy can vary based on personal experiences, biases, and cultural backgrounds (Lee et al., 2024). These differences mean that what resonates as sympathetic to one group may have a different impact on another.
6. **Complexity of Emotions:** Sympathy is often intertwined with other emotions like empathy, compassion, and pity. Distinguishing and measuring these overlapping emotional responses adds another layer of complexity.
7. **Qualitative Nature:** Much of the analysis of sympathy involves qualitative assessment, which lacks the precision and objectivity of quantitative methods. This reliance on qualitative analysis can introduce researcher bias and variability in findings.
8. **Evolving Media Landscapes:** The rapid evolution of media landscapes, including the rise of social media and user-generated content, constantly changes how sympathy is expressed and perceived. Keeping measurement methods up-to-date with these changes is an ongoing challenge.

Due to these factors, developing reliable and valid metrics for measuring sympathy in the media requires a multidisciplinary approach, combining linguistic analysis, psychological principles, and content analysis, while accounting for the dynamic nature of media and audience interpretations. A successful evaluation system should be objective and based on empirical evidence, and for that it should be as automated as possible. Furthermore, due to the complex nature of the task, a successful solution should be one that utilizes large amounts of data. This would average out and overcome the ‘noise’ that is inherent to any kind of measurement, let alone one that puts a complicated concept such as sympathy at its centre.

## Automated Media Bias Detection

Media bias detection involves the automated identification of bias within journalistic texts. This process typically combines Natural Language Processing (NLP) and machine learning techniques such as sentiment analysis (Lin et al., 2011), topic modelling (Best et al., 2005), and lexical feature analysis (Hube & Fetahu, 2018). These techniques help identify patterns and features indicating bias, providing a systematic approach to understanding and mitigating media bias.

Media bias detection is a relatively new area in NLP. Initial attempts to automatically detect media bias began in the early 2000s but were limited in accuracy and robustness (Rodrigo-Ginés et al., 2023). Over the last decade, advances in deep learning have significantly impacted NLP, including media bias detection. Specifically, the introduction of recurrent neural networks (RNNs) (Rashkin et al., 2017) and transformer networks (Baly et al., 2020) has enabled the development of sophisticated techniques that outperform traditional methods.

Despite these advances, Large Language Models (LLMs) like ChatGPT have yet to be extensively utilized for media bias detection. LLMs, pretrained on vast amounts of data, have the potential to succeed in this area due to their ability to process context, generate coherent text, and provide reasoning. Their impressive capabilities in natural language understanding, reasoning, and generation could enhance the accuracy and robustness of bias detection, providing deeper insights and more reliable identification of biased content (Hamborg & Donnay, 2018; Wen & Younes, 2024). We believe that the tailored application of state-of-the-art LLMs we developed could be usefully adopted, and no doubt further refined, by media organizations which have a genuine interest in producing balanced, unbiased, high-quality output.

## Large Language Models as a Tool to Assess Sympathetic Framing and Media Bias

Large Language Models (LLMs), such as OpenAI's ChatGPT, Google's Gemini and Mistral by MistralAI, among others, may prove to be particularly well-suited for analyzing media-bias for several reasons:

1. **Broad Knowledge Base:** LLMs are *large* pretrained models, often referred to as foundation models. The concept '*large pretrained models*' does not only mean that the number of the model's parameters is large, but also entails that the model-training was done over immense textual corpora containing billions of words spanning almost any domain available. As such, LLMs have the "knowledge" (linguistics statistics) and ability to process and respond to queries (known as *prompts*) across multiple domains without the need for a specific supervised training.
2. **Zero-Shot Abilities:** Consequently, as a result of the size of the model and the sheer volume of the training data, LLMs, and ChatGPT specifically, have demonstrated impressive zero-shot capabilities: the ability to answer specific questions or perform classification tasks without any fine tuning (hence, zero-shot). The zero-shot abilities were demonstrated time and time again in tasks such as sentiment analysis, stance detection, and

hate speech detection – achieving results better or comparable to those of fine-tuned and domain-specific models (Wang et al., 2023).

3. **Emotion and Empathy Understanding:** Specifically, recent research has shown that ChatGPT's ability to detect and express emotions is comparable to that of humans, with an accuracy of approximately 92% for classifying various emotions (Schaaff et al., 2023). In another overwhelming cross-sectional study that was recently published (Ayers et al., 2023), ChatGPT was evaluated for its ability to provide quality and empathetic responses to medical patients' questions from a public social media forum. Evaluators preferred ChatGPT's responses over those of physicians in 78.6% of cases, rating them significantly higher in both quality and empathy.

These attributes suggest that LLMs can effectively analyse and detect sympathy (and therefore sympathy bias) in news media texts. Their ability to 'understand' context and generate nuanced responses makes them a tool with excellent potential for identifying the expression of subtle emotional expressions and providing a basis for comprehensive analysis of how sympathy is expressed in journalistic content.

Furthermore, LLMs' capacity to process vast amounts of data allows them, by subjecting tests to large datasets, to average out signals and filter out noise. This means that while in the process of LLM's classification individual errors might occur, the large-scale patterns and trends it identifies should be reliable. By leveraging its extensive data processing capabilities, using LLMs can provide a consistent and comprehensive picture of media bias, enhancing the robustness and accuracy of bias detection efforts.

In the current study, we present a novel, ChatGPT4-based, method for investigating and quantifying bias in the media. ChatGPT4 capabilities are unprecedented; its advanced contextual understanding, support for multiple languages and ability to perform tasks with minimal examples, were harnessed in the current study for yielding a massive scale of accurate responses.

This allowed for assessments of large datasets, mitigating measurement-related noise that is prominent when the sample size is small. Using ChatGPT4 was also crucial for avoiding potential biases inherent in human subjective judgment.

We focus on the case study of the Israel-Gaza war and its coverage by the BBC in various platforms. The Israel-Gaza war suits well to this end, because it is a polarizing dispute, therefore making achieving impartiality both challenging and important. Also, it has been the most prominent single international story during the course of this study, providing the largest dataset not just of BBC material, but also of comparative material across other global news outlets.

# Experiments and Results

In order to empirically confirm impartiality or lack of impartiality thereof, we have conducted a series of seven experiments. In the first three experiments we use LLMs to quantify sympathetic framing towards each party in the conflict. We do this for BBC news stories (Experiment 1), news headlines (Experiment 2), and then repeat these experiments on BBC Arabic (Experiment 3). In the fourth experiment we introduce repetitions and slight prompting variations in order to assess the stability and reliability of the AI model we use in Experiments 1-3. In the fifth experiment we validate our methodology by having the LLM produce reasoning “explaining” its logic in a consistent way and by establishing a comparison to human judgment, based on a sample of items evaluated independently by ten human judges. In the sixth experiment we apply our methodology to a large collection of news stories from hundreds of news outlets from across the globe and the political spectrum. We then align the BBC’s framing tendencies with the framing tendencies of other news outlets that have a clear political orientation. Finally, in the seventh experiment, we move beyond the textual medium and apply our analytic framework to measure framing tendencies in the BBC podcasts, radio, and TV shows. The remainder of this section provides a detailed description of the seven experimental settings and the empirical results.

## Experiment #1: Sympathy in Web Articles ’Main Texts

Our dataset for this experiment was initially comprised of 1,529 conflict-relevant items from the BBC website, published within our defined timeframe of interest: four months starting from the day of the Hamas attack on October 7th, 2023 (For the detailed criteria of data inclusion for this and all other experiments, please refer to the Methods section).

To evaluate if the BBC reporting creates greater sympathy towards one side of the conflict compared to the other, we employed a ChatGPT-based analysis: we systematically inputted all conflict-related BBC articles, one by one, providing the same prompt each time, asking the following six questions, hereafter referred to as q1-q6 (The actual prompt is in bold):

**“I have the following article.**

**Please answer only yes or no to the following questions:**

**1) Does this text create sympathy for Israel?**

**2) Does this text create sympathy for Gaza?**

To enhance the discernment between various aspects of Palestinian or Israeli entities garnering increased sympathy, we introduced two additional pairs of questions:

Questions regarding sympathy towards Israeli and Palestinian civilians:

**3) Does this text create sympathy for the Israeli people?**

**4) Does this text create sympathy for the Palestinian people?**



Questions regarding sympathy towards Israeli and Palestinian fighting entities:

**5) Does this text create sympathy for IDF/Israel military?**

**6) Does this text create sympathy for Hamas?"**

Note that for the purpose of our analysis and for interpreting the results, questions 3-6 constitute a supplemental extension for questions 1 and 2, whereas q1 and q2 (being more general) are the main questions in our design. For simplicity, when no further resolution is required, or for practical reasons of capacity - we often refer exclusively to q1 and q2.

### **Experiment#1, Results:**

The results of experiment #1 are depicted in Figure 1. Our query yielded 1481/1529 cases for which full responses were received from ChatGPT (See the exact definition in the Methods section). The distribution of answers for q1 and q2 are represented in Figure 1a. ChatGPT classified the majority of articles (75%) as creating sympathy towards one side or both sides. Notably, a significant proportion of the articles (16%) created sympathy towards both sides of the conflict. Concentrating on the difference in sympathy received by each side, we observed that the sympathy expressions towards Gaza were approximately x1.5 more frequent than the sympathy expressions towards Israel (Figure 1a,b).

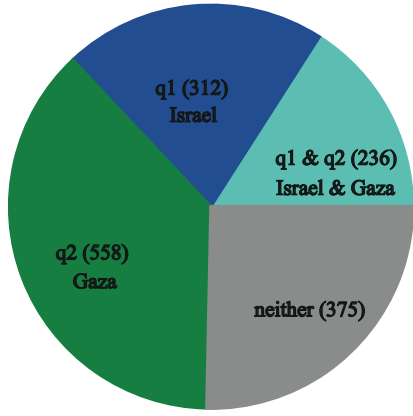
Next, to examine the dynamics of the conflict coverage in time, we grouped all the articles in our dataset into weekly bins, starting from October 7th 2023 (Figure 1c). Analysing the conflict coverage over time unveiled several distinct findings: First, beyond the week of the attack, sympathy level was higher towards the Palestinian side in all weeks but one.

Second, sympathy towards both sides decreased dramatically over time. However, our analysis also revealed a notable decrease in the number of articles over time (Figure 1d). This variability could impact both findings: while an unstable baseline might somewhat obscure the first, the second could be attributed solely to the overall decrease in coverage. To mitigate this inherent variance, we opted to investigate the mean (proportional) expression of sympathy thereafter.

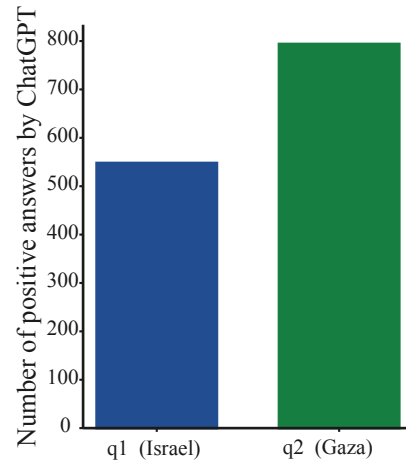
Dividing the number of weekly occurrences of sympathy by the total number of articles per week resulted in a consistent measure, ranging between 0 and 1, and remaining robust despite changes in the number of published articles over time. We used this strategy to evaluate the results yielded for the full query (Questions 1-6, Figure 1e).

In the first two pairs of questions (i.e., q1-q2 and q3-q4), the results demonstrated a clear bias towards showing more sympathy to the Palestinian side, which started after the first week and remained generally stable over time. Questions 3 and 4 qualitatively replicated the results observed for questions 1 and 2. These results not only sharpened our findings, but also validated our methodology, demonstrating that minor alterations in the phrasing of the prompts do not change the results dramatically (compare solid lines to dashed lines in Figure 1e).

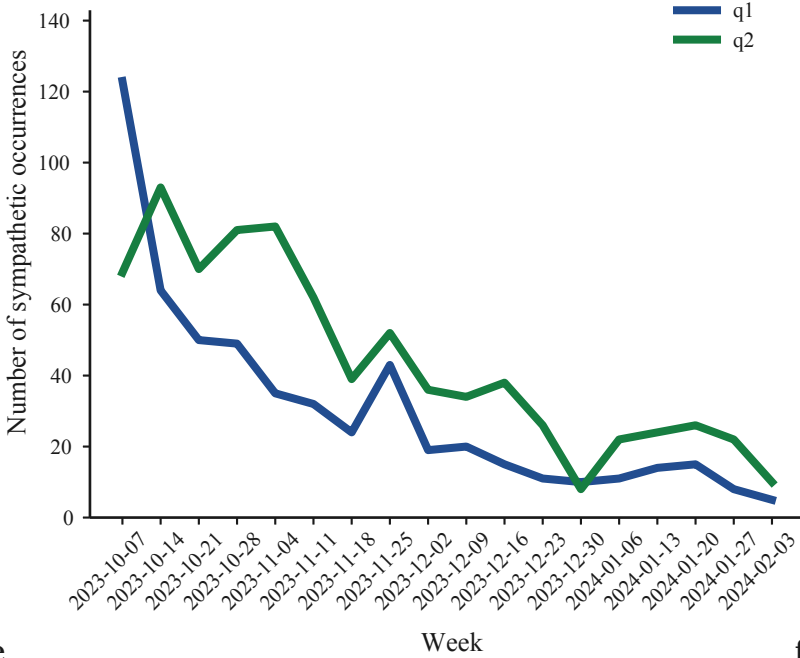
**a** Distribution of Positive Answers: Main Texts Analysis (N = 1481)



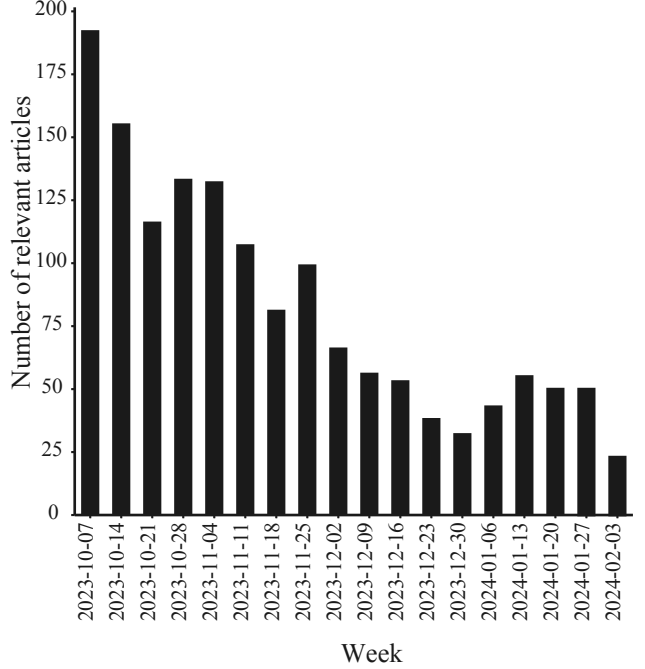
**b**



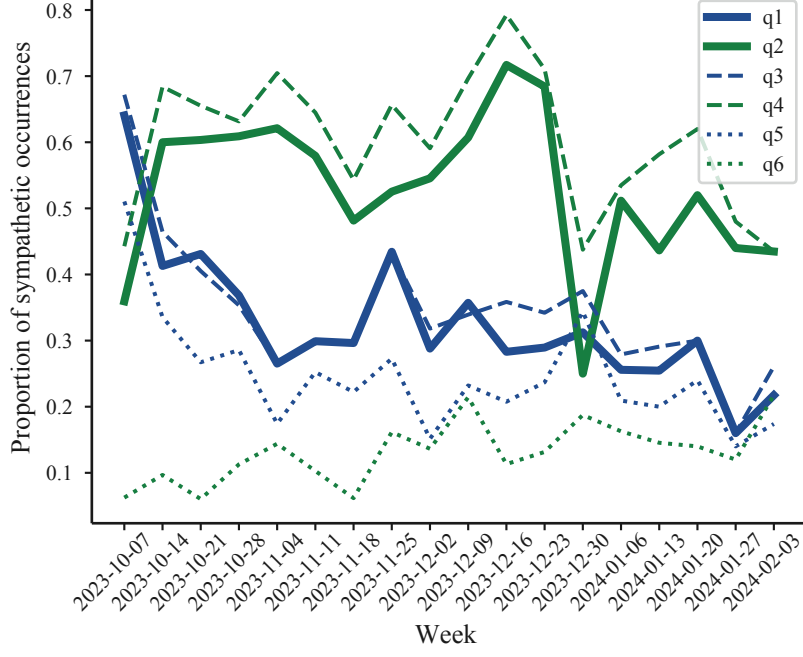
**c**



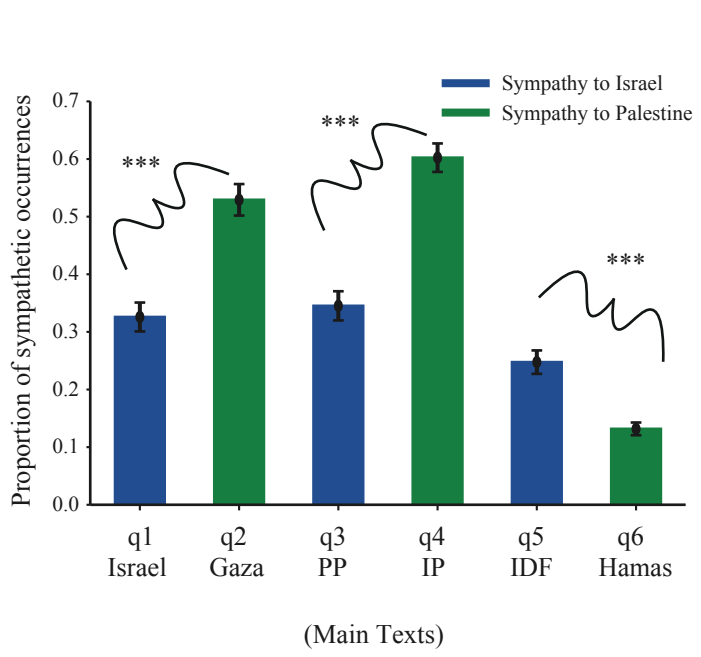
**d**



**e**



**f**



**Figure 1.** Analysis of 1,481 Main Texts Published on the BBC British Website in the four months following October 7th, 2023. **a**) A pie chart depicting the distribution of sympathetic occurrences towards Israel (q1) and Palestine (q2). **b**) The total number of positive answers for questions 1 and 2 (“Does this text create sympathy to Israel/Palestine”, respectively). **c**) The number of positive responses by ChatGPT to q1 and q2, dynamically aggregated over a week of reporting. **d**) The number of conflict-related articles published on the BBC website weekly. **e**) The proportion of positive responses by ChatGPT to all six questions in our query. Means are dynamically calculated over a week of reporting. Blue lines represent questions regarding sympathy to Israel and green lines represent questions regarding sympathy to Palestine. Dashed lines represent questions regarding civilians and dotted lines represent questions regarding militant entities. **f**) The proportion of positive responses by ChatGPT to all six questions, calculated over the entire 18 weeks within the reporting period. Each bar represents the proportion of positive answers to that particular question. \*\*\* indicates  $p < 0.0001$ , Paired t-test. n.s. – not significant.

In addition to these findings, a contrasting trend emerged for q5 and q6, which regarded sympathy towards the IDF/Hamas, respectively (see the dotted lines in Figure 1e). We observed a pronounced disparity in sympathy favouring the IDF, particularly during the initial weeks of the conflict, when reports of Israeli soldiers being killed or abducted on October 7th were prevalent. Notably, this gap diminished over time (see Figure 1f). This result, combined with the results received for the other pairs of questions, evaluates our methodology again, as it demonstrates ChatGPT's ability to identify subtle (but important) distinctions in its input for yielding separable results. Furthermore, the dissociation between the results received for the pairs of civilian/general entities and those obtained for the pair of military entities, shows that the answer by ChatGPT depends on the precise question, rather than being an outcome of some inherent bias within ChatGPT4 itself towards either Israel or Palestine.

## **Experiment #2: Sympathy in the Headlines**

In an era where attention spans are increasingly fragmented and time is at a premium, headlines offer a quick and efficient way for viewers to grasp the essence of a news story without delving into the entire article (Gabiolkov et al., 2016). However, headlines often reflect sympathy in a binary manner, towards one side of a conflict, due to the need for simplification and clarity, emotional appeal, and the biases of media outlets. This approach resonates with their target audience, maintains narrative consistency, and leverages sensationalism to attract more readers. Additionally, time and space constraints make it easier to highlight one perspective rather than providing a balanced view. These factors collectively contribute to the prevalence of one-sided headlines, despite the potential sacrifice of balance and impartiality.

Moreover, binary sympathy expression in headlines oversimplifies complex issues, fostering a shallow understanding that encourages societal division and polarization. This type of coverage reinforces existing biases and promotes a "black and white" mentality, leading to increased partiality and eroding public trust in media. Additionally, it limits the scope of public discourse by excluding alternative viewpoints and critical analysis, thus preventing constructive dialogue and comprehensive exploration of conflicts.

Recognizing this prominent influence, we turned to evaluate the sympathy levels as reflected exclusively by the headlines. For that goal, we replicated the above-mentioned analysis: we repeated the exact same procedure, presenting ChatGPT with one news item at a time, together with the same six questions, but this time – we changed the first sentence in the prompt to: “**I have the following article headline..”** and then inputted headlines only, instead of the complete articles.

Since headlines are significantly shorter than the body of the article, it was a trivial observation that they include fewer expressions of sympathy than those found in the main text. However, if the headlines were chosen in an unbiased manner, we expected this decrease in proportion to be equal for both sides, so that the results for headlines would broadly reflect the results for the articles themselves. The results of the BBC headlines analysis are depicted in Figure 2.

## Experiment #2, Results:

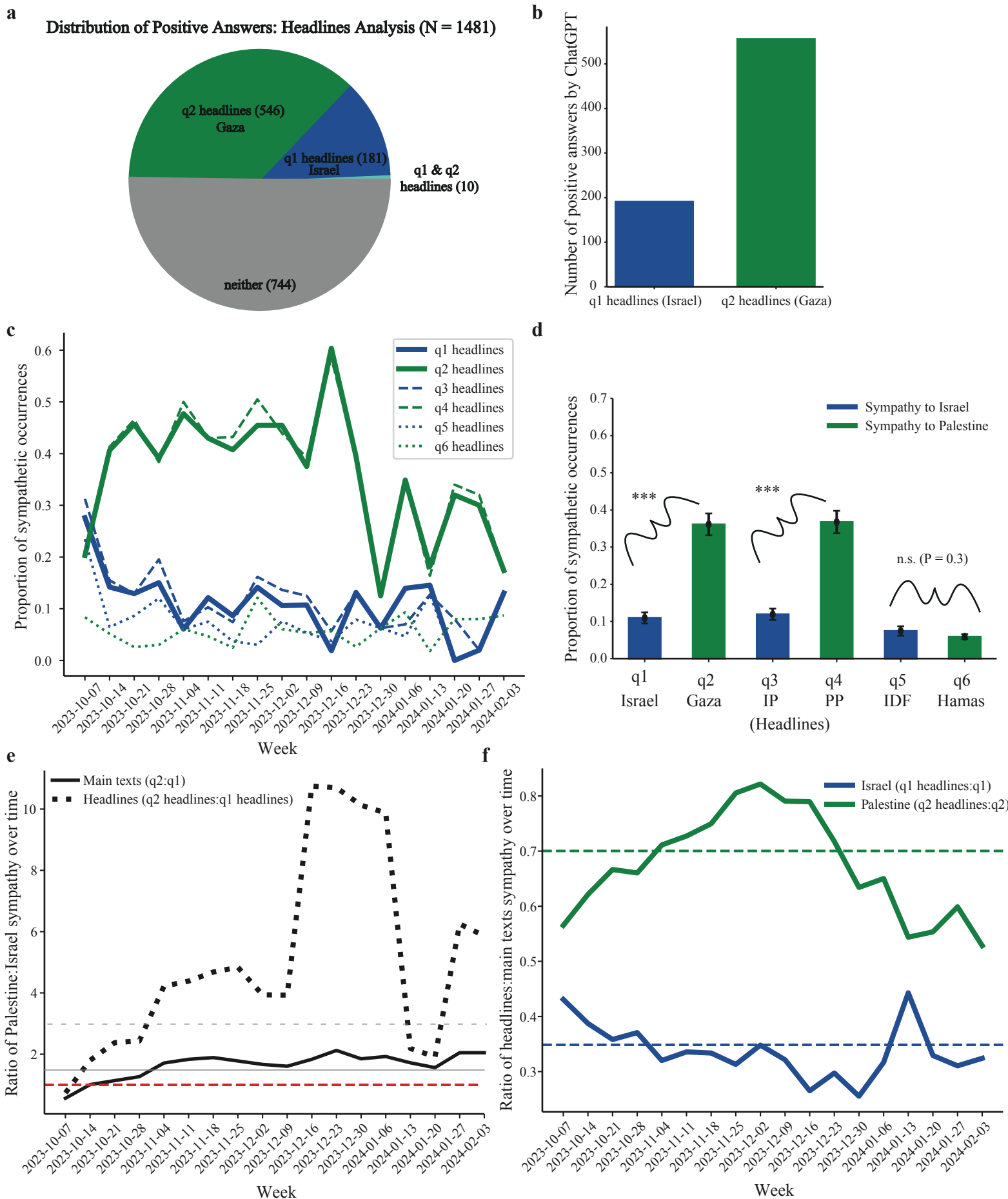
For this experiment to be comparable with experiment #1, our dataset consisted of the same 1481 items for which a complete response was received by ChatGPT when asked about the main text. Our first observation revealed that, as we suspected, a binary sympathy expression characterized the headlines: the portion of items reflecting sympathy for both sides almost completely vanished (Figure 2a; compare the turquoise slice, that now constituted less than 1% of the items, to that in Figure 1a). Focusing on the sympathy ratio for the two sides of the conflict, this analysis revealed a significantly more biased picture: The first two pairs of questions exhibited an even more extreme disparity, with the Palestinian side receiving nearly x3 times sympathetic headlines than the Israeli side (x2.91 times, Figure 2b). This effect was robust and stable across all time points, emerging almost immediately after the first week of coverage (q1 vs. q2 and q3 vs. q4 – see Figure 2c, solid and dashed lines. Note, once again, how similar the answers to these two pairs of questions are).

Examining the full six-question-query results, we have found that, remarkably, in the headlines analysis, Israel did not maintain an advantage even in the comparison between the IDF and Hamas. The slight edge initially observed for the IDF was swiftly overridden by comparable sympathy levels towards Hamas, culminating in a non-significant difference between the two when sympathy was averaged across all weeks (See Figure 2d, last two bars).

Surprised by the last finding, we sought to assess two additional questions. First, we wanted to check how (and to what extent) is the pro-Palestinian tendency, observed at the level of the main text, augmented at the level of the headlines. To answer this question, we plotted the ratio of q1:q2 and compared it to the ratio of q1\_headline:q2\_headline over time (Figure 2e). Our inquiry yielded a notable finding: Both the main text ratio line (i.e., q1:q2 when the input is the main text, depicted by the solid line in Figure 2e) and the headline ratio line (i.e., q1:q2 when the input is limited to the headline alone, represented by the dashed line in Figure 2e) consistently exceeded one, indicating a consistent bias towards the Palestinian side. However, while the solid line remained relatively stable around two, indicating a typical bias of approximately twice more sympathy towards Palestine, the dashed line skyrocketed, reaching values higher than 10 at certain time points.

The second question we asked regarded the ratios of headlines to main texts showing sympathy for each of the sides (Israel and Gaza) separately. We were interested in quantifying the bias (if any) associated with the stage of headline selection, independently from the unbalanced sympathy in the main texts. To state this explicitly: it is to be expected that headlines will carry less sympathy (and information in general), as they are made of shorter texts. However, if the headlines are chosen in an impartial manner, this reduction in sympathy from main-texts to the headlines level, should be reflected with similar proportions for both sides.

Thus, we examined the ratio of headlines that created sympathy towards Israel to the articles that generated sympathy towards Israel in their main-text, and contrasted the result with the parallel measure for the Palestinian side. For this goal, we plotted ratio of q1\_headline:q1 and compared it



**Figure 2.** Analysis of 1,481 Headlines Published on the BBC British Website in the four months following October 7th, 2023. **a**) A pie chart depicting the distribution of sympathetic occurrences towards Israel (q1) and Palestine (q2). **b**) The total number of positive answers for questions 1 and 2 when solely headlines were given as an input **c**) The proportion of positive responses by ChatGPT to all six questions in our query. Means are dynamically calculated over a week of reporting. Blue lines represent questions regarding sympathy to Israel and green lines represent questions regarding sympathy to Palestine. Dashed lines represent questions regarding civilians and dotted lines represent questions regarding militant entities. **d**) The proportion of positive responses by ChatGPT to all six questions. Each bar represents the proportion of positive answers to that question, averaged over the entire 18 weeks within the reporting period. \*\*\* indicates  $p < 0.0001$ , Paired t-test. n.s. – not significant. **e**) Sympathy trends, depicted separately for headlines and main texts. The ratio of positive responses by ChatGPT to q1 and q2 when the Main texts are given (solid lines) and when solely articles' headlines are provided as input (dashed line). The flat red dashed line represents a ratio of 1, where a balanced coverage should reside. Faint grey straight lines represent the averages over time. Ratios are calculated over the bins of weekly published articles and then smoothed with a rolling average using a sliding window with size 4. **f**) Headlines vs. main text trends, depicted separately for Israel and Palestine. The graph illustrates the ratio of positive responses by ChatGPT to q1 (for Israel, blue line) and q2 (for Palestine, green line) when only articles' headlines are provided as input vs. when the main texts are given as input. Where an impartial choice of headlines is made, these lines should be generally similar. Dashed lines show the average ratio for each one of the sides. Ratios are calculated over the bins of weekly published articles, and then smoothed with a rolling average using a sliding window with size 4. IP/PP - Israeli/Palestinian People.

to the ratio of q2\_headline:q2 over time (Figure 2f). Note that this comparison (q1\_headline:q1 vs. q2\_headline:q2) goes above and beyond the previously described finding about the different sympathy levels directed at both sides in the main texts, as it controls for this factor.

Once again, our results demonstrate a notable imbalance; When articles' main texts were labelled as sympathetic towards Israel, it was reflected in the headline only in about a third of the cases. For the Palestinian side, this ratio was approximately double (see the dashed lines in Figure 2f, which represent averages over time). Our analysis reveals that, even when considering the lower number of articles showing sympathy to the Israeli vs. the Palestinian side - another notable trend that enhances the imbalance as found in the first experiment - the headlines further change the framing of the story to evoke more sympathy for the Palestinian than the Israeli side. To be clear, when assessing the headlines we observe a trend of further suppressing potential sympathy for the Israeli side, even in cases where the in-depth reporting may suggest otherwise. Recall, the headlines are decided by editors, and not by the authors of the main text, thus suggesting another independent layer of bias.

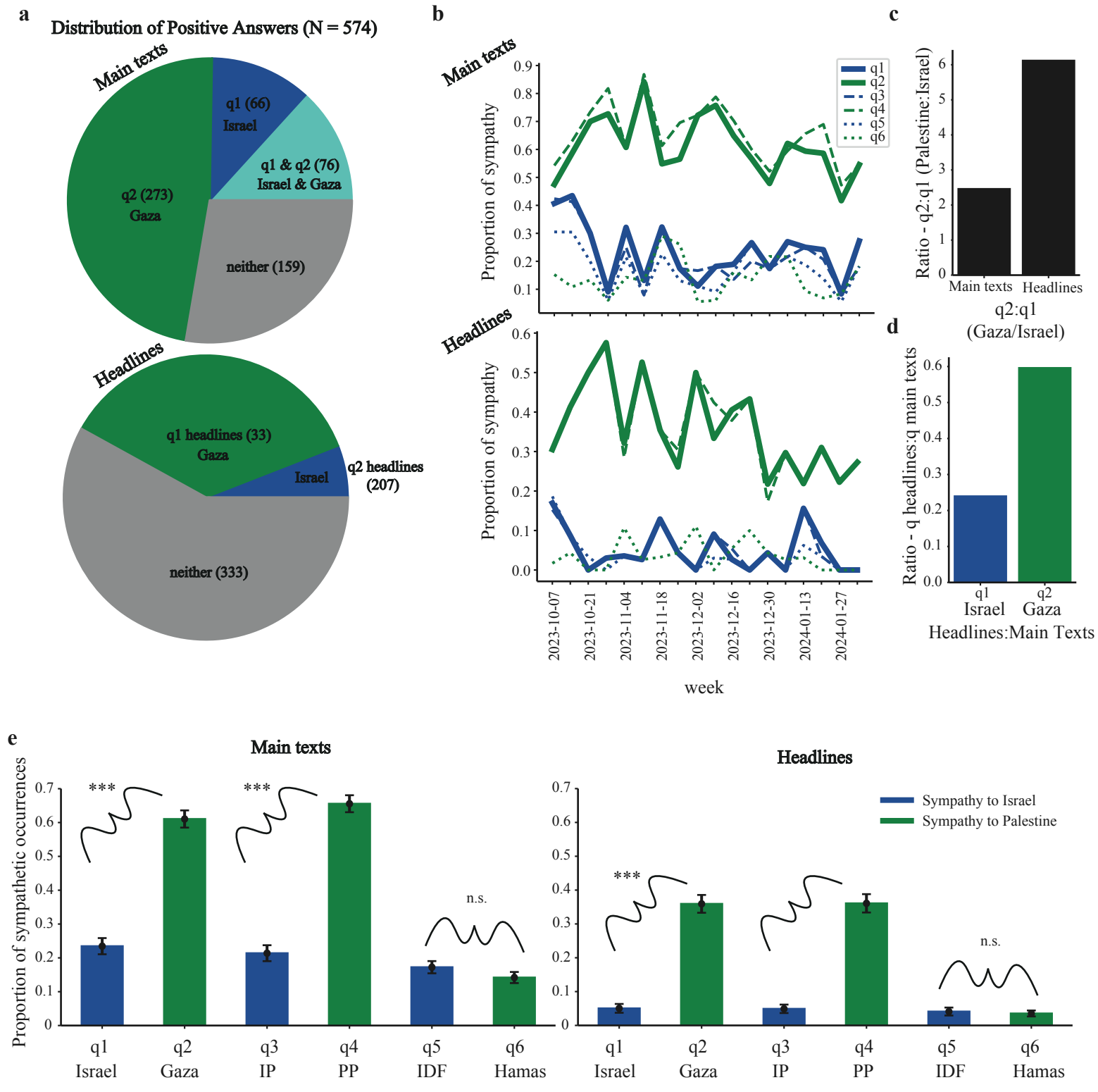
### **Experiment #3: BBC in the Arabic Language**

The BBC offers news coverage in multiple languages to cater to a global audience. Regardless of the language of reporting, the BBC is committed to adhering to the same high standards of journalism, which include impartiality and accuracy. This commitment ensures that all audiences receive balanced and unbiased news coverage. The BBC's Arabic service, should therefore provide impartial and accurate reporting, as should the BBC do across all platforms and languages, reflecting the corporation's legal obligations. To test the extent that the BBC maintains these standards, we conducted an empirical test, examining the conflict as covered by the BBC Arabic news website.

### **Experiment #3, Results:**

Our evaluation is based on scraping a total of 876 articles published on the BBC Arabic website between October 7th, 2023, and February 7th, 2024. We filtered out 302 items from this dataset, that did not feature at least one of our six designated keywords. The remaining dataset contains 574 items (please refer to the Methods section for the list of these words which were selected to identify coverage of the Gaza War).

Given the potential variance in ChatGPT's performance across languages, with English typically regarded as the most proficient and natural, we initiated our study by translating the articles into English using various methods. Specifically, we employed Google Translate, ChatGPT3.5, ChatGPT4o and ChatGPT4 for this purpose. Subsequently, we enlisted the feedback of several Arabic speakers to evaluate the quality of these translation options. The consensus among them was that the translation produced by ChatGPT4 exhibited superior quality compared to the others, being noted for its high standard (even though not perfect, but see 'Replications and Variations' in the Methods section). Consequently, we utilized the Arabic-to-English translated dataset and



**Figure 3.** Analysis of 574 Headlines and Main Texts Published on the BBC Arabic Website in the four months following October 7th, 2023. **a)** Pie charts depicting the distribution of sympathetic occurrences towards Israel (q1) and Palestine (q2) in the main texts (**top**) and headlines (**bottom**). **b)** The proportion of positive responses by ChatGPT to all six questions in the main texts (**top**) and headlines (**bottom**) analyses. Means are dynamically calculated over a week of reporting. Blue lines represent questions regarding sympathy to Israel and green lines represent questions regarding sympathy to Palestine. Dashed lines represent questions regarding civilians and dotted lines represent questions regarding militant entities. **c)** Sympathy trends, depicted separately for headlines and main texts. The ratios of positive responses by ChatGPT to q1 and q2 when the main texts are given (**left**) and when solely articles' headlines are provided as input (**right**). **d)** Headlines vs. main text trends, depicted separately for both sides. The total headlines:main-texts sympathy ratios for Israel (q1headlines:q1, blue bar) and for Palestine (q2 headlines:q2, green bar). **e)** The proportion of positive responses by ChatGPT to all six questions for main texts (**left**) and headlines (**right**) analyses. Each bar represents the proportion of positive answers to that question, averaged over the entire 18 weeks within the reporting period. \*\*\* indicates  $p < 0.0001$ , Paired t-test. n.s. – not significant. IP/PP - Israeli/Palestinian People.

proceeded with the same analyses as those conducted on the dataset obtained from the BBC English website.

This experiment confirmed that the BBC Arabic website exhibits a notably greater degree of imbalance, even when contrasted with that found in the BBC English website (refer to Figure 3 for comparison with Figures 1-2). In BBC Arabic, we observed a greater degree of imbalance in sympathy at the level of both main texts and headlines. This imbalance was evident in each and every time-point, remarkably including even the week of the Hamas attack (see Figure 3b). We note that during that week the shocking details of Hamas' attack on Israel were emerging, weeks before Israel launched its ground campaign. Averaged across all time points, the ratios between the 2 main questions in our query were  $\sim x2.5$  fold and  $\sim x6$  fold for the main texts and headlines analyses, respectively (Figure 3c). Once again, another independent bias was evident at the choice of headlines, where  $\sim 60\%$  of the articles exhibiting sympathy to Palestine reflected this in their headline. Still, only  $\sim 25\%$  doing so in the case of Israel (Figure 3d). Considering the full six-questions-query, the difference between the sides was so prominent, such that the sympathy towards Israel and 'The Israeli people' was not comparable to that directed towards Gaza and the Palestinian people, but was comparable to that directed towards Hamas (Figure 3b,e) - a proscribed terrorist organization under the law of the UK, the legal environment in which the BBC is founded and operates.

#### **Experiment #4, Reliability of the Methodology**

The output generated by ChatGPT is known to be influenced by subtle variations in the input it receives, primarily the prompt (Salinas & Morstatter, 2024. Errica et al., 2024). Additionally, owing to the inherent stochasticity of the model, even when provided with the exact same prompt, different results may arise across multiple runs. To test the stability of the model and the reliability of our findings, we conducted ten iterations of the same procedure and repeated this for both the main-text and the headlines experiments over the BBC English website dataset. In some of these iterations, we introduced subtle changes to the prompt by altering the order of questions (please refer to Figure 4).

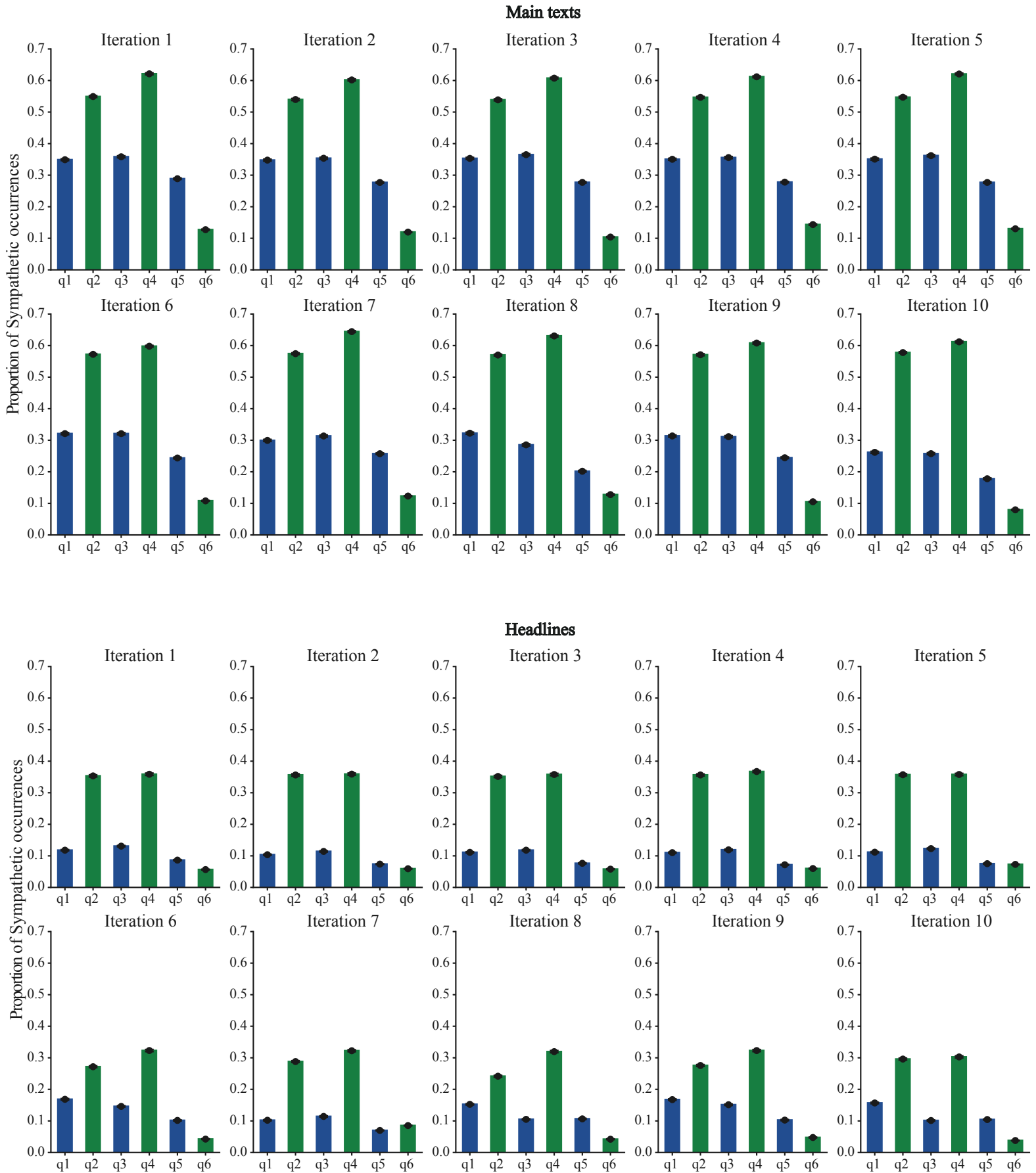
#### **Experiment #4, Results:**

The experiment convincingly demonstrated that the conclusions drawn from our results remain stable through multiple runs and despite subtle variations in repetitions with minor perturbations. The results for this experiment, which constitute support for the reliability of our methodology, are depicted in Figure 4 for both the main text (top) and the headlines (bottom) analyses. For each one of these analyses, five identical repetitions are depicted in the upper row and five repetitions where the order of the questions was shuffled are depicted in the lower row.

#### **Experiment #5, Evaluating the Validity of the Methodology against Human Annotation**

Reliability and validity are both crucial aspects of measurement tools, but they are not the same and one does not always guarantee the other. Specifically, while reliability refers to the consistency





**Figure 4.** *Stability and Reliability Across Multiple Runs with Minor Variations.* Proportion of positive responses by ChatGPT to each one of the six questions, repeating both the articles' main text (top) and headlines (bottom) experiments ten times. Experiments were done using the data from BBC English (N=1481 articles/headlines). Iterations 1-5 were identical. The questions order for iterations 6-10 was as follows: Iteration 6: 2 1 4 3 6 5, iteration 7: 1 3 5 2 4 6, iteration 8: 2 4 6 1 3 5, iteration 9: 2 1 4 3 6 5, iteration 10: 6 5 4 3 2 1. The high similarity between iterations indicates that the measurement is generally stable and reliable.

or repeatability of a measurement, reliability alone does not ensure validity, which is the accuracy of the measurement in capturing what it is intended to measure. The results we observed gave us several strong reasons to trust the validity of our methodology, e.g. the seemingly sensible locations of an array of reputable news outlets across the axis in Experiment 6 (see below), or the discrepancy between the first week and the following weeks in experiments 1 & 2). To test this more thoroughly, we designed another experiment and started our investigation by probing the ‘black box’.

The ‘black box problem’, in the context of AI based models, refers to the fact that while these models are capable of very powerful computations and impressive performance, understanding how exactly these computations underlie the transformation from the input to the output level remains very difficult (Guidotti et al., 2018; von Eschenbach, 2021; Castelvechi, 2016). To better estimate the validity of our methodology, first, we were interested to know how ChatGPT decides regarding the yes/no answer, after it is given different texts as inputs.

Our first attempt to get closer to that answer and better explain the obtained results, involved utilizing the high-level processing of human language that characterizes ChatGPT: we asked it explicitly to provide reasoning for its answers. Although it may not reflect a rigorous test that implies how the computation is done (e.g. which words/combinations of words are given more weight than others), it may anecdotally hint if the model is ‘directing its attention’ towards the right places. We started by inputting 100 randomly sampled headlines from the BBC English website, asking the six questions just as we did previously, but this time we added the following sentence at the end of the prompt: **“Then, only if the answer is yes, please explain what led you to give this answer?”**.

We were impressed by ChatGPT’s ability to explain and support its decisions with convincing arguments, drawing on the relevant material, reflecting high-level ‘understanding’ of subtle nuances in the language (see Table 1 for several representative examples. The full reasoning for all sampled headlines is provided in Supplementary Document 1).

Finally, we wanted to design an experiment that further evaluates this aspect more rigorously. Rigorous validation of any tool that aims at measuring sympathy cannot be easily established, mostly due to the absence of ground-truth which is usually needed to calibrate AI tools or determine their accuracy. For the current work, our (somewhat philosophical) underlying assumption was that the absence of ground-truth in measuring sympathy necessitates relying on public opinion. Much like a tree falling in the woods making a sound only if there are ears to hear it, the impact of a text in generating sympathy is meaningful only if perceived and felt by its readership as such.

In other words, without an objective standard to measure sympathy, the subjective experiences and emotional reactions of the public should become the primary metric for assessment. Assessing the validity of our tool with this approach ensures that the tool remains relevant and accurate in capturing the genuine emotional impact of texts as perceived by real people. Thus, we next asked

Headline	“Does the following text create sympathy to...”	Explanation by ChatGPT
'I don't eat or sleep' says husband of new mother missing after Hamas attacks	1) Israel? <b>Yes</b> 2) Gaza? <b>No</b> 3) Israeli people? <b>Yes</b> 4) Palestinian people? <b>No</b> 5) Israeli military? <b>No</b> 6) Hamas? <b>No</b>	The text creates sympathy for Israel and its people, specifically for the husband of the new mother because he is the one depicted as suffering due to the situation. 'I don't eat or sleep' implies a state of deep distress and suffering for an Israeli individual, related to the actions of Hamas, thus potentially generating sympathy for the Israeli side. The headline implies that the harm was caused by Hamas, a Palestinian organization. As there is no reference to any suffering by Palestinian people, Gaza, the Palestinian organization Hamas, or the IDF/Israeli military, no sympathy is explicitly created for them in this headline.
Israel Gaza: EU calls for 'corridors and pauses' for humanitarian aid	1) Israel? <b>No</b> 2) Gaza? <b>Yes</b> 3) Israeli people? <b>No</b> 4) Palestinian people? <b>Yes</b> 5) Israeli military? <b>No</b> 6) Hamas? <b>No</b>	The article headline doesn't explicitly create sympathy for Israel, the Israeli people, IDF/Israel military, or Hamas. However, it does imply that those in Gaza potentially are in a situation where they need humanitarian aid, which could create sympathy for Gaza and the Palestinian people. The assertion of the need for 'corridors and pauses' suggests that the current situation may not be allowing for the effective delivery of aid, possibly due to ongoing conflict. Consequently, readers may feel sympathetic to the plight of those affected in Gaza, which includes the Palestinian people.
Rishi Sunak calls for stability after backing Israel against Hamas	1) Israel? <b>Yes</b> 2) Gaza? <b>No</b> 3) Israeli people? <b>No</b> 4) Palestinian people? <b>No</b> 5) Israeli military? <b>Yes</b> 6) Hamas? <b>No</b>	1) The text creates sympathy for Israel since Rishi Sunak is backing Israel, which might suggest to the reader that Israel is in a position needing support. 5) The text also indirectly creates sympathy for the IDF/Israel military since they are the primary force fighting against Hamas. By Sunak backing Israel, he is also indirectly supporting the IDF.
Israel-Gaza: Malaysia will maintain ties with Hamas says PM Anwar Ibrahim	1) Israel? <b>No</b> 2) Gaza? <b>Yes</b> 3) Israeli people? <b>No</b> 4) Palestinian people? <b>Yes</b> 5) Israeli military? <b>No</b> 6) Hamas? <b>No</b>	The text implies a positive action taken by Malaysia towards Hamas, which governs Gaza. Therefore, this text may generate sympathy for Hamas and indirectly for Gaza and the Palestinian people. The act of Malaysia maintaining ties could be viewed as a form of support or approval for Hamas, thus creating sympathy. The text does not mention any specific events, actions, or struggles related to Israel, Israeli people, or IDF/Israel military, so it does not create sympathy for them.
Israel says Hamas stages hit-and-run attacks from tunnels	1) Israel? <b>Yes</b> 2) Gaza? <b>No</b> 3) Israeli people? <b>No</b> 4) Palestinian people? <b>No</b> 5) Israeli military? <b>Yes</b> 6) Hamas? <b>No</b>	The text implies that Hamas, a Palestinian militant group, uses unkempt tactics like initiating hit-and-run attacks on Israel, thus painting them as threats. This can generate sympathy for Israel as it appears as the targeted party and for the Israeli military which has to counteract these attacks. However, the headline does not directly mention or imply anything about the Israeli or Palestinian people

**Table 1.** Examples for ChatGPT's Explained Answers in Response to Five BBC Headlines. In this (somewhat anecdotal) 'introspection' experiment, the exact prompt given to ChatGPT was as follows:

*I have the following article headline. Please answer only yes or no to the following questions:*

*1) Does this text create sympathy for Israel? 2) Does this text create sympathy for Gaza? 3) Does this text create sympathy for the Israeli people?*

*4) Does this text create sympathy for the Palestinian people? 5) Does this text create sympathy for IDF/Israel military? 6) Does this text create sympathy for Hamas?*

*Then, only if the answer is yes, please explain what led you to give this answer?*

to what extent ChatGPT reflects the human judgment and designed a straightforward experiment to compare the two.

### **Experiment #5, Results:**

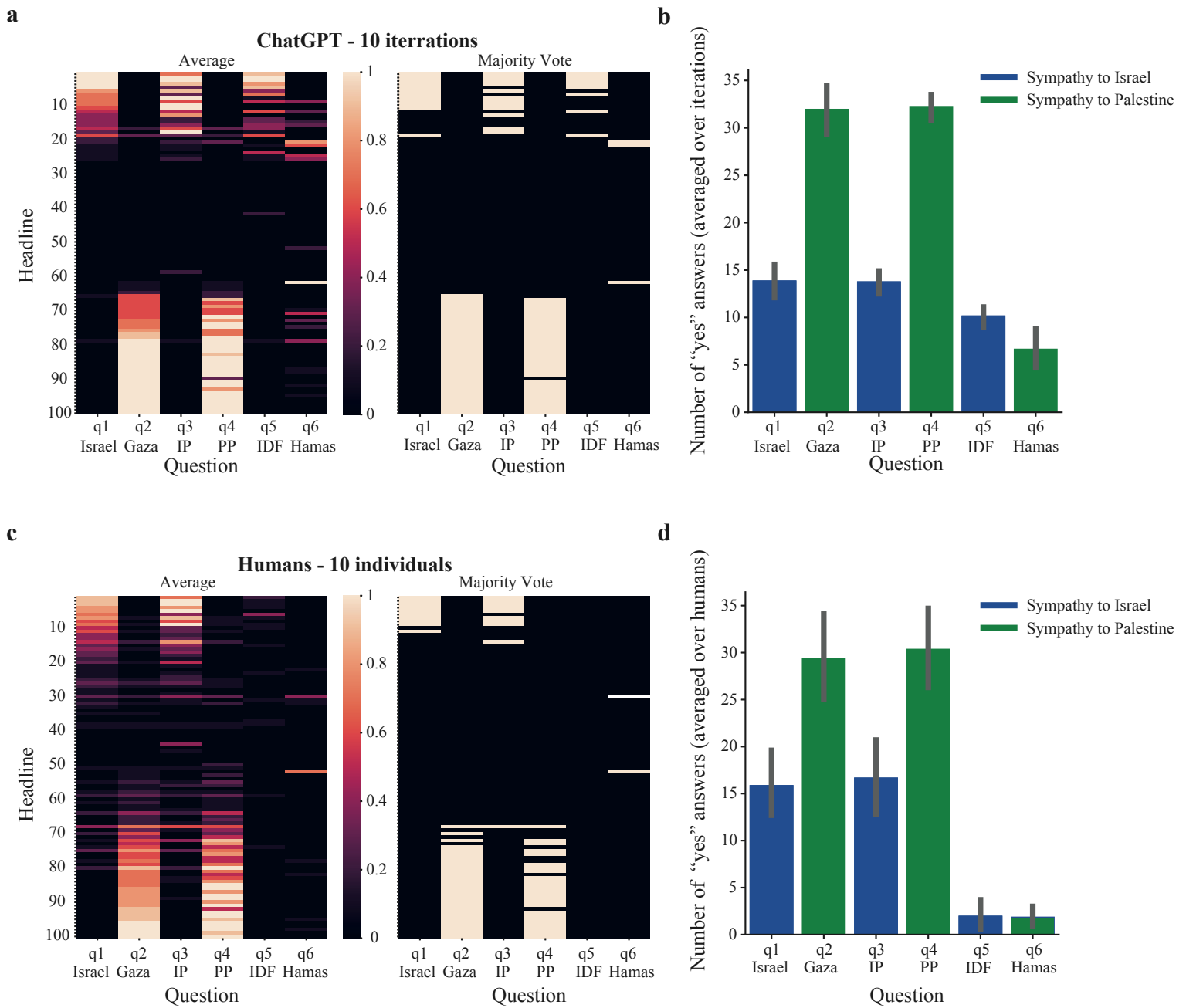
Since humans are limited in their attention span and the amount of text they can practically read, we used only 100 headlines for this experiment (the same randomly sampled items for which ChatGPT produced reasoned responses). We then independently presented these headlines to ten individuals, with the bolded text below, followed by the exact same six questions given to ChatGPT: **“Please read the following news headlines. Try to be as objective as possible and answer only “yes” or “no” to the following questions”**.

The entire data and results for this experiment are presented in Figures 5 and 6, as well as in supplementary Figure 1. Because both the responses of humans and those of ChatGPT may differ between individuals or iterations, respectively, we measure the correspondence in two complimentary ways (please refer to Figure 5a,c): The Majority Vote measure (Figure 5a,c right), as its name suggests, reflects the response received in most repetitions; It gets a “yes” value only if most evaluators answered ‘yes’ for this question.

The Average measure (Figure 5a,c left) reflects the mean “vote” calculated over the 10 iterations/participants (hereafter may be jointly referred to as ‘repetitions’). It ranges from 0 to 1: 0 indicates full agreement of ‘no’ by all ten human annotators; 1 indicates a full agreement of a “yes” response; where 0.5 reflects the lowest level of certainty/agreement, as different repetitions equally yield each type of response. Since the Average measure is the more informative one, encapsulating both the detection of sympathy and the level of consensus for this detection, we use it for further quantification. Both measures are plotted to allow impression of the similar ‘fingerprints’ by humans and by ChatGPT answers for the complete query.

Sorting all headlines in a descending order according to the average difference between q1 and q2 (i.e., q1 minus q2, calculated independently for ChatGPT and Human matrices), we observed generally similar patterns at the matrices depicting ChatGPT and Human responses, as can be seen in Figure 5a,c. However, focusing on specific questions, some differences emerged. Most notably, the almost complete absence of stripes within the Human matrix’s q5 and q6 suggested that the extent to which humans and ChatGPT’s answers are calibrated depends on the exact question (compare the 2 right columns in 5a and those at 5c, either in the Humans or in the Majority Vote matrix).

To further evaluate this, we calculated the average over repetitions for each question separately (Figure 5b,d). Doing this revealed a remarkable similarity between ChatGPT’s and human responses for q1 and q2, as well as for q3 and q4 (compare the four left bars in Figure 5b to those in 5d). For questions 5 and 6, the already low detection rate by ChatGPT became considerably lower in the human responses (two right bars in 5b,d). We conclude that, on average, ChatGPT’s



**Figure 5.** Comparison of Responses by Human Participants and ChatGPT to 100 Headlines Published by the BBC. **a)** Matrices depicting a summary of the “yes” answers provided by ChatGPT across ten iterations for each of the six questions (q1-q6). The vertical y-axis represents the different headlines, while the horizontal x-axis represents the questions. Headlines are sorted by the average value of q1-q2 (i.e. on a pro-Israeli to a Pro Palestinian direction, top to bottom). **Left:** A matrix depicting the average response value. The color coding represents a score in the range 0-1, where 0 means that the headline-question pair yielded negative responses in all 10 iterations, and 1 means the opposite, i.e. a positive answer in all 10 iterations. Note that numbers that are closer to 0.5 reflect lower degree of certainty. **Right:** A binary matrix depicting the “majority vote” measure: headline-question pairs are colored in white if more than half of the iterations yielded a positive answer and remain black otherwise. **b)** The number of positive responses by ChatGPT to all six questions, averaged over 10 iterations. **c-d)** The same as a-b, but 10 human subjects replace 10 ChatGPT iterations. The high similarity between the responses of ChatGPT and human participants across iterations and individuals suggests that both sources produce on average similar measurements of sympathy towards Israel (q1) and Palestine (q2). IP/PP - Israeli/Palestinian People.

judgment regarding sympathy accurately reflects real people's judgment, and that the degree this holds depends on the exact question being asked.

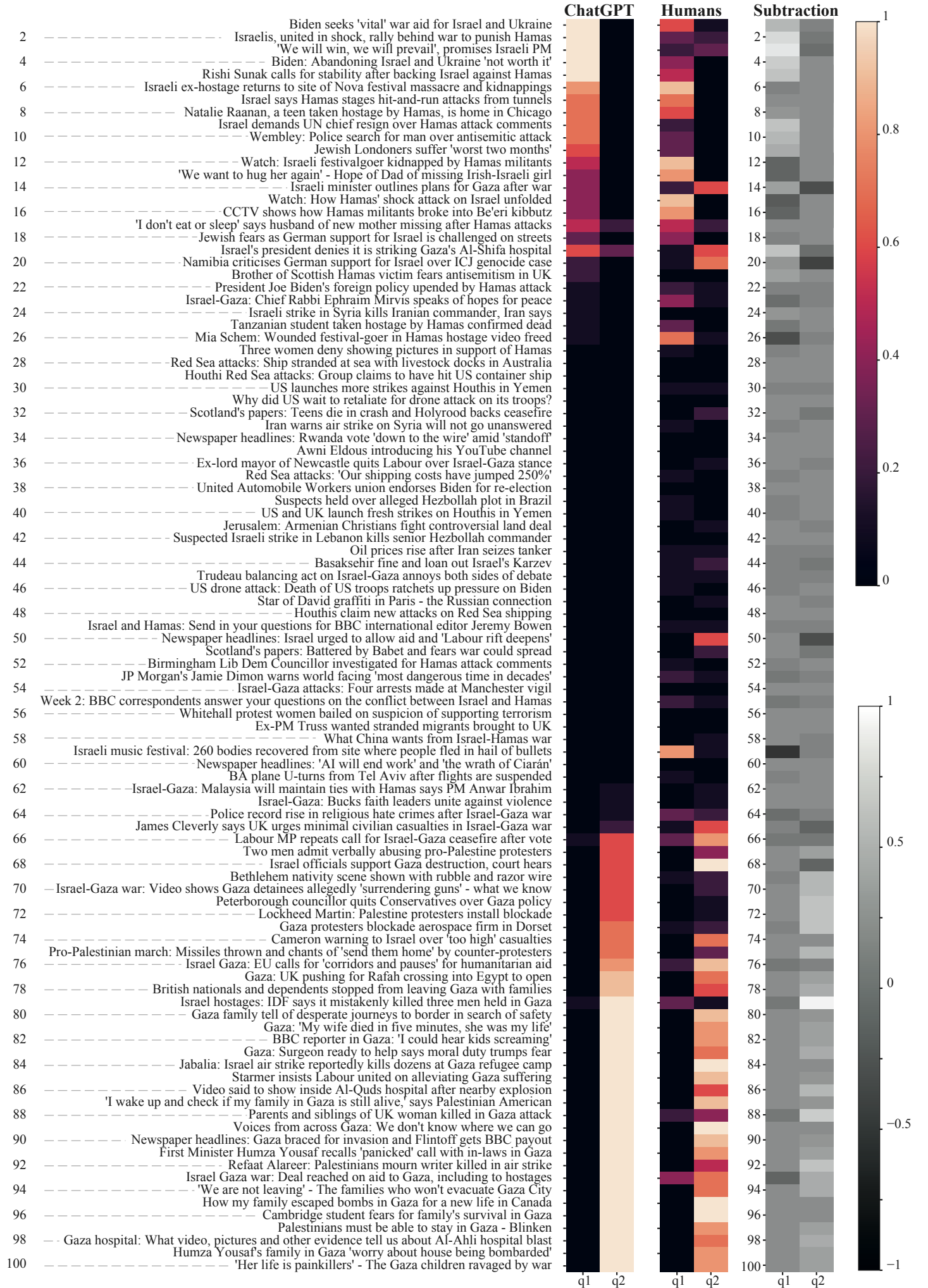
When comparing the responses between humans and ChatGPT so far, we only regarded average trends. Average trends are an important aspect for evaluating our methodology, as it assumes that having relatively few erroneous classifications should not affect the fundamental conclusions, being derived from averages over big numbers. Notably, it is expected that the more samples the averages are based on, the 'cleaner' they are. Thus, we note that while the sample of ten human subjects is very small and should be up-scaled to allow further conclusions, this enabled a surprisingly positive finding; We did not expect that the human average and that of ChatGPT would converge to such high similarity after the evaluation of just as few as ten repetitions having just 100 items each.

Having said that, average trends only provide a coarse measure. To better address our question, we wanted to conduct a direct, fine-grained, comparison between ChatGPT and human judgment, in a paired manner (Figure 6 and supplementary Figure 1). For this goal, we sorted the 100 headlines and corresponding responses according to the average ChatGPT response (specifically, by ChatGPT average value for q1 minus q2, in a descending order), and then sorted the matching human response side by side (See Figure 6. Note that the Humans matrix, now including only q1 and q2 for easier comparison, is not sorted independently as it was in Figure 5a,c but according to the order already dictated by ChatGPT). Finally, we visualized the differences between the matrices by adding a third, subtraction matrix (see Figure 6, right). In this matrix, values range between 1 (bright values – ChatGPT detected sympathy in all iterations, but humans never did) to -1 (dark values – Humans detected sympathy in all iterations, but ChatGPT never did) with 0 (grey) representing complete agreement between the two.

This visualization revealed, once again, the high similarity between the responses, as can be seen by the prevalence of the grey-coloured items. Quantitatively, the responses were highly correlated between humans and ChatGPT for both q1 ( $R(100) = 0.62$ ) and q2 ( $R(100) = 0.83$ ). Further conclusions can be reached by observing the explicitly depicted headlines where discrepancies emerge between humans and ChatGPT (see, for example, q1 for item #3, or q2 for item #20. While examining the findings, it is interesting to refer to Supplementary Document #1 for ChatGPT's explanation regarding each item. The results for the full six-question-query are presented in Supplemental Figure 1).

### **Experiment #6, comparing the BBC to other global news outlets**

The results presented above provide strong evidence of unequal framing and expressions of sympathy towards Israel and Palestine in the BBC coverage of the conflict. It has also demonstrated that the novel methodology we apply for empirical evaluation of the impartiality in sympathetic framing, is robust and valid – reliably detecting sympathy bias in a way that highly resembles human judgments.



**Figure 6. Correlation Between Human Participants and ChatGPT Responses.** Responses for q1 & q2 received from ChatGPT for 100 headlines, averaged over 10 iterations and sorted in descending order based on q1-q2 scores. Responses from 10 human subjects are sorted in a matched order, such that the same 100 items could be viewed together with their associated headline. The black & white subtraction matrix represents the difference between the two: darker colors imply higher degrees of sympathy according to human judgment when compared to ChatGPT, brighter colors imply lower degrees of sympathy according to human judgment when compared to ChatGPT and grey colors imply agreement between the responses. The figure highlights the general calibration and disparity between human and AI evaluations of sympathetic occurrences, illustrating the effectiveness and validity of ChatGPT's responses in reflecting human judgments. This agreement could be further appreciated by the high correlation between the human and ChatGPT average values (q1;  $R(100) = 0.62$ . q2;  $R(100) = 0.83$ . Complete query;  $R(600) = 0.72$ ), as well as by the fact that average of both subtraction columns is not significantly different than zero (q1; Mean = -0.02, SD = 0.23,  $p = 0.39$ . q2; Mean = 0.026, SD = 0.24,  $p = 0.29$ ).

However, it may not be clear to what extent this detected bias, even if accurate, was a result of partial and biased coverage by the BBC, and to what extent the reality unavoidably underlaid this; i.e., that the enormous damage, and especially the high number of casualties in Gaza, naturally and inevitably result in more sympathy towards the side with ‘greater suffering’ - the ‘underdog’.

We note that some of the findings presented thus far already suggest that the latter explanation is implausible, at least in some cases. For example, the discrepancy between the sympathy expressed in the main texts and the headlines. Even if one accepts that the level of imbalance in articles is reasonable, we expect the same level of discrepancy in articles to be reflected in headlines. Yet, the level of imbalance is significantly higher in headlines, compared to the level of imbalance in the main text (compare Figure 1 to Figure 2, or within Figure 3 – compare main-texts’ results to headlines’ results). The same logic is valid for the discrepancy between the BBC English and Arabic websites. The level of imbalance in one language should be reflected in another language. Yet, the data from BBC Arabic website exhibits a consistently higher level of imbalance, compared to the English dataset (compare the results from Figures 1 and 2 to those in Figure 3). Furthermore, the later analysis also demonstrated that higher sympathy levels were always expressed for Gaza, even during the first week following the Hamas attack on October 7th (see Figure 3b).

Nevertheless, we looked for additional ways to dissociate these two alternatives (opinion-induced bias vs. facts-induced). For that purpose, we compare the conflict coverage by the BBC to that of other news outlets worldwide. Here, we utilized the fact that ChatGPT is not a regular ‘reader’, but one capable of consuming and processing vast amounts of data.

### **Experiment #6, Results:**

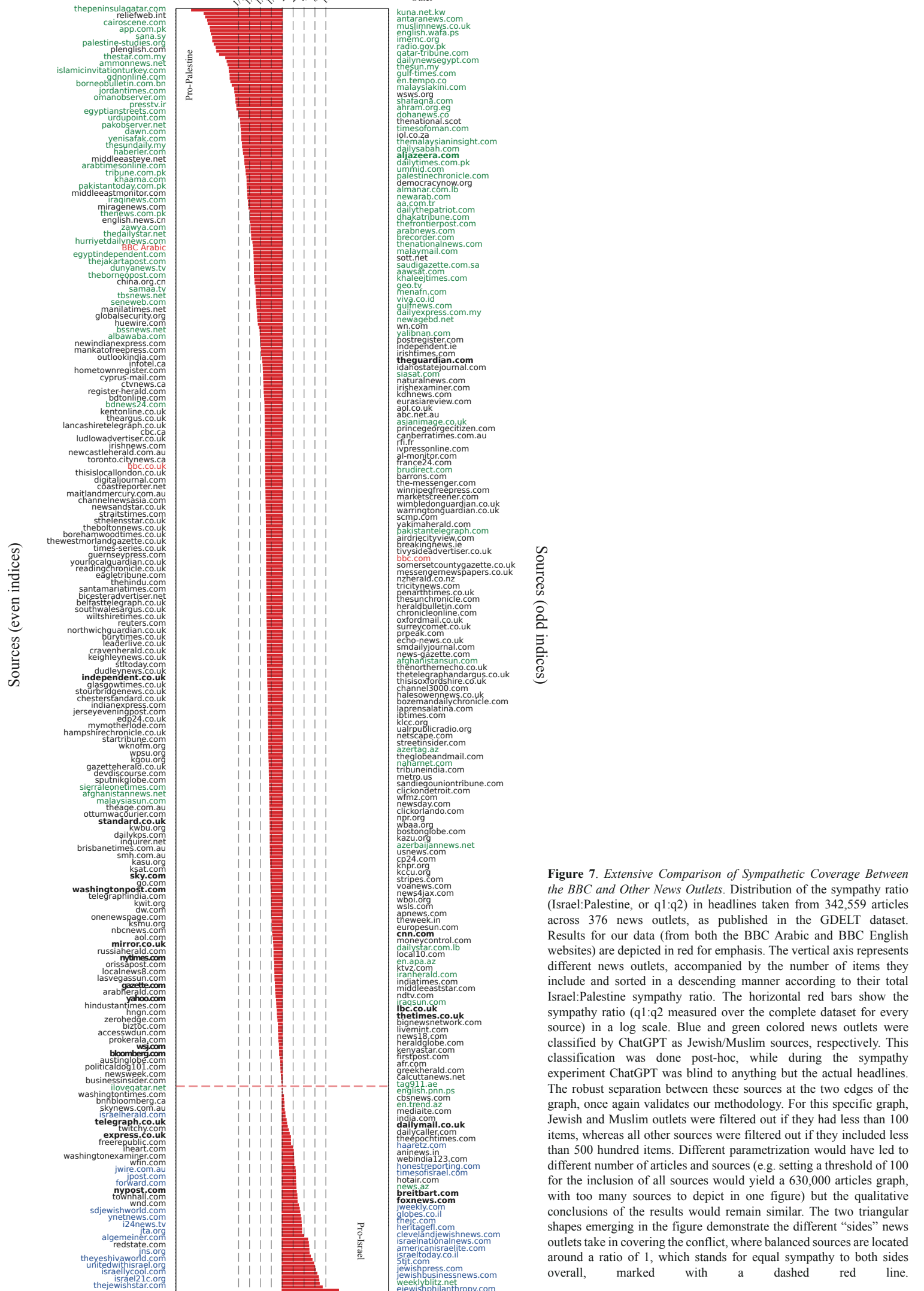
ChatGPT exhibited a great ability in detecting sympathy within short headline texts. We therefore implemented this strategy to validate our methodology and provide an external reference point for comparison with the BBC, undertaking an assessment of our headline analysis across various other news outlets. For this purpose, we utilized the GDELT dataset (Global Database of Events, Language, and Tone. See [here](#)), an extensive open source that monitors global news media published worldwide. Initially, we filtered the dataset to extract only items from the relevant time frame (the four months following October 7th, 2023), which also contained one or more of the six words used for filtering the BBC data (see Methods for further elaboration). For the robustness of our analysis (which depends on high volumes of data such that the noise inherent to any measurement averages out) we only included news outlets for which we had at least 100 items. This strategy yielded approximately 630,000 items published in about 1,500 news outlets. While the results shown in Figure 7 were filtered for visualization purposes, the full results can be zoomed in and viewed in Supplemental Figure 2

Due to the remarkably similar results obtained from comparing the ratios  $q_2:q_1$  and  $q_4:q_3$ , and to streamline our analysis, we focused solely on quantifying the ratios  $q_2:q_1$  across headlines from various news outlets. These ratios were averaged throughout the complete (four months) time-window, to ensure consistency and stability with sparser data points. This process resulted in a single number representing the sympathy ratio for each news outlet in our analysis. All the news outlets were then plotted on the same axis to allow for comparison.



Sympathy ratio: Israel/Palestine (log scale)

- Muslim affiliation
- Jewish affiliation
- Other



**Figure 7. Extensive Comparison of Sympathetic Coverage Between the BBC and Other News Outlets.** Distribution of the sympathy ratio (Israel:Palestine, or q1:q2) in headlines taken from 342,559 articles across 376 news outlets, as published in the GDEL dataset. Results for our data (from both the BBC Arabic and BBC English websites) are depicted in red for emphasis. The vertical axis represents different news outlets, accompanied by the number of items they include and sorted in a descending manner according to their total Israel:Palestine sympathy ratio. The horizontal red bars show the sympathy ratio (q1:q2 measured over the complete dataset for every source) in a log scale. Blue and green colored news outlets were classified by ChatGPT as Jewish/Muslim sources, respectively. This classification was done post-hoc, while during the sympathy experiment ChatGPT was blind to anything but the actual headlines. The robust separation between these sources at the two edges of the graph, once again validates our methodology. For this specific graph, Jewish and Muslim outlets were filtered out if they had less than 100 items, whereas all other sources were filtered out if they included less than 500 hundred items. Different parametrization would have led to different number of articles and sources (e.g. setting a threshold of 100 for the inclusion of all sources would yield a 630,000 articles graph, with too many sources to depict in one figure) but the qualitative conclusions of the results would remain similar. The two triangular shapes emerging in the figure demonstrate the different “sides” news outlets take in covering the conflict, where balanced sources are located around a ratio of 1, which stands for equal sympathy to both sides overall, marked with a dashed red line.

We used blue and green hues to colour the extreme regions, where news outlets exhibit a sympathy ratio larger than 2:1 to any direction (i.e. a ratio  $<1/2$  for pro-Israeli outlets and  $>2$  for pro-Palestinian outlets). Furthermore, we asked ChatGPT to label both Jewish and Muslim news outlets, as we predicted that they would generally exhibit distinguished bias in the sympathy they create, due to their apparent potential impartiality in relation to the conflict. The results of this experiment both reaffirm the validity of our methodology and demonstrates how extreme is the imbalance exhibited by the BBC in general, and mainly in the Arabic language. Figure 5: See how the Jewish (blue) and Muslim (green) news outlets are grouped at the edges of the graph and note the location of the BBC ENGLISH and BBC ARABIC (both in red) across the wide range of news outlets covered by GDELT). Also note the blue and green regions of extremely unbalanced news outlets, defined as those with a sympathy ratio bigger than 2 towards Israel or Palestine, respectively.

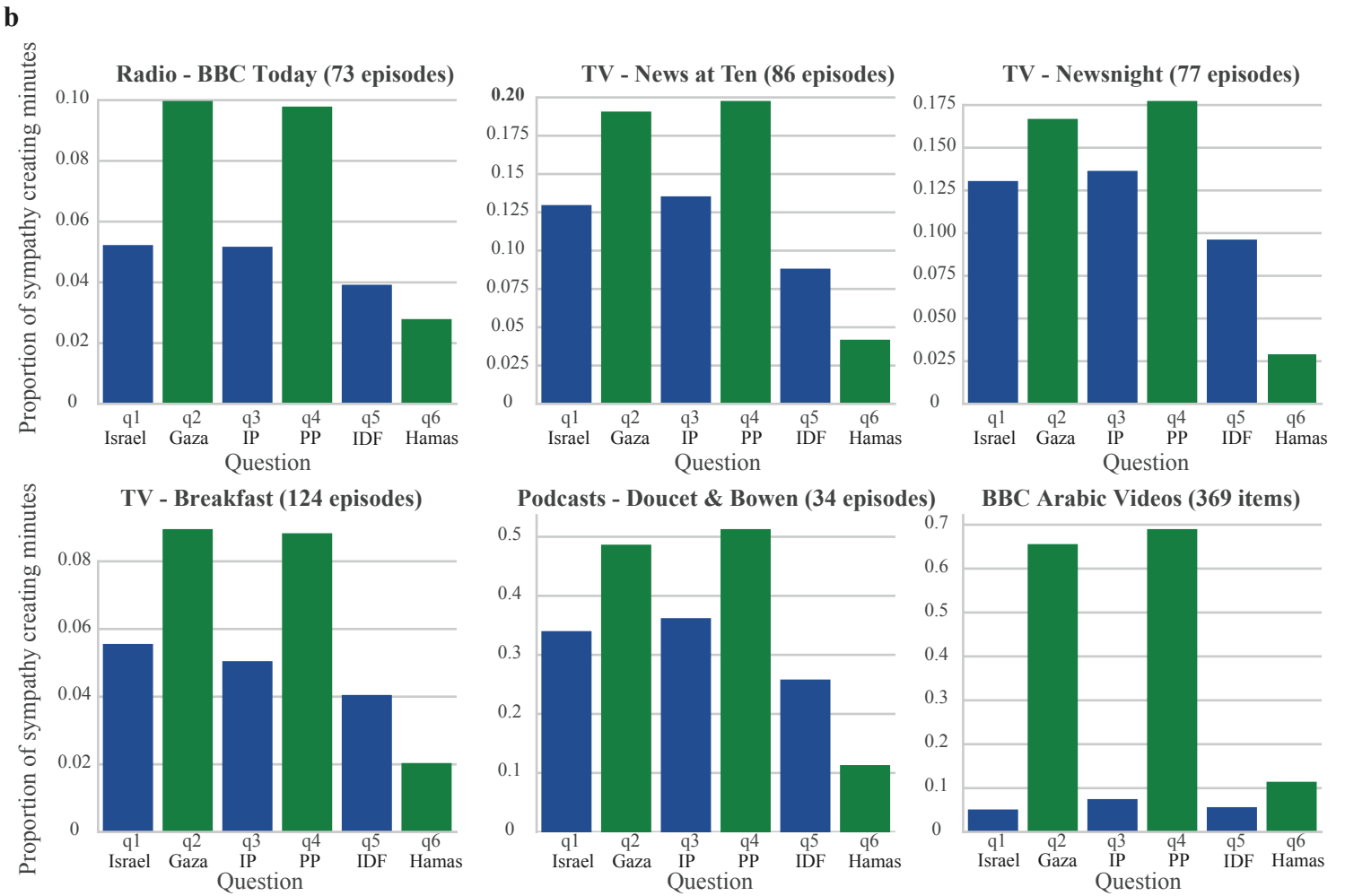
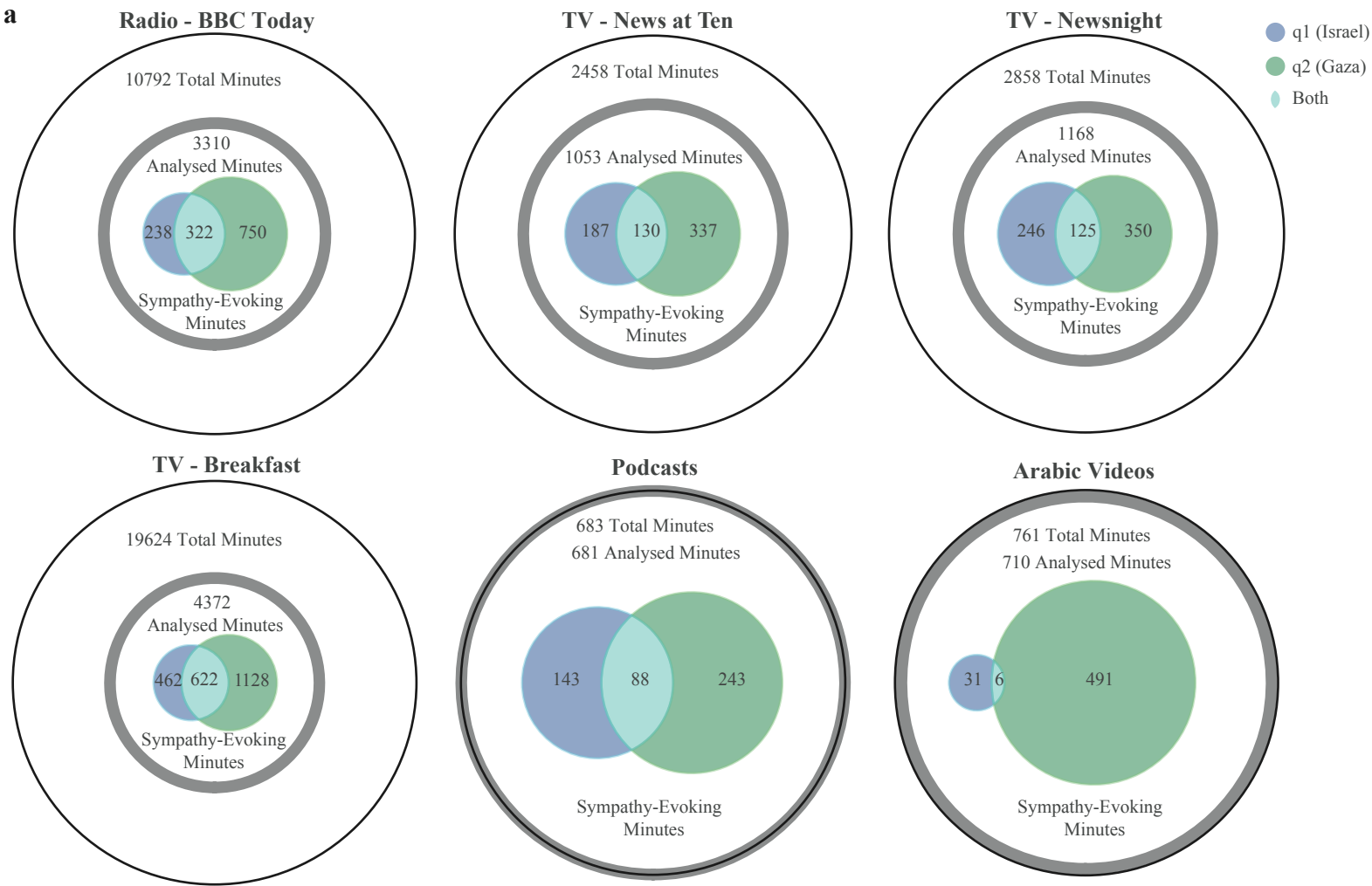
### **Experiment #7, Expanding the Assessment to Other Platforms**

In the experiments undertaken so far, we probed texts from online websites. However, BBC News utilizes a variety of publication channels and formats to reach a global audience, including Television, Radio, Podcasts and Videos. Next, we asked to assess whether our novel methodology could be generalized and used for reliably measuring sympathy across these platforms too. As case studies, we decided to focus on chapters published during our temporal window of interest from the following BBC programs: TV - News at Ten, Newsnight and Breakfast. Radio - BBC Today. Podcasts – by Liz Doucet and Jeremy Bowen. In addition, due to our previous findings regarding the texts published at the BBC Arabic website, we also decided to investigate their published videos (translated to English). Since our methodology receives texts as input while these sources are all based on speech, we were curious to see if the same bias patterns could still be detected (if they exist) even if some of it is likely lost in the translation from speech to text due to, e.g., the absence of tone.

### **Experiment #7, Results:**

We started by converting all the required data from speech to text, using an AI based tool (by a private company named 'Bluskai'). The resulting data was sorted in a table, in which rows containing the texts are divided by utterances for different speakers and accompanied by time stamps. For this analysis, we divided the data into chunks of ~ one minute (see Methods for details). We searched these samples for our 6 keywords and chose our samples of interest if they included one or more of these words or if they were adjacent to such a sample (Figure 8a, 'Analysed minutes'). We then inputted those samples sequentially, just as per our previous analysis, changing only the first sentence in the prompt to fit the new settings: **"I have the following text, taken from a Radio/podcast/Television show..."**

This strategy yielded in total 11,294 (out of 37,176) samples/minutes that were sent to ChatGPT for classification (see division by program in Figure 8a, 'Total Minutes'). These samples included altogether 7,328,260 words, with 197 being the average number of words per sample. The results



**Figure 8. Comprehensive Analysis of Sympathetic Coverage Across Multiple BBC Publication Channels.** **a)** The figure depicts the data used in the extensive study regarding sympathy towards Israel and Palestine across various BBC publication channels during the four months following October 7th, 2023. The analysis includes radio programs, TV shows, podcasts, and translated videos. The most sophisticated AI tools were used to transform text to speech for the purpose of this analysis, ensuring accurate and consistent evaluation of the content. The complete datasets, represented by the thin black circles, were divided into chunks, and relevant chunks of text were then chosen based on the presence of one or more of our keywords. The relevant chunks, represented by the thick grey circles, were sent to ChatGPT and yielded the results depicted in the Venn diagrams for the two main questions in our query **b)** The proportion of sympathy-creating minutes is shown for the complete query and for each channel, providing a broad view of how different media formats within the BBC network portray the Israel-Palestine conflict. While all channels exhibit bias in sympathy that favors Palestine, the Arabic videos exhibit this bias on a different scale, showing a much more prominent example of extremely unbalanced coverage. IP/PP - Israeli/Palestinian People.

for this analysis are presented in Figure 8, illustrating how the imbalance of sympathy for Palestinians /Israelis is consistent throughout different BBC platforms, with the content in the Arabic language pushing this trend forward, being extremely biased even when contrasted with the already-material imbalance in the BBC's English content.

## **Discussion**

Contrary to the obligations of impartial reporting, our analysis of sympathy levels in BBC reporting on the Israel-Gaza conflict reveals clear imbalance in the framing of the two sides. The data we analysed consistently indicate a clear bias favouring the Palestinian side, evident across various platforms, formats and languages.

Focusing on articles published online, we showed that the imbalance in coverage was robust in time (Figures 1-3) and especially pronounced in headlines, where sympathy towards Palestine dramatically outweighs that towards Israel, by 3/6-fold on average in the English and Arabic websites, respectively, peaking at tenfold or more at some time-points (see Figure 2 for English and Figure 3 for Arabic headlines analyses). Furthermore, and independently of the main text analysis, we have found that even in the relatively few articles where the main text carries some sympathy towards Israel, this sympathy is rarely reflected in the headline, whereas the same proportion is doubled for Palestine (Figures 2f,3d).

Regarding the BBC Arabic, these tendencies are notably exacerbated: Our analysis demonstrated it to be amongst the most extreme of all the media sources we scrutinized. A thorough investigation unveiled how its bias surpasses that of BBC English across all measured parameters (compare the results in Figures 1,2 to those in Figure 3).

In addition to the conclusions drawn from our analysis, it is noteworthy to highlight the innovative methodology employed in this study. By utilizing ChatGPT-based analysis to assess sympathy levels in big pools of news articles, particularly through the quantifying sympathy occurrences in main-texts, headlines, and their ratios, we introduced a novel approach to studying media bias.

Our method allows for an efficient big-data analysis, via an objective evaluation, thus mitigating potential biases inherent in human subjective judgment and providing insights into the nuances of media coverage. Our innovative, straightforward application of the cutting-edge NLP technology proved to be exceptionally robust; different repetitions yielded similar results, indicating reliability (Figure 4).

Furthermore, our results reflected human judgment remarkably well; responses from human participants and ChatGPT converged to be very similar, even though our sample size was small (Figure 5). This is especially important, as the absence of 'ground-truth' for calibrating our tool makes the average human opinion a very reasonable choice. Moreover, a closer observation, where responses by humans and ChatGPT to the same items were examined side by side, revealed good fits beyond the average level; headlines received similar scores by humans and ChatGPT as reflected in high correlation values, both for the complete 6-questions-dataset, and specifically for

our main questions (Figure 6 and supplementary Figure 1). In the cases where there is disagreement between ChatGPT and humans, reading ChatGPT's 'explanations' provides an interesting (though anecdotal) observation (Table 1, Supplementary Document #1).

After establishing its robustness, we applied our methodology to the assessment of other news outlets. This assessment, based on hundreds of thousands of items, highlighted the distinctiveness of the BBC's standpoint, indicating an exceptionally extreme position even when contrasted with international counterparts, some of which are explicitly hostile to Israel (refer to Figure 7). We pushed the limits further, as we wanted to apply the method on data coming from completely different platforms, all based on speech that was converted to text using advanced AI tools. In this analysis, once again, we revealed a sympathy bias widely spread in various BBC publication channels, with the videos published in the Arabic website being the most biased by far, replicating our previous results again.

Taken together, these findings raise important concerns about journalistic impartiality and the influence of media framing on the public perception of conflict dynamics. While it is essential to recognize the complexities of the Israel-Palestine conflict, media outlets must strive for balanced and fair reporting to foster a nuanced understanding among their audiences.

The novel approach we developed facilitated the systematic analysis of a vast dataset of news articles, offering valuable insights into the portrayal of the Israel-Palestine conflict in the media. Not only does this method enhance the rigor and comprehensiveness of our findings, but it also has the potential to establish a precedent for future research in the realm of media studies. By deepening our understanding of media dynamics, it can contribute to fostering impartial and balanced reporting.

Specifically, the disparity observed in BBC reporting, particularly in the headlines, underscores the need for ongoing scrutiny of media practices and a commitment to transparency and accountability in journalism. Moving forward, efforts to address bias and promote balanced reporting are crucial for fostering informed discourse and facilitating constructive engagement with complex geopolitical issues like the Israel-Palestine conflict.

# Methods

## Main Dataset (BBC English Website)

Our dataset for experiments 1-3 comprised 1,529 items scraped from the BBC website, published within our defined timeframe of interest (October 7th, 2023, to February 7th, 2024). Items were included only if somehow relevant to the Israel-Gaza conflict., i.e. published in the middle east tab and/or contain at least one of the following six sequences: [israel, gaza, palestin, idf, hamas, antisem]. It is worth noting that we employed abbreviated sequences like 'palestin' to encompass both the terms 'Palestine' and 'Palestinian'. The main dataset in experiments 1-3 was collected by the Asserson legal team, with the result being replicated with a fully automated data collection process (not shown).

After sending the articles sequentially to ChatGPT, including the complete prompt every time, we expected (and accepted) strictly answers in the format 1) yes/no ... 6) yes/no. our query yielded 1481/1529 cases for which responses of this kind were received from ChatGPT. 40 of the 48 missing items did not include any content as their main text, being mostly videos or images. For the other 8 items (about 0.5%), ChatGPT failed to return an answer in the required format.

We replicated the results of this experiment (the results are not shown in the current report) with a dataset we collected with the fully automated scraping system, provided by Bright Data.

## ChatGPT API Usage

We wrote a custom Python code, using the Application Programming Interface (API) made available by OpenAI, the creator of ChatGPT. In this and in all other experiments ChatGPT-4 was the model of choice and all default settings (i.e. temperature, context, etc.) were kept.

## Transcripts Analysis and Choosing the Right Size for Single Samples

Our methodology is based on quantitative analysis - Multiple complex samples (i.e. texts written in natural language, encoded in high – and due to their different lengths also varying - dimensions) are classified in a binary manner and reduced to a simple yes/no answer. While the basic data units used in our previous analyses were well-defined (main-text/headline of one article), the current analysis posed a new challenge: dividing the data in chunks. First, we needed to choose the basic unit that suits this analysis. While this may sound as a simple, somewhat technical decision, it is in fact an important one and not so trivial.

On one hand, since the power and precision of our methodology does not come from single classifications (which could be noisy), but rather depends on large-scale numbers, the division to samples should provide a high number of samples. For example, if one seeks to apply the methodology on, e.g., a radio show containing 10 chapters, choosing a chapter as the basic unit would result in a far too small a dataset with only 10 samples, reduced to yes/no answers. Furthermore, if the size of these chunks is too big – a question like “does this text create sympathy” may be answered positively in the vast majority of times, reflecting an uninformative query (think about the question: “Is there a person drinking water right now in NYC?”).

On the other hand, choosing chunks that are too small may result in inaccurate results due to the lack of information and context that are needed for the correct classifications of the single samples (think about the question “Is there a person drinking water right now, standing within a certain 1x1 meter area within some unpopulated land?”). Thus, the size of the chunks should be as small as possible to allow the highest number of samples, while still keeping the test informative. Here, we chose to divide the samples using the temporal information (time stamps) associated with them, as this is a reliable measure that should be easy to get with most transcripts. We chose to split the data in chunks of approximately one minute, concatenating all of the utterances within a minute (note that, e.g., if an utterance was longer than a minute, it was sent to ChatGPT as is). Admittedly, while this strategy yielded high numbers of samples, where individual samples contain enough content for informative tests (i.e. including both “yes” and “no” answers to our question, think about the question: “Is there a person drinking water right in an arbitrary group containing, e.g., 200 people?”), it seemed to be somewhat arbitrary.

Future research should regard the ideal size of chunks that would allow the most efficient/precise analysis. It is tempting to hypothesize that the solution would be one that maximizes the entropy of the single tests (i.e., choosing chunks size such that individual tests have ~ 50% chance to result in either yes/no answer, Shani-Narkiss et al., 2020).

### **Humans vs. ChatGPT**

For the human participants essay, we received valid answers for 997 out of the 1,000 questions we asked in total (10 human participants x 100 headlines each). For the three questions that were left blank, all by the same subject, we filled all missing values with “no”.

### **GDELT Experiment - Labelling the Muslim and the Jewish News Outlets**

For the labelling of the Muslim and the Jewish news outlets (Figure 7, green and blue, respectively) we used ChatGPT4o. We note that the labelling was meant to allow a coarse impression, and it may contain some random errors. The exact prompt was as follows:

*“I have a list of website sources and would like the following information for each source: [Source, Country, Religion, Global Rank, Local Rank, Ownership].*

*Here are the specifications:*

- Source: The name of the media outlet, exactly as given.*
- Country: The country of origin for this media outlet.*
- Religion: The primary religion associated with the media outlet (or the country of origin, by default).*
- Global Rank: Does this source ranked among the top-100 global news outlets, in terms of readership size (strictly Yes/No/NA).*

- *Local Rank: Does this source ranked among the top-10 local news outlets (country-level), in terms of readership size (strictly Yes/No/NA).*

- *Ownership: Private, Public, NA, Other (strictly one of these options)."*

### **Replications and Variations**

The extensive study described in this report included replications and variations not included in the current document. For example, we analysed another version of the main dataset encompassing the articles from the BBC English website, as we wanted to make sure that a fully automated data collection would yield a similar result to that yielded by the data collected manually by the Asserson legal team. Another example is the experiments we conducted over the BBC Arabic dataset; here the report includes our first attempt, where we used (Arabic to English) translation by ChatGPT4. However, we replicated this experiment using two alternative translations, by ChatGPT4o and by Google Translate.

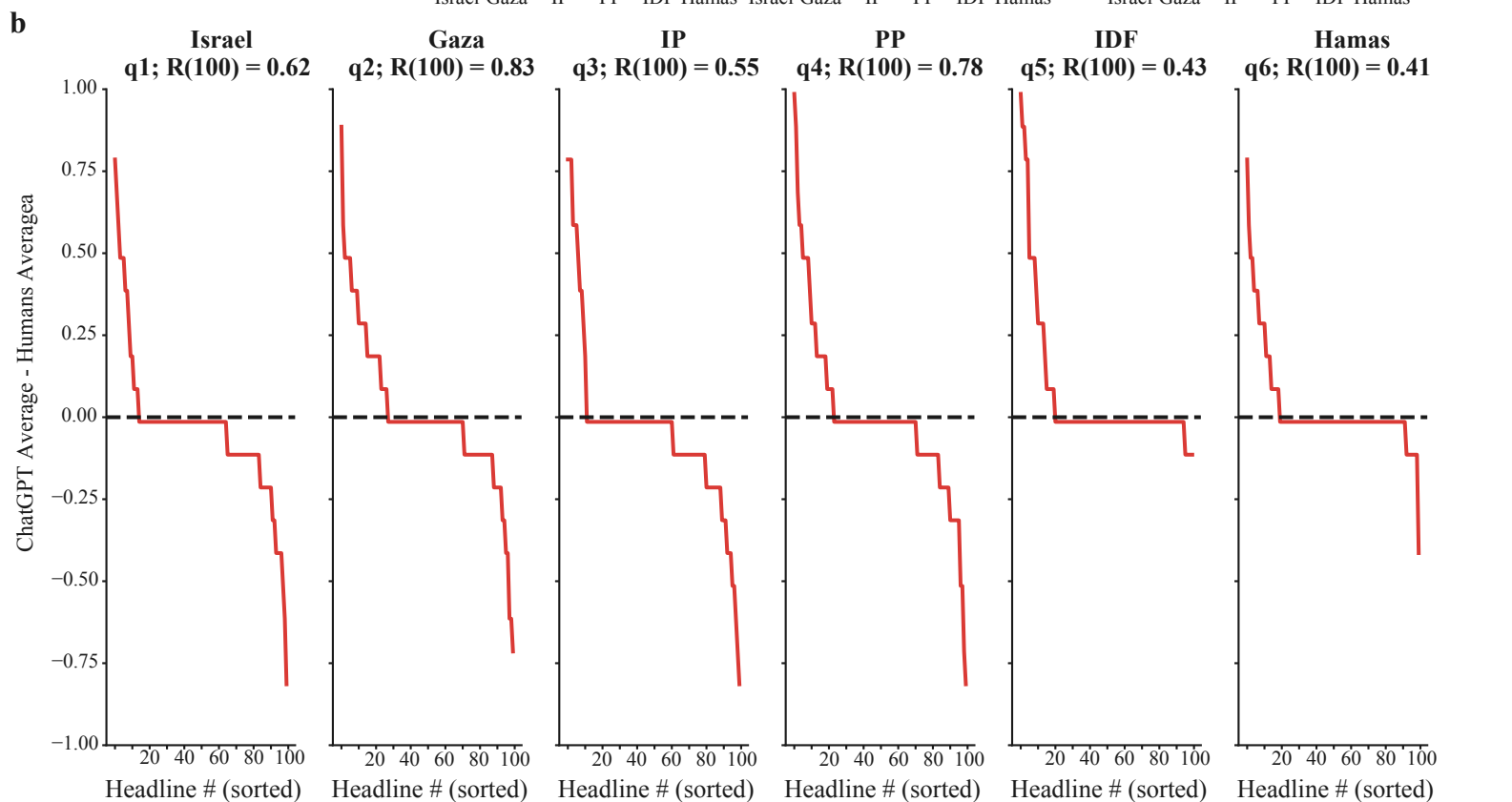
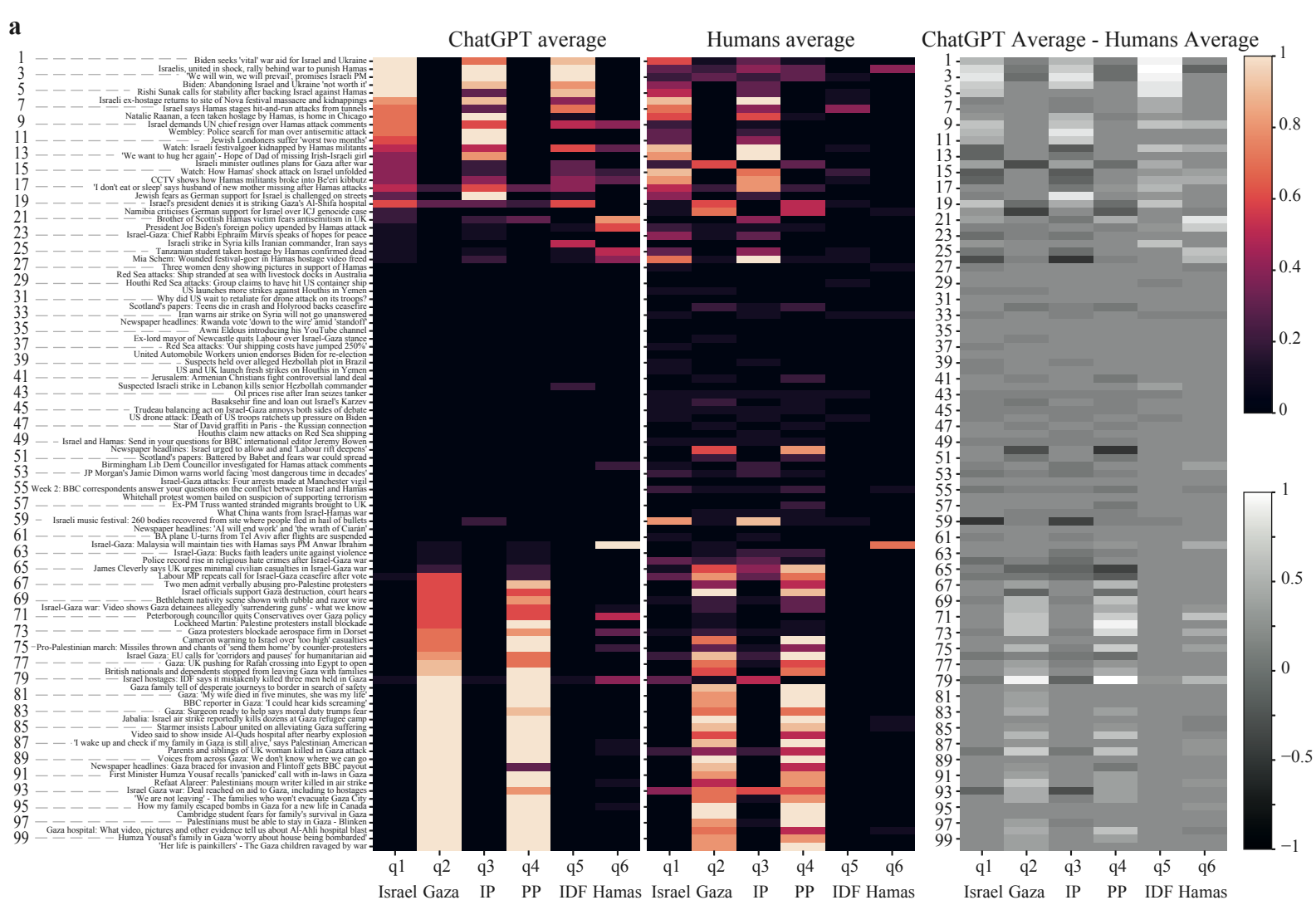
For clarity and transparency, and as a good scientific practice, we focus exclusively on the original experiments we conducted in this report. However, we note that the trends reported here were consistent, demonstrating the robustness of the findings throughout different settings.



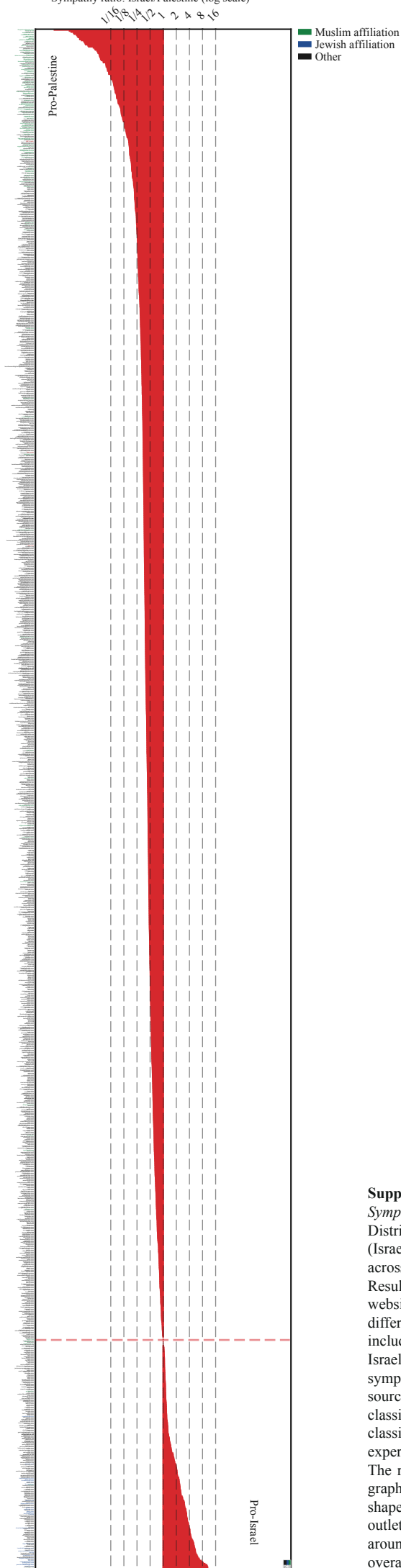
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**Supplemental figure 1. Comparison of Responses Between Human Participants and ChatGPT, the full query (six questions).** This figure presents a detailed comparison of the average responses between 10 ChatGPT iterations and 10 human participants for 100 headlines published on the BBC British website. The analysis focuses on all the six different questions (q1-q6) regarding sympathy towards Israel and Palestine. **a**) Exactly like figure 6, but with all six questions depicted. **b**) A quantification of the disagreement between humans and ChatGPT. For each one of the questions, the subtraction between the matrices yields 100 residual values which are then sorted according to size. As can be seen, for questions 1-4, the residuals caused by subtracting the ChatGPT and the Human matrices are centered around zero, reflecting similar assessments between the two on average. For questions 5-6, more positive than negative values are included in the residuals, suggesting that when it comes to sympathy towards militant entities, ChatGPT sensitivity is higher than that of humans. Most residual values are small, reflecting a general agreement between humans and ChatGPT. This could be further appreciated by the correlation values, depicted next to each question. The general correlation value for the full query is  $R(600) = 0.72$ . IP/PP - Israeli/Palestinian People.



**Supplemental Figure 1.** Full results, *Extensive Comparison of Sympathetic Coverage Between the BBC and Other News Outlets.* Distribution of the sympathy ratio (Israel:Palestine, or  $q1:q2$ ) in headlines taken from 628,859 articles across 1465 news outlets, as published in the GDEL dataset. Results for our data (from both the BBC Arabic and BBC English websites) are depicted in red for emphasis. The vertical axis represents different news outlets, accompanied by the number of items they include and sorted in a descending manner according to their total Israel:Palestine sympathy ratio. The horizontal red bars show the sympathy ratio ( $q1:q2$  measured over the complete dataset for every source) in a log scale. Blue and green colored news outlets were classified by ChatGPT as Jewish/Muslim sources, respectively. This classification was done post-hoc, while during the sympathy experiment ChatGPT was blind to anything but the actual headlines. The robust separation between these sources at the two edges of the graph, once again validates our methodology. The two triangular shapes emerging in the figure demonstrate the different “sides” news outlets take in covering the conflict, where balanced sources are located around a ratio of 1, which stands for equal sympathy to both sides overall, marked with a dashed red line.

## Schedule 6 – Interviewee Experiment Methodology

### i. Introduction

The goal of this task was to profile and analyse the interviewees that the BBC has chosen to incorporate into its English and Arabic coverage of the Israel-Hamas war.

### ii. Data Tagging

Article content was divided across the entire Dataset into instances where interviewees were quoted. In order to correctly profile Interviewees, each instance in BBC English and BBC Arabic was tagged in a manual review by an appropriate English or Arabic speaker.

- a. The identity categories were sub-classified as: ‘Academic’, ‘Civilian’, ‘Military’, ‘NGO’, ‘Official body’, ‘Politician’, ‘Professional’, ‘Reporter’, ‘State/government’, ‘Victim’, and ‘Victim’s relative’. Identities which did not fall inside these categories were labelled as ‘Other’.
- b. The nationality of the quoted agents were defined as: ‘Israeli’ (Israeli national and resident), ‘Israeli foreign’ (Israeli national and non-resident), ‘Palestinian’ (Palestinian national and resident), ‘Palestinian foreign’ (Palestinian national and non-resident), ‘Other’.
- c. The political affiliation of the quoted agents was defined as: ‘Palestinian’, ‘Israeli’, ‘Neither’, or ‘Other’.
- d. The final category was aimed to determine the affiliation of the quote, with classifications of: ‘pro-Palestinian’, ‘pro-Israeli’, ‘Neutral’ and ‘Other’.

### iii. Tagging Criteria

#### Identifying Quotes

Human reviewers read each article and noted down the interviewees and their associate quotes in line with the following criteria:

- a. The presence of quote marks, indicating that someone was speaking;
- b. Phrases such as *A. N. Other told the BBC...* followed by quote marks;

Where there were breaks in a quote, these were removed from the word count of the quote itself.

e.g. *"I saw the people coming", A. N. Other told the BBC, "and I wondered what had happened"*

In instances without a clear indication of an interviewee (i.e. without quote marks/clear signposting as per a. and b., interviewees were counted as such where the BBC had clearly sat down individually with the interviewee. Indicators for this included human interest pieces, accompanying images, and longer pieces.

Comments from press conferences, official statements, public spokespeople and third party sources (e.g. Reuters, CNN) were not included.

e.g. *"According to an IDF spokesperson the "Israeli army have been..."* would therefore not be included as a BBC interviewee.

### Identifying Nationality

If the nationality of the speaker was not written or made clear in the article, the Human Reviewer spent a short amount of time researching the interviewee to establish their nationality. Dual nationals were noted as such.

The Human Reviewers wrote down all nationalities, where they were known, however, for the purposes of this experiment, they were refined to Israeli (or Dual Israeli), Palestinian (or Dual Palestinian) or 'Other'

Where the Human Reviewer did not know, or could not clearly find out the nationality of the interviewee, the interviewee was tagged as 'Unknown'.

### Determining Speaker Affiliation

There was a base assumption that Israelis were affiliated with Israel and Palestinians affiliated with Palestine. Unless the quote/wider context of the article stood to challenge this assumption, that is what was written.

For those of 'Other' nationalities, the Human Reviewer made a further assumption that anyone with close personal ties (e.g. through immediate family members) to Israel or Palestine, would therefore also be considered as affiliated with that region. Former Scottish First Minister Humza Yousaf, for example, was considered to have an affiliation with Palestine, due to his wife Nadia El-Nakla being Palestinian.

Job roles, per se, did not equate to an assumption around affiliation, with the exception of some NGOs/religious leaders. For example, employees of UNRWA were considered affiliated with Palestinians.

If the affiliation of the speaker was not clear from reading the article, or through research of more prominent interviewees, then the speaker affiliation was deemed to be 'neither'

### **Determining Quote Affiliation**

As per speaker affiliation, this was also part of the Human Reviewer to define, using the following guidelines:

- a. This exercise focused on the viewpoint expressed by the particular quote at hand. One UK national, for example, has been interviewed several times, presenting differing views and perspectives, and thus providing quotes that were deemed to be affiliated with Israel, Palestine, or neither.
- b. There was no baseline assumption here that Israeli nationals would provide quotes that were affiliated with Israel, nor that all Palestinians would provide quotes that were affiliated with Palestine. However, this was the case in the majority of applicable quotes.
- c. Where the affiliation of that particular quote was not clear, the Human Reviewer noted 'Neither'

### **Determining Word Count of Quotes**

Human reviewers determined the word count of a quote by lifting all text relating to an interviewee into an .xls cell, which was subsequently formulated to accurately calculate the number of words. Where there were breaks in a quote (as described above), these were removed, and therefore not captured.

#### iv. Data Analysis

Tagged data tables were analysed using a custom Python code and Google Sheets, and was composed of 3 steps:

- a. (python) Data loading and cleanup - xlsx data tables were converted into Pandas DataFrames, and categories were merged to correct typing errors such as spelling and upper/lower case text.

- b. (python) A cross tab table was constructed to derive the frequency for each of the identity sub-categories against the nationality, political affiliation and quote affiliation.
- c. (Google Sheets) Pie charts were produced against all tables and summarised by relative frequency of use per nationality/affiliation.



## Schedule 7 – Omissions: Keyword Search Methodology

### i. Data Tool – Keyword Search Engine

We used a custom designed Excel Macro Search Engine to conduct a number of keyword searches across our entire dataset. Our dataset comprised all the English Language output within the reporting window (i.e. BBC articles, Radio, Podcasts, Newsnight, News at Ten and Newsnight). Transcriptions were used for all the output, except the BBC articles.

The search engine is designed to look up instances where one or more ‘primary’ or ‘key’ words appear, within a defined number of words of another ‘secondary’ word or words. The search engine used the following variables as inputs:

- Main word: This is the main search word. E.g. ‘Hamas’
- Definite word(s): All of these word(s) must appear within the ‘Lookup Amount’ of the main word, in order to capture it in the results e.g. ‘health’ and ‘ministry’
- Potential word(s): one of these words must appear within the Lookup Amount of the main word, in order to capture it in the results. E.g. ‘proscribe’, ‘designate’ and ‘recognise’
- Lookup Amount: This is the number of words between the main word and any definite or potential words that are entered.

‘\*’ was used to allow the capture of other, related search terms. For example, terror\* includes terror, terrorist(s) and terrorism.

The search engine macro was developed in native Visual Basic for Applications (VBA) and is 275 lines long.

The search algorithm works as follows:

1. It identifies all matches of the Main Word.
2. Starting at the Main Word, it copies an amount of words equal to the Lookup Amount in both directions into a list.
3. Check whether the list contains all Definite words.
4. Check whether the list contains any Potential words.
5. If **both** checks are passed, return a successful match to the user.

General Limitations

1. Transcriptions, provided to us by Blueskai<sup>12</sup> were found to be highly accurate, with the exception of names (of both individuals and of certain place names). We therefore limited our use of names as a search term.
2. Human Error, due to the sheer volume of data it is possible that there are some instances of human error both when creating the search terms and when categorising the results of the searches.

Below is a sample of a search result, showing the input terms, a section of the results and categorisation. Full search results can be found in appendix 7. The methodology behind each search is explained below.

This is the main search term. The search engine will produce every instance of the phrase 'war crime' or war crimes'

The output here yielded 184 instances of the phrase 'war crime' or war crimes' were found, across outputs

Each result is categorised

i	70225
i	70393
i	73231
both	73667
both	73673
both	73894
both	74098
both	74277
i	75381
i	77657
h	77660
i	77730
i	77732
i	77783
h	77863
both	77863
na	87256
na	87263

At the end is the total for each category

Israel	115
Hamas	15
both	15
NA	30
duplicates	9

using the AL Shifa hospital in this way was a war crime, but it didn't lessen Israel's responsibility to protect civilians. Hamas says this is a war crime. The Israelis say they can attack anywhere if it's guilty to leaking classified information that helped journalists reveal alleged war crimes by the country's special forces in Afghanistan. David McBride guilty to leaking classified information that helped journalists reveal alleged war crimes by the country's special forces in Afghanistan. David McBride country with no intention of giving them back is a war crime. The Russian government says it's unaware of the case port in Sri Lanka, who have themselves been accused of war crimes and where 10s of thousands of disappeared people has the Daily Mail, which has the front page headline No war crimes, no angry chants, just solidarity with the UKs fearful there are people in this country who accused him of war crimes for his part in the bombing of Cambodia and in the bombing of Laos and Cambodia as tantamount to war crimes. Henry Kissinger was one of the key proponents of his role in carpet bombing Cambodia as tantamine to a war crime. Israel and Hamas have agreed to extend a truce in the bombing of Laos and Cambodia as tantamount to war crimes. Henry Kissinger was one of the key proponents of Hello. Tomorrow morning, war crimes expert Philippe Sands joins our live coverage on Israel International Criminal Court already many years ago to investigate any war crimes committed by any party in the territory of the this? Because they know Israel is the side that commits war crimes, crimes against humanity. And now there's a growing number a diplomatic shield for Israel when it comes to potential war crimes investigations. There's a range of options available. Frankly, it's with Boris Johnson, who condemns Metropolitan Police investigation into alleged war crimes by Israel and Gaza. The former Prime Minister says Police after it emerged that the Met is investigating alleged war crimes in Gaza. Now Scotland Yard are clear that in anticipating a greater number of potential witnesses and victims of war crimes arriving from the region. Ever since, that story may it makes a point that genocide is distinct from other war crimes Israel's accused of in Gaza. EG collective punishment of further South by Israel potentially amounted to forcible transfer, a war crime. Members, including Israel's allies, rejected statements coming from Israe Nuremberg trials, the journalist Chris Stephen, considering the future of war crimes, justice after decades of compromise and disappointments. And F by the IDF Prime Minister. Such an act constitutes a war crime, does it not? a question of whether Israel has or has not committed war crimes in their assault. And there's plenty of evidence, not Article 1F of the Refugee Convention provides for exclusions for war crimes and crimes against humanity, that sort of thing. And humanitarian law, all that is also an abuse and a war crime, according to a reading of the law. think these instances of civilian that this and accusations of war crimes will not be

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.blueskai.com/>

ii. Searches performed

**Searches used for Omission 1: Failure to put due weight on the existence and content of the Hamas Charter**

<b>Keyword search Hamas charter</b>	
<b>Rationale</b>	We were looking for how often the Hamas charter is mentioned across our data set.
<b>Methodology and data collection</b>	Main word: 'charter*'. Definite word: none Potential word: none Results: 113, 11 relevant. Since it produced only 113 results, we went through each result and found 11 references to the Hamas charter in total.
<b>Limitations and/or anomalies to adopted approach</b>	None identified

**Searches used for Omission 2: Failure to address Hamas as a dictatorship**

<b>Keyword search Hamas as a dictatorship</b>	
<b>Rationale</b>	We were looking to investigate how often the BBC refers to Hamas' rule in Gaza as a dictatorship.

<p>Methodology and data collection</p>	<p>We came up with the following 9 synonyms for dictatorship: autocracy, authoritarian, despot, absolute rule, tyranny, oppression and totalitarian.</p> <p>We ran two searches:</p> <p>1. Main word: Hamas*</p> <p>Definite word: none</p> <p>Potential words: dictator*, autocr*, authoritarian*, despot*, absolute rule*, tyrann*, oppress*, totalitarian*.</p> <p>Lookup amount: 15 words</p> <p>Results: This search produced three results, two of which were relevant.</p> <p>2. Main word: Gaza*</p> <p>Definite word: none</p> <p>Potential words: dictator*, autocr*, authoritarian*, despot*, absolute rule*, tyrann*, oppress*, totalitarian*.</p> <p>Lookup amount: 15 words</p> <p>Results: This search produced two results, one of which was relevant.</p> <p>The searches produced a total of three relevant results.</p>
<p>Limitations and/or anomalies to adopted approach</p>	<p>None identified.</p>

**Searches used for Omission 3: Failure to address levels of journalistic freedom in Gaza**

<p><b>Keyword searches journalistic control in Gaza</b></p>	
<p><b>Rationale</b></p>	<p>We wanted to investigate if there was any mention of the fact that there is a lack of journalistic freedom in Gaza.</p>

<p><b>Methodology and data collection</b></p>	<p>We ran the following six searches:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Main word: censor*            Definite word: gaza*            Potential words: media*, press*, journal*, reporter*            Lookup amount: 20            Results: 0</li>   <li>2. Main word: freedom*            Definite word: gaza*            Potential words: press*, journalis*, media*            Lookup amount: 20            Results: 1, not relevant to what we were investigating.</li>   <li>3. Main word: control*            Definite word:gaza*            Potential words:journal*, media*, reporter*, press*            Lookup amount: 20            Results: 15, none relevant</li>   <li>4. Main word: censor*            Definite word: none            Potential words: media*, press*, journal*, reporter*            Lookup amount: 20            Results: 5, none relevant save for one which is a question from a listener regarding whether the Israeli government censors the media.</li>   <li>5. Main word: freedom*            Definite word: none            Potential words: press*, journalis*, media*, reporter*            Lookup amount: 20 words            Results: 54, none relevant.</li>   <li>6. Main word: control*            Definite word: none            Potential words: journal*, media*, reporter*, press*            Lookup amount: 20            Results: 77, none relevant, however there were numerous references regarding Israel's control of the media.</li> </ol>
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<b>Limitations and/or anomalies to adopted approach</b>	None identified
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**Searches used for Omission 4: Failure to use the word terrorist across BBC reporting:**

For this section we conducted the following four searches across our English Language dataset to determine the following:

- How many times the word Hamas appears;
- How many times the word Hamas appears in association with terror;
- How many times the word Hamas appears in association with being a “proscribed”, “designated” or recognised” terror organisation;
- How many times the word Hamas appears in association with being a health ministry.

<b>Keyword search Hamas</b>	
<b>Rationale</b>	We were looking to investigate how many times the word Hamas appears across our reporting timeframe, so that we could compare it to how many times it appears in association with terror, proscribed terror organisation and health ministry.
<b>Methodology and data collection</b>	<p>Main word: Hamas*</p> <p>Definite words: none</p> <p>Potential words: None</p> <p>There were 12,459 results.</p> <p>We also used an excel formula to count the total number of articles and programs that mentioned Hamas. The result was 1,500 items.</p>
<b>Limitations and/or anomalies to adopted approach</b>	As Hamas is a name, on rare occasions it was misspelt in the transcripts. On one occasion, it came up as Samas. On another occasion, as Alas. These results did not appear in our search results. However, we believe that these are the only two occasions and the search engine was able to capture a vast majority of the results.

<b>Keyword search Hamas terror</b>	
<b>Rationale</b>	We were looking to investigate how many times, where the word Hamas appears, it was associated with 'terror'
<b>Methodology and data collection</b>	<p>Main word: 'Hamas*'                      Definite Word: 'terror*'                      Potential words: none                      Lookup amount: 10 words                      Our search produced 963 results, across 444 BBC items.</p>
<b>Limitations and/or anomalies to adopted approach</b>	<p>The choice of using a Lookup Amount of 10 words between Hamas and terror in order for the result to be included means that some relevant results were excluded and some irrelevant results were included. However when we widened this to 10 or 14 words, there were many more irrelevant results included than relevant results. Because of the high number of results, we were unable to go through each one to check if it was relevant. Additionally, we expect that the included irrelevant results will balance out the excluded relevant ones.</p>

<b>Keyword search Hamas proscribed terror organisation</b>	
<b>Rationale</b>	The BBC promised to, where possible, refer to Hamas as a “proscribed” terrorist organisation. We wanted to see to what extent they have complied with this.
<b>Methodology and data collection</b>	<p>Main word: ‘Hamas*’                      Definite word: ‘terror’                      Potential words: ‘proscribe*’, ‘prescribe*’, ‘designate*’ and ‘recognise*’                      Lookup amount: 10 words</p> <p>We included the word ‘prescribe’ as that was how the transcript often referred to ‘proscribed’ as. We did not use a search word for organisation as there were several different words that could be used including group, and our search engine wasn’t able to accommodate two different sets of potential words. Additionally, it was discovered to be unnecessary since if it says ‘proscribed’ or ‘designated’ or ‘recognised’ as a ‘terror’..., nearly always it will have the word organisation or group in there. Our search produced 409 results, in 233 BBC items.</p>
<b>Limitations and/or anomalies to adopted approach</b>	Some relevant results were excluded when there were more than 10 words between Hamas and one of the relevant search words. However, as above, where we broadened the search we received many more irrelevant results.



<b>Keyword search occupied West Bank</b>	
<b>Rationale</b>	We were looking to investigate how often the West Bank is associated with being occupied, and compare that to how often Hamas is associated with being a proscribed terrorist organisation.
<b>Methodology and data collection</b>	<p>We ran the following two searches:</p> <p>1. Main word: 'West Bank*'            Definite words: none            Potential words: none            Results: 962 mentions, in 325 BBC items</p> <p>2. Main word: 'West Bank*',            Definite word: 'occup*'            Potential words: none            Lookup amount: 10 words            Results: 244 mentions, in 173 items</p>
<b>Limitations and/or anomalies to adopted approach</b>	We used 10 words as our lookup amount in order to remain consistent with our searches above.

<b>Keyword search Hamas health ministry</b>	
<b>Rationale</b>	We were looking to investigate how often Hamas is associated with being a health ministry, and compare that to how often it is associated with being a proscribed terrorist organisation.

<p><b>Methodology and data collection</b></p>	<p>Main word: ' Hamas*', and the                  Definite words: 'health*' and 'minist*'                  Potential words: none                  Lookup amount: 10 words                  The search produced 593 results, in 440 BBC items.</p>
<p><b>Limitations and/or anomalies to adopted approach</b></p>	<p>We used 10 words as our lookup amount in order to remain consistent with our searches above.</p>

**Searches used for Omission 5: Failure Adequately to Represent War Crimes**

The purpose of the searches for this omission was to identify all instances where war crimes, genocide, breach of international law and crimes against humanity were mentioned. We then categorised them to compare how often they were associated with Israel versus Hamas. In categorising them, the question was, does this phrase or sentence accuse, allege or associate Israel or Hamas with a war crime, genocide, breach of international law or crimes against humanity.

On several occasions, we found that a particular sentence was repeated several times, usually because it was a news headline. We decided to count each instance as a separate reference.

<p><b>Keyword search war crimes</b></p>	
<p><b>Rationale</b></p>	<p>We were looking to identify all instances where war crimes were mentioned and identify whether it was referring to Israel or Hamas.</p>

<p><b>Methodology and data collection</b></p>	<p>Main word: 'war crime*'.                  Definite word: none                  Potential words: none                  Lookup amount: n/a                  The search produced 184 results. We went through each one and categorised them as referring to Israel, Hamas, both or not applicable. The results were Israel 112, Hamas 15, both 15, NA 33, duplicates 9. We added the both score to each of Israel and Hamas' scores for a total of 127 for Israel and 30 for Hamas.</p>
<p><b>Limitations and/or anomalies to adopted approach</b></p>	<p>Since we did not use a lookup amount to limit the search, we found categorisation to be relatively straightforward as the use of the word 'war crime' is rather unequivocal.</p>

<p><b>Keyword search genocide</b></p>	
<p><b>Rationale</b></p>	<p>We were looking to identify all instances where genocide was mentioned and identify whether it was referring to Israel or Hamas.</p>
<p><b>Methodology and data collection</b></p>	<p>Main word: 'genocid*'                  Definite word: none                  Potential words: none                  Lookup amount: n/a                  The search produced 472 results. Our categorisation showed that there were: Israel 283, Hamas 19, NA 169.</p>

<p><b>Limitations and/or anomalies to adopted approach</b></p>	<p>Categorisation was difficult here due to both the sheer volume of results and the fact that association where it came to Israel was sometimes more subtle. There were some results that could have gone into either Israel or NA. This was where we developed our categorisation question of ‘does this sentence associate Israel with genocide?’ As an example of where we drew the line, we categorised “ICJ orders Israel to take all measures to prevent genocidal acts” as israel and “The court will deliver only an opinion on the genocide allegation” as NA. We believe that a strong argument can be made for moving the line in either direction and therefore consider that our categorisation here is reasonable.</p>
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<p><b>Keyword search breach of international law</b></p>	
<p><b>Rationale</b></p>	<p>We were looking to identify all instances where a breach of international law was referenced and identify whether it was referring to Israel or Hamas.</p>
<p><b>Methodology and data collection</b></p>	<p>Main word: ‘international*’                  Definite word: ‘law*’                  Potential words: none                  Lookup amount: 10 words                  The search generated 729 results. Our categorisation showed that were: Israel 151, Hamas 11, both 16. The rest of the results were either duplicates or irrelevant. We added the both score to each of Israel and Hamas’ scores for a total of 167 for Israel and 27 for Hamas.</p>

<p><b>Limitations and/or anomalies to adopted approach</b></p>	<p>Categorisation was again difficult here due to both the sheer volume of results and the fact that association when it came to Israel was sometimes more subtle. There were some results that could have gone into either Israel or N/A. We again made use of our categorisation question of ‘does this sentence associate Israel with genocide?’</p> <p>As an example of where we drew the line, we categorised “and they must do more to meet the requirements of international law” as Israel and “of course we need to see the full force of international law being applied” as N/A. We believe that a strong argument can be made for moving the line in either direction and therefore consider that our categorisation here is reasonable.</p> <p>Additionally, due to the large volume of results there may be some inconsistencies in categorisation due to human error.</p>
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<p><b>Keyword search crimes against humanity</b></p>	
<p><b>Rationale</b></p>	<p>We were looking to identify all instances where crime against humanity was referenced and identify whether it was referring to Israel or Hamas.</p>
<p><b>Methodology and data collection</b></p>	<p>Main word: ‘crime*’                  Definite word: ‘humanity’                  Potential words: none                  Lookup amount: 10 words</p> <p>The search produced 60 results. Our categorisation showed that there were: Israel 14, Hamas 21, both 1, NA 10, duplicates 14. We added the both score to each of Israel and Hamas’ scores for a total of 15 for Israel and 22 for Hamas.</p>

<b>Limitations and/or anomalies to adopted approach</b>	None identified
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**Searches used for Omission 6: Failure to explain military threats to Israel**

Keyword search existential threats to Israel	
<b>Rationale</b>	We were looking to investigate the extent to which the existential threats facing Israel were covered by the BBC.
<b>Methodology and data collection</b>	<p>We ran the following two searches:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Main word: exist*            Definite word: threat*            Potential words: none            Lookup amount: 10 words.            Results: 30, of these, 10 were relevant.</li> <li>2. Main word: Israel*            Definite word: exist*            Potential words: none            Lookup amount: 10 words.            Results: 105, of these, 12 were relevant. 8 were duplicate results of the search above.</li> </ol> <p>Total relevant results: 14</p>
<b>Limitations and/or anomalies to adopted approach</b>	It was difficult to formulate a search term to capture this topic.

**Searches used for Omission 7: Failure to adequately report on elements of the hostage ordeal**

Keyword search hostage mentions	
<b>Rationale</b>	We were looking to investigate how many times the hostages are mentioned and to contrast that with the specific context below.
<b>Methodology and data collection</b>	Main word: 'hostage*' Definite word: none Potential words: none' Lookup amount: n/a Results: 5,453, in 971 items
<b>Limitations and/or anomalies to adopted approach</b>	None identified

Keyword search taking hostages against international law	
<b>Rationale</b>	We were looking to investigate how many times the fact that taking hostages is against international law is mentioned. We decided to also include results that reference taking hostages as a war crime.
<b>Methodology and data collection</b>	Main word: 'hostage*' Definite word: none Potential words: 'war crime*', 'international*', 'law*', 'illegal*' Lookup amount: 10 words. Results: 93, 9 relevant

<b>Limitations and/or anomalies to adopted approach</b>	None identified
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<b>Keyword search hostage access to the red cross</b>	
<b>Rationale</b>	We were looking to investigate how many mentions there were of the fact that Hamas does not allow the Red Cross to access the hostages.
<b>Methodology and data collection</b>	Main word: 'red cross*' Definite word: none Potential words: none Lookup amount: n/a Results: 212, 19 relevant
<b>Limitations and/or anomalies to adopted approach</b>	None identified

<b>Keyword search hostage trauma - sexual crimes</b>	
<b>Rationale</b>	We were looking to investigate how many mentions there were of sexual abuse of hostages in captivity.
<b>Methodology and data collection</b>	Main word: 'hostage*' Definite word: none Potential words: 'rape*', 'sex*', 'abuse*' Lookup amount: 20 words Results: 22, 3 relevant
<b>Limitations and/or anomalies to adopted approach</b>	None identified



**Searches used for Omission 8: Failure to address the socio-economic cost of war on Israel**

<b>Keyword search Israel economy</b>	
<b>Rationale</b>	We were looking to investigate how many references there were to the impact of the war on Israel's economy.
<b>Methodology and data collection</b>	Main word: 'econom*' Definite word: none Potential words: 'Israel*', 'war*', 'gaza*', 'palestine*' Lookup amount: 10 words Results: 98, 6 relevant
<b>Limitations and/or anomalies to adopted approach</b>	None identified

<b>Keyword search displaced Israelis</b>	
<b>Rationale</b>	We were looking to investigate how many mentions there were of the fact that Israelis have been displaced and whether there was an in-depth feature program or article about it.

<b>Methodology and data collection</b>	<p>We ran the following two searches:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Main word: 'dispac*' Definite word: 'Israel*' Potential words: none Lookup amount: 10 words Results: 98, 6 relevant</li><li>2. Main word: 'evacuat*' Definite word: none Potential words: 'Israel*', 'north*' Lookup amount: 10 words Results: 297, 26 relevant Total results: 32. One in depth article found.</li></ol>
<b>Limitations and/or anomalies to adopted approach</b>	None identified.

## Schedule 8 – The Hamas Charter

### i. BBC References (in Dataset)

The parameters of this search are set out in Schedule 8(ii). The results were as below:

Origin	Source	Quote
Article 07/10/2023	Written by Yolande Knell	<i>“With this latest operation, Hamas seems keen to burnish its credentials once again as a militant organisation. Its charter remains committed to the destruction of Israel.”</i>
Newsnight 11/10/2023	Tzipi Hotovely, Israeli ambassador to the UK	<i>“Well, it's definitely clear that there is no other alternative than fighting back if your enemy wants basically to make sure that no Jew will live in the land of Israel, and this is the Hamas charter.”</i>
BBC Breakfast 13/10/2024	Grant Shapps, UK defence secretary	<i>“This is, these are terrorists who as I mentioned before, don't just want to eradicate Israel, They want to eradicate all Jews, that is in their plan, that's in their charter.”</i>
Newsnight 13/10/2023	Hadley Freeman, Sunday Times Columnist	<i>“In Israel, Hamas is a terrorist organization. Its founding charter is about Jewish genocide, so of course then Israel will respond in however way it responds.”</i>
Podcast 13/10/2023	Lyse Doucet, BBC reporter	<i>“Israelis get really worried and angry that the Hamas has not changed its charter, its founding charter, which calls for the destruction of the state of Israel.”</i>
BBC Breakfast 14.10.2023	Viewer	<i>“Hamas’ charter states that the aim for the annihilation of the Jewish people and to wipe Israel off the map.”</i>
Podcast 20/10/2023	Listener	<i>“My question is, what will it take for Hamas to remove its commitment to destroy the State of Israel from its charter and accept Israel as a legitimate neighbour to a Palestinian state?”</i>
Newsnight 24/10/2023	Rachel Riley, TV presenter	<i>“how can you make peace with those people when it's in their declaration that they want to annihilate</i>

ii. English Translation of the Hamas Charter 1988

Taken from the Avalon Project, Lillian Goldman Law Library, Yale Law school<sup>13</sup>

*The Covenant  
of the  
Islamic Resistance Movement  
18 August 1988*

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<sup>13</sup> A web version is available at [https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th\\_century/hamas.asp](https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/hamas.asp), last accessed 3 September 2024

**In The Name Of The Most Merciful Allah**

"Ye are the best nation that hath been raised up unto mankind: ye command that which is just, and ye forbid that which is unjust, and ye believe in Allah. And if they who have received the scriptures had believed, it had surely been the better for them: there are believers among them, but the greater part of them are transgressors. They shall not hurt you, unless with a slight hurt; and if they fight against you, they shall turn their backs to you, and they shall not be helped. They are smitten with vileness wheresoever they are found; unless they obtain security by entering into a treaty with Allah, and a treaty with men; and they draw on themselves indignation from Allah, and they are afflicted with poverty. This they suffer, because they disbelieved the signs of Allah, and slew the prophets unjustly; this, because they were rebellious, and transgressed." (Al-Imran - verses 109-111).

Israel will exist and will continue to exist until Islam will obliterate it, just as it obliterated others before it" (The Martyr, Imam Hassan al-Banna, of blessed memory).

"The Islamic world is on fire. Each of us should pour some water, no matter how little, to extinguish whatever one can without waiting for the others." (Sheikh Amjad al-Zahawi, of blessed memory).

**In The Name Of The Most Merciful Allah**

*Introduction*

Praise be unto Allah, to whom we resort for help, and whose forgiveness, guidance and support we seek; Allah bless the Prophet and grant him salvation, his companions and supporters, and to those who carried out his message and adopted his laws - everlasting prayers and salvation as long as the earth and heaven will last. Hereafter:

O People:

Out of the midst of troubles and the sea of suffering, out of the palpitations of faithful hearts and cleansed arms; out of the sense of duty, and in response to Allah's command, the call has gone out rallying people together and making them follow the ways of Allah, leading them to have

determined will in order to fulfill their role in life, to overcome all obstacles, and surmount the difficulties on the way. Constant preparation has continued and so has the readiness to sacrifice life and all that is precious for the sake of Allah.

Thus it was that the nucleus (of the movement) was formed and started to pave its way through the tempestuous sea of hopes and expectations, of wishes and yearnings, of troubles and obstacles, of pain and challenges, both inside and outside.

When the idea was ripe, the seed grew and the plant struck root in the soil of reality, away from passing emotions, and hateful haste. The Islamic Resistance Movement emerged to carry out its role through striving for the sake of its Creator, its arms intertwined with those of all the fighters for the liberation of Palestine. The spirits of its fighters meet with the spirits of all the fighters who have sacrificed their lives on the soil of Palestine, ever since it was conquered by the companions of the Prophet, Allah bless him and grant him salvation, and until this day.

This Covenant of the Islamic Resistance Movement (HAMAS), clarifies its picture, reveals its identity, outlines its stand, explains its aims, speaks about its hopes, and calls for its support, adoption and joining its ranks. Our struggle against the Jews is very great and very serious. It needs all sincere efforts. It is a step that inevitably should be followed by other steps. The Movement is but one squadron that should be supported by more and more squadrons from this vast Arab and Islamic world, until the enemy is vanquished and Allah's victory is realised.

Thus we see them coming on the horizon "and you shall learn about it hereafter" "Allah hath written, Verily I will prevail, and my apostles: for Allah is strong and mighty." (The Dispute - verse 21).

"Say to them, This is my way: I invite you to Allah, by an evident demonstration; both I and he who followeth me; and, praise be unto Allah! I am not an idolator." (Joseph - verse 107).

Hamas (means) *strength and bravery* -(according to) Al-Mua'jam al-Wasit: c1.

## Definition of the Movement

### **Ideological Starting-Points**

#### *Article One:*

The Islamic Resistance Movement: The Movement's programme is Islam. From it, it draws its ideas, ways of thinking and understanding of the universe, life and man. It resorts to it for judgement in all its conduct, and it is inspired by it for guidance of its steps.

### **The Islamic Resistance Movement's Relation With the Moslem Brotherhood Group:**

#### *Article Two:*

The Islamic Resistance Movement is one of the wings of Moslem Brotherhood in Palestine. Moslem Brotherhood Movement is a universal organization which constitutes the largest Islamic movement in modern times. It is characterised by its deep understanding, accurate comprehension and its complete embrace of all Islamic concepts of all aspects of life, culture, creed, politics, economics, education, society, justice and judgement, the spreading of Islam, education, art, information, science of the occult and conversion to Islam.

### **Structure and Formation**

#### *Article Three:*

The basic structure of the Islamic Resistance Movement consists of Moslems who have given their allegiance to Allah whom they truly worship, - "I have created the jinn and humans only for the purpose of worshipping" - who know their duty towards themselves, their families and country. In all that, they fear Allah and raise the banner of Jihad in the face of the oppressors, so that they would rid the land and the people of their uncleanness, vileness and evils.

"But we will oppose truth to vanity, and it shall confound the same; and behold, it shall vanish away." (Prophets - verse 18).

### *Article Four:*

The Islamic Resistance Movement welcomes every Moslem who embraces its faith, ideology, follows its programme, keeps its secrets, and wants to belong to its ranks and carry out the duty. Allah will certainly reward such one.

### **Time and Place Extent of the Islamic Resistance Movement:**

#### *Article Five:*

Time extent of the Islamic Resistance Movement: By adopting Islam as its way of life, the Movement goes back to the time of the birth of the Islamic message, of the righteous ancestor, for Allah is its target, the Prophet is its example and the Koran is its constitution. Its extent in place is anywhere that there are Moslems who embrace Islam as their way of life everywhere in the globe. This being so, it extends to the depth of the earth and reaches out to the heaven.

"Dost thou not see how Allah putteth forth a parable; representing a good word, as a good tree, whose root is firmly fixed in the earth, and whose branches reach unto heaven; which bringeth forth its fruit in all seasons, by the will of its Lord? Allah propoundeth parables unto men, that they may be instructed." (Abraham - verses 24-25).

### **Characteristics and Independence:**

#### *Article Six:*

The Islamic Resistance Movement is a distinguished Palestinian movement, whose allegiance is to Allah, and whose way of life is Islam. It strives to raise the banner of Allah over every inch of Palestine, for under the wing of Islam followers of all religions can coexist in security and safety where their lives, possessions and rights are concerned. In the absence of Islam, strife will be rife, oppression spreads, evil prevails and schisms and wars will break out.

How excellent was the Moslem poet, Mohamed Iqbal, when he wrote:



"If faith is lost, there is no security and there is no life for him who does not adhere to religion. He who accepts life without religion, has taken annihilation as his companion for life."

### **The Universality of the Islamic Resistance Movement:**

#### *Article Seven:*

As a result of the fact that those Moslems who adhere to the ways of the Islamic Resistance Movement spread all over the world, rally support for it and its stands, strive towards enhancing its struggle, the Movement is a universal one. It is well-equipped for that because of the clarity of its ideology, the nobility of its aim and the loftiness of its objectives.

On this basis, the Movement should be viewed and evaluated, and its role be recognised. He who denies its right, evades supporting it and turns a blind eye to facts, whether intentionally or unintentionally, would awaken to see that events have overtaken him and with no logic to justify his attitude. One should certainly learn from past examples.

The injustice of next-of-kin is harder to bear than the smite of the Indian sword.

"We have also sent down unto thee the book of the Koran with truth, confirming that scripture which was revealed before it; and preserving the same safe from corruption. Judge therefore between them according to that which Allah hath revealed; and follow not their desires, by swerving from the truth which hath come unto thee. Unto every of you have we given a law, and an open path; and if Allah had pleased, he had surely made you one people; but he hath thought it fit to give you different laws, that he might try you in that which he hath given you respectively. Therefore strive to excel each other in good works; unto Allah shall ye all return, and then will he declare unto you that concerning which ye have disagreed." (The Table, verse 48).

The Islamic Resistance Movement is one of the links in the chain of the struggle against the Zionist invaders. It goes back to 1939, to the emergence of the martyr Izz al-Din al-Kissam and his brethren the fighters, members of Moslem Brotherhood. It goes on to reach out and become one with another chain that includes the struggle of the Palestinians and Moslem Brotherhood in the 1948 war and the Jihad operations of the Moslem Brotherhood in 1968 and after.

Moreover, if the links have been distant from each other and if obstacles, placed by those who are the lackeys of Zionism in the way of the fighters obstructed the continuation of the struggle, the Islamic Resistance Movement aspires to the realisation of Allah's promise, no matter how long that should take. The Prophet, Allah bless him and grant him salvation, has said:

"The Day of Judgement will not come about until Moslems fight the Jews (killing the Jews), when the Jew will hide behind stones and trees. The stones and trees will say O Moslems, O Abdulla, there is a Jew behind me, come and kill him. Only the Gharkad tree, (evidently a certain kind of tree) would not do that because it is one of the trees of the Jews." (related by al-Bukhari and Moslem).

### **The Slogan of the Islamic Resistance Movement:**

#### *Article Eight:*

Allah is its target, the Prophet is its model, the Koran its constitution: Jihad is its path and death for the sake of Allah is the loftiest of its wishes.

### Objectives

#### Incentives and Objectives:

#### *Article Nine:*

The Islamic Resistance Movement found itself at a time when Islam has disappeared from life. Thus rules shook, concepts were upset, values changed and evil people took control, oppression and darkness prevailed, cowards became like tigers: homelands were usurped, people were scattered and were caused to wander all over the world, the state of justice disappeared and the state of falsehood replaced it. Nothing remained in its right place. Thus, when Islam is absent from the arena, everything changes. From this state of affairs the incentives are drawn.

As for the objectives: They are the fighting against the false, defeating it and vanquishing it so that justice could prevail, homelands be retrieved and from its mosques would the voice of

the mu'azen emerge declaring the establishment of the state of Islam, so that people and things would return each to their right places and Allah is our helper.

"...and if Allah had not prevented men, the one by the other, verily the earth had been corrupted: but Allah is beneficent towards his creatures." (The Cow - verse 251).

*Article Ten:*

As the Islamic Resistance Movement paves its way, it will back the oppressed and support the wronged with all its might. It will spare no effort to bring about justice and defeat injustice, in word and deed, in this place and everywhere it can reach and have influence therein.

### Strategies and Methods

#### **Strategies of the Islamic Resistance Movement: Palestine Is Islamic aqf:**

*Article Eleven:*

The Islamic Resistance Movement believes that the land of Palestine is an Islamic Waqf consecrated for future Moslem generations until Judgement Day. It, or any part of it, should not be squandered: it, or any part of it, should not be given up. Neither a single Arab country nor all Arab countries, neither any king or president, nor all the kings and presidents, neither any organization nor all of them, be they Palestinian or Arab, possess the right to do that. Palestine is an Islamic Waqf land consecrated for Moslem generations until Judgement Day. This being so, who could claim to have the right to represent Moslem generations till Judgement Day?

This is the law governing the land of Palestine in the Islamic Sharia (law) and the same goes for any land the Moslems have conquered by force, because during the times of (Islamic) conquests, the Moslems consecrated these lands to Moslem generations till the Day of Judgement.

It happened like this: When the leaders of the Islamic armies conquered Syria and Iraq, they sent to the Caliph of the Moslems, Umar bin-el-Khatib, asking for his advice concerning the conquered land - whether they should divide it among the soldiers, or leave it for its owners, or what? After consultations and discussions between the Caliph of the Moslems,

Omar bin-el-Khatab and companions of the Prophet, Allah bless him and grant him salvation, it was decided that the land should be left with its owners who could benefit by its fruit. As for the real ownership of the land and the land itself, it should be consecrated for Moslem generations till Judgement Day. Those who are on the land, are there only to benefit from its fruit. This Waqf remains as long as earth and heaven remain. Any procedure in contradiction to Islamic Sharia, where Palestine is concerned, is null and void.

"Verily, this is a certain truth. Wherefore praise the name of thy Lord, the great Allah." (The Inevitable - verse 95).

### **Homeland and Nationalism from the Point of View of the Islamic Resistance Movement in Palestine:**

#### *Article Twelve:*

Nationalism, from the point of view of the Islamic Resistance Movement, is part of the religious creed. Nothing in nationalism is more significant or deeper than in the case when an enemy should tread Moslem land. Resisting and quelling the enemy become the individual duty of every Moslem, male or female. A woman can go out to fight the enemy without her husband's permission, and so does the slave: without his master's permission.

Nothing of the sort is to be found in any other regime. This is an undisputed fact. If other nationalist movements are connected with materialistic, human or regional causes, nationalism of the Islamic Resistance Movement has all these elements as well as the more important elements that give it soul and life. It is connected to the source of spirit and the granter of life, hoisting in the sky of the homeland the heavenly banner that joins earth and heaven with a strong bond.

If Moses comes and throws his staff, both witch and magic are annulled.

"Now is the right direction manifestly distinguished from deceit: whoever therefore shall deny Tagut, and believe in Allah, he shall surely take hold with a strong handle, which shall not be broken; Allah is he who heareth and seeth." (The Cow - Verse 256).

### **Peaceful Solutions, Initiatives and International Conferences:**

### *Article Thirteen:*

Initiatives, and so-called peaceful solutions and international conferences, are in contradiction to the principles of the Islamic Resistance Movement. Abusing any part of Palestine is abuse directed against part of religion. Nationalism of the Islamic Resistance Movement is part of its religion. Its members have been fed on that. For the sake of hoisting the banner of Allah over their homeland they fight. "Allah will be prominent, but most people do not know."

Now and then the call goes out for the convening of an international conference to look for ways of solving the (Palestinian) question. Some accept, others reject the idea, for this or other reason, with one stipulation or more for consent to convening the conference and participating in it. Knowing the parties constituting the conference, their past and present attitudes towards Moslem problems, the Islamic Resistance Movement does not consider these conferences capable of realising the demands, restoring the rights or doing justice to the oppressed. These conferences are only ways of setting the infidels in the land of the Moslems as arbitrators. When did the infidels do justice to the believers?

"But the Jews will not be pleased with thee, neither the Christians, until thou follow their religion; say, The direction of Allah is the true direction. And verily if thou follow their desires, after the knowledge which hath been given thee, thou shalt find no patron or protector against Allah." (The Cow - verse 120).

There is no solution for the Palestinian question except through Jihad. Initiatives, proposals and international conferences are all a waste of time and vain endeavors. The Palestinian people know better than to consent to having their future, rights and fate toyed with. As in said in the honourable Hadith:

"The people of Syria are Allah's lash in His land. He wreaks His vengeance through them against whomsoever He wishes among His slaves It is unthinkable that those who are double-faced among them should prosper over the faithful. They will certainly die out of grief and desperation."

### **The Three Circles:**

### *Article Fourteen:*

The question of the liberation of Palestine is bound to three circles: the Palestinian circle, the Arab circle and the Islamic circle. Each of these circles has its role in the struggle against Zionism. Each has its duties, and it is a horrible mistake and a sign of deep ignorance to overlook any of these circles. Palestine is an Islamic land which has the first of the two kiblahs (direction to which Moslems turn in praying), the third of the holy (Islamic) sanctuaries, and the point of departure for Mohamed's midnight journey to the seven heavens (i.e. Jerusalem).

"Praise be unto him who transported his servant by night, from the sacred temple of Mecca to the farther temple of Jerusalem, the circuit of which we have blessed, that we might show him some of our signs; for Allah is he who heareth, and seeth." (The Night-Journey - verse 1).

Since this is the case, liberation of Palestine is then an individual duty for every Moslem wherever he may be. On this basis, the problem should be viewed. This should be realised by every Moslem.

The day the problem is dealt with on this basis, when the three circles mobilize their capabilities, the present state of affairs will change and the day of liberation will come nearer.

"Verily ye are stronger than they, by reason of the terror cast into their breasts from Allah. This, because they are not people of prudence." (The Emigration - verse 13).

### **The Jihad for the Liberation of Palestine is an Individual Duty:**

#### *Article Fifteen:*

The day that enemies usurp part of Moslem land, Jihad becomes the individual duty of every Moslem. In face of the Jews' usurpation of Palestine, it is compulsory that the banner of Jihad be raised. To do this requires the diffusion of Islamic consciousness among the masses, both on the regional, Arab and Islamic levels. It is necessary to instill the spirit of Jihad in the heart of the nation so that they would confront the enemies and join the ranks of the fighters.

It is necessary that scientists, educators and teachers, information and media people, as well as the educated masses, especially the youth and sheikhs of the Islamic movements, should take part in the operation of awakening (the masses). It is important that basic changes be made in the school curriculum, to cleanse it of the traces of ideological invasion that

affected it as a result of the orientalists and missionaries who infiltrated the region following the defeat of the Crusaders at the hands of Salah el-Din (Saladin). The Crusaders realised that it was impossible to defeat the Moslems without first having ideological invasion pave the way by upsetting their thoughts, disfiguring their heritage and violating their ideals. Only then could they invade with soldiers. This, in its turn, paved the way for the imperialistic invasion that made Allenby declare on entering Jerusalem: "Only now have the Crusades ended." General Guru stood at Salah el-Din's grave and said: "We have returned, O Salah el-Din." Imperialism has helped towards the strengthening of ideological invasion, deepening, and still does, its roots. All this has paved the way towards the loss of Palestine.

It is necessary to instill in the minds of the Moslem generations that the Palestinian problem is a religious problem, and should be dealt with on this basis. Palestine contains Islamic holy sites. In it there is al- Aqsa Mosque which is bound to the great Mosque in Mecca in an inseparable bond as long as heaven and earth speak of Isra` (Mohammed's midnight journey to the seven heavens) and Mi'raj (Mohammed's ascension to the seven heavens from Jerusalem).

"The bond of one day for the sake of Allah is better than the world and whatever there is on it. The place of one's whip in Paradise is far better than the world and whatever there is on it. A worshipper's going and coming in the service of Allah is better than the world and whatever there is on it." (As related by al-Bukhari, Moslem, al-Tarmdhi and Ibn Maja).

"I swear by the holder of Mohammed's soul that I would like to invade and be killed for the sake of Allah, then invade and be killed, and then invade again and be killed." (As related by al-Bukhari and Moslem).

### **The Education of the Generations:**

#### *Article Sixteen:*

It is necessary to follow Islamic orientation in educating the Islamic generations in our region by teaching the religious duties, comprehensive study of the Koran, the study of the Prophet's Sunna (his sayings and doings), and learning about Islamic history and heritage from their authentic sources. This should be done by specialised and learned people, using a curriculum that would healthily form the thoughts and faith of the Moslem student. Side by side with this, a comprehensive study of the enemy, his human and financial capabilities, learning about his points of weakness and strength, and getting to know the forces supporting and helping him, should also be included. Also, it is important to be acquainted with the current

events, to follow what is new and to study the analysis and commentaries made of these events. Planning for the present and future, studying every trend appearing, is a must so that the fighting Moslem would live knowing his aim, objective and his way in the midst of what is going on around him.

"O my son, verily every matter, whether good or bad, though it be the weight of a grain of mustard-seed, and be hidden in a rock, or in the heavens, or in the earth, Allah will bring the same to light; for Allah is clear-sighted and knowing. O my son, be constant at prayer, and command that which is just, and forbid that which is evil: and be patient under the afflictions which shall befall thee; for this is a duty absolutely incumbent on all men. Distort not thy face out of contempt to men, neither walk in the earth with insolence; for Allah loveth no arrogant, vain-glorious person." (Lokman - verses 16-18).

### **The Role of the Moslem Woman:**

#### *Article Seventeen:*

The Moslem woman has a role no less important than that of the moslem man in the battle of liberation. She is the maker of men. Her role in guiding and educating the new generations is great. The enemies have realised the importance of her role. They consider that if they are able to direct and bring her up they way they wish, far from Islam, they would have won the battle. That is why you find them giving these attempts constant attention through information campaigns, films, and the school curriculum, using for that purpose their lackeys who are infiltrated through Zionist organizations under various names and shapes, such as Freemasons, Rotary Clubs, espionage groups and others, which are all nothing more than cells of subversion and saboteurs. These organizations have ample resources that enable them to play their role in societies for the purpose of achieving the Zionist targets and to deepen the concepts that would serve the enemy. These organizations operate in the absence of Islam and its estrangement among its people. The Islamic peoples should perform their role in confronting the conspiracies of these saboteurs. The day Islam is in control of guiding the affairs of life, these organizations, hostile to humanity and Islam, will be obliterated.

#### *Article Eighteen:*

Woman in the home of the fighting family, whether she is a mother or a sister, plays the most important role in looking after the family, rearing the children and embuing them with moral values and thoughts derived from Islam. She has to teach them to perform the religious duties in preparation for the role of fighting awaiting them. That is why it is necessary to pay



great attention to schools and the curriculum followed in educating Moslem girls, so that they would grow up to be good mothers, aware of their role in the battle of liberation.

She has to be of sufficient knowledge and understanding where the performance of housekeeping matters are concerned, because economy and avoidance of waste of the family budget, is one of the requirements for the ability to continue moving forward in the difficult conditions surrounding us. She should put before her eyes the fact that the money available to her is just like blood which should never flow except through the veins so that both children and grown-ups could continue to live.

"Verily, the Moslems of either sex, and the true believers of either sex, and the devout men, and the devout women, and the men of veracity, and the women of veracity, and the patient men, and the patient women, and the humble men, and the humble women, and the alms-givers of either sex who remember Allah frequently; for them hath Allah prepared forgiveness and a great reward." (The Confederates - verse 25).

### **The Role of Islamic Art in the Battle of Liberation:**

#### *Article Nineteen:*

Art has regulations and measures by which it can be determined whether it is Islamic or pre-Islamic (Jahili) art. The issues of Islamic liberation are in need of Islamic art that would take the spirit high, without raising one side of human nature above the other, but rather raise all of them harmoniously in an equilibrium.

Man is a unique and wonderful creature, made out of a handful of clay and a breath from Allah. Islamic art addresses man on this basis, while pre-Islamic art addresses the body giving preference to the clay component in it.

The book, the article, the bulletin, the sermon, the thesis, the popular poem, the poetic ode, the song, the play and others, contain the characteristics of Islamic art, then these are among the requirements of ideological mobilization, renewed food for the journey and recreation for the soul. The road is long and suffering is plenty. The soul will be bored, but Islamic art renews the energies, resurrects the movement, arousing in them lofty meanings and proper conduct. "Nothing can improve the self if it is in retreat except shifting from one mood to another."

All this is utterly serious and no jest, for those who are fighters do not jest.

### **Social Mutual Responsibility:**

#### *Article Twenty:*

Moslem society is a mutually responsible society. The Prophet, prayers and greetings be unto him, said: "Blessed are the generous, whether they were in town or on a journey, who have collected all that they had and shared it equally among themselves."

The Islamic spirit is what should prevail in every Moslem society. The society that confronts a vicious enemy which acts in a way similar to Nazism, making no differentiation between man and woman, between children and old people - such a society is entitled to this Islamic spirit. Our enemy relies on the methods of collective punishment. He has deprived people of their homeland and properties, pursued them in their places of exile and gathering, breaking bones, shooting at women, children and old people, with or without a reason. The enemy has opened detention camps where thousands and thousands of people are thrown and kept under sub-human conditions. Added to this, are the demolition of houses, rendering children orphans, meting cruel sentences against thousands of young people, and causing them to spend the best years of their lives in the dungeons of prisons.

In their Nazi treatment, the Jews made no exception for women or children. Their policy of striking fear in the heart is meant for all. They attack people where their breadwinning is concerned, extorting their money and threatening their honour. They deal with people as if they were the worst war criminals. Deportation from the homeland is a kind of murder.

To counter these deeds, it is necessary that social mutual responsibility should prevail among the people. The enemy should be faced by the people as a single body which if one member of it should complain, the rest of the body would respond by feeling the same pains.

#### *Article Twenty-One:*

Mutual social responsibility means extending assistance, financial or moral, to all those who are in need and joining in the execution of some of the work. Members of the Islamic Resistance Movement should consider the interests of the masses as their own personal interests. They must spare no effort in achieving and preserving them. They must prevent any foul play with the future of the upcoming generations and anything that could cause loss to

society. The masses are part of them and they are part of the masses. Their strength is theirs, and their future is theirs. Members of the Islamic Resistance Movement should share the people's joy and grief, adopt the demands of the public and whatever means by which they could be realised. The day that such a spirit prevails, brotherliness would deepen, cooperation, sympathy and unity will be enhanced and the ranks will be solidified to confront the enemies.

### **Supportive Forces Behind the Enemy:**

#### *Article Twenty-Two:*

For a long time, the enemies have been planning, skillfully and with precision, for the achievement of what they have attained. They took into consideration the causes affecting the current of events. They strived to amass great and substantive material wealth which they devoted to the realisation of their dream. With their money, they took control of the world media, news agencies, the press, publishing houses, broadcasting stations, and others. With their money they stirred revolutions in various parts of the world with the purpose of achieving their interests and reaping the fruit therein. They were behind the French Revolution, the Communist revolution and most of the revolutions we heard and hear about, here and there. With their money they formed secret societies, such as Freemasons, Rotary Clubs, the Lions and others in different parts of the world for the purpose of sabotaging societies and achieving Zionist interests. With their money they were able to control imperialistic countries and instigate them to colonize many countries in order to enable them to exploit their resources and spread corruption there.

You may speak as much as you want about regional and world wars. They were behind World War I, when they were able to destroy the Islamic Caliphate, making financial gains and controlling resources. They obtained the Balfour Declaration, formed the League of Nations through which they could rule the world. They were behind World War II, through which they made huge financial gains by trading in armaments, and paved the way for the establishment of their state. It was they who instigated the replacement of the League of Nations with the United Nations and the Security Council to enable them to rule the world through them. There is no war going on anywhere, without having their finger in it.

"So often as they shall kindle a fire for war, Allah shall extinguish it; and they shall set their minds to act corruptly in the earth, but Allah loveth not the corrupt doers." (The Table - verse 64).

The imperialistic forces in the Capitalist West and Communist East, support the enemy with all their might, in money and in men. These forces take turns in doing that. The day Islam appears, the forces of infidelity would unite to challenge it, for the infidels are of one nation.

"O true believers, contract not an intimate friendship with any besides yourselves: they will not fail to corrupt you. They wish for that which may cause you to perish: their hatred hath already appeared from out of their mouths; but what their breasts conceal is yet more inveterate. We have already shown you signs of their ill will towards you, if ye understand." (The Family of Imran - verse 118).

It is not in vain that the verse is ended with Allah's words "if ye understand."

### Our Attitudes Towards:

#### A. Islamic Movements:

##### *Article Twenty-Three:*

The Islamic Resistance Movement views other Islamic movements with respect and appreciation. If it were at variance with them on one point or opinion, it is in agreement with them on other points and understandings. It considers these movements, if they reveal good intentions and dedication to Allah, that they fall into the category of those who are trying hard since they act within the Islamic circle. Each active person has his share.

The Islamic Resistance Movement considers all these movements as a fund for itself. It prays to Allah for guidance and directions for all and it spares no effort to keep the banner of unity raised, ever striving for its realisation in accordance with the Koran and the Prophet's directives.

"And cleave all of you unto the covenant of Allah, and depart not from it, and remember the favour of Allah towards you: since ye were enemies, and he reconciled your hearts, and ye became companions and brethren by his favour: and ye were on the brink of a pit of fire, and he delivered you thence. Allah

declareth unto you his signs, that ye may be directed." (The Family of Imran - Verse 102).

### *Article Twenty-Four:*

The Islamic Resistance Movement does not allow slandering or speaking ill of individuals or groups, for the believer does not indulge in such malpractices. It is necessary to differentiate between this behaviour and the stands taken by certain individuals and groups. Whenever those stands are erroneous, the Islamic Resistance Movement preserves the right to expound the error and to warn against it. It will strive to show the right path and to judge the case in question with objectivity. Wise conduct is indeed the target of the believer who follows it wherever he discerns it.

"Allah loveth not the speaking ill of anyone in public, unless he who is injured call for assistance; and Allah heareth and knoweth: whether ye publish a good action, or conceal it, or forgive evil, verily Allah is gracious and powerful." (Women - verses 147-148).

### **B. Nationalist Movements in the Palestinian Arena:**

#### *Article Twenty-Five:*

The Islamic Resistance Movement respects these movements and appreciates their circumstances and the conditions surrounding and affecting them. It encourages them as long as they do not give their allegiance to the Communist East or the Crusading West. It confirms to all those who are integrated in it, or sympathetic towards it, that the Islamic Resistance Movement is a fighting movement that has a moral and enlightened look of life and the way it should cooperate with the other (movements). It detests opportunism and desires only the good of people, individuals and groups alike. It does not seek material gains, personal fame, nor does it look for a reward from others. It works with its own resources and whatever is at its disposal "and prepare for them whatever force you can", for the fulfilment of the duty, and the earning of Allah's favour. It has no other desire than that.

The Movement assures all the nationalist trends operating in the Palestinian arena for the liberation of Palestine, that it is there for their support and assistance. It will never be more than that, both in words and deeds, now and in the future. It is there to bring together and not to divide, to preserve and not to squander, to unify and not to throw asunder. It evaluates every good word, sincere effort and good offices. It closes the door in the face of side disagreements

and does not lend an ear to rumours and slanders, while at the same time fully realising the right for self-defence.

Anything contrary or contradictory to these trends, is a lie disseminated by enemies or their lackeys for the purpose of sowing confusion, disrupting the ranks and occupy them with side issues.

"O true believers, if a wicked man come unto you with a tale, inquire strictly into the truth thereof; lest ye hurt people through ignorance, and afterwards repent of what ye have done." (The Inner Apartments - verse 6).

*Article Twenty-Six:*

In viewing the Palestinian nationalist movements that give allegiance neither to the East nor the West, in this positive way, the Islamic Resistance Movement does not refrain from discussing new situations on the regional or international levels where the Palestinian question is concerned. It does that in such an objective manner revealing the extent of how much it is in harmony or contradiction with the national interests in the light of the Islamic point of view.

### **C. The Palestinian Liberation Organization:**

*Article Twenty-Seven:*

The Palestinian Liberation Organization is the closest to the heart of the Islamic Resistance Movement. It contains the father and the brother, the next of kin and the friend. The Moslem does not estrange himself from his father, brother, next of kin or friend. Our homeland is one, our situation is one, our fate is one and the enemy is a joint enemy to all of us.

Because of the situations surrounding the formation of the Organization, of the ideological confusion prevailing in the Arab world as a result of the ideological invasion under whose influence the Arab world has fallen since the defeat of the Crusaders and which was, and still is, intensified through orientalist, missionaries and imperialists, the Organization adopted the idea of the secular state. And that is how we view it.

Secularism completely contradicts religious ideology. Attitudes, conduct and decisions stem from ideologies.

That is why, with all our appreciation for The Palestinian Liberation Organization - and what it can develop into - and without belittling its role in the Arab-Israeli conflict, we are unable to exchange the present or future Islamic Palestine with the secular idea. The Islamic nature of Palestine is part of our religion and whoever takes his religion lightly is a loser.

"Who will be adverse to the religion of Abraham, but he whose mind is infatuated? (The Cow - verse 130).

The day The Palestinian Liberation Organization adopts Islam as its way of life, we will become its soldiers, and fuel for its fire that will burn the enemies.

Until such a day, and we pray to Allah that it will be soon, the Islamic Resistance Movement's stand towards the PLO is that of the son towards his father, the brother towards his brother, and the relative to relative, suffers his pain and supports him in confronting the enemies, wishing him to be wise and well-guided.

"Stand by your brother, for he who is brotherless is like the fighter who goes to battle without arms. One's cousin is the wing one flies with - could the bird fly without wings?"

### **D. Arab and Islamic Countries:**

#### *Article Twenty-Eight:*

The Zionist invasion is a vicious invasion. It does not refrain from resorting to all methods, using all evil and contemptible ways to achieve its end. It relies greatly in its infiltration and espionage operations on the secret organizations it gave rise to, such as the Freemasons, The Rotary and Lions clubs, and other sabotage groups. All these organizations, whether secret or open, work in the interest of Zionism and according to its instructions. They aim at undermining societies, destroying values, corrupting consciences, deteriorating character and annihilating Islam. It is behind the drug trade and alcoholism in all its kinds so as to facilitate its control and expansion.

Arab countries surrounding Israel are asked to open their borders before the fighters from among the Arab and Islamic nations so that they could consolidate their efforts with those of their Moslem brethren in Palestine.

As for the other Arab and Islamic countries, they are asked to facilitate the movement of the fighters from and to it, and this is the least thing they could do.

We should not forget to remind every Moslem that when the Jews conquered the Holy City in 1967, they stood on the threshold of the Aqsa Mosque and proclaimed that "Mohammed is dead, and his descendants are all women."

Israel, Judaism and Jews challenge Islam and the Moslem people. "May the cowards never sleep."

### **E. Nationalist and Religious Groupings, Institutions, Intellectuals, The Arab and Islamic World:**

The Islamic Resistance Movement hopes that all these groupings will side with it in all spheres, would support it, adopt its stand and solidify its activities and moves, work towards rallying support for it so that the Islamic people will be a base and a stay for it, supplying it with strategic depth an all human material and informative spheres, in time and in place. This should be done through the convening of solidarity conferences, the issuing of explanatory bulletins, favourable articles and booklets, enlightening the masses regarding the Palestinian issue, clarifying what confronts it and the conspiracies woven around it. They should mobilize the Islamic nations, ideologically, educationally and culturally, so that these peoples would be equipped to perform their role in the decisive battle of liberation, just as they did when they vanquished the Crusaders and the Tatars and saved human civilization. Indeed, that is not difficult for Allah.

"Allah hath written, Verily I will prevail, and my apostles: for Allah is strong and mighty." (The Dispute - verse 21).

#### *Article Thirty:*

Writers, intellectuals, media people, orators, educators and teachers, and all the various sectors in the Arab and Islamic world - all of them are called upon to perform their role, and to fulfill their duty, because of the ferocity of the Zionist offensive and the Zionist influence in many countries exercised through financial and media control, as well as the consequences that all this lead to in the greater part of the world.



Jihad is not confined to the carrying of arms and the confrontation of the enemy. The effective word, the good article, the useful book, support and solidarity - together with the presence of sincere purpose for the hoisting of Allah's banner higher and higher - all these are elements of the Jihad for Allah's sake.

"Whosoever mobilises a fighter for the sake of Allah is himself a fighter. Whosoever supports the relatives of a fighter, he himself is a fighter." (related by al-Bukhari, Moslem, Abu-Dawood and al-Tarmadhi).

### **F. Followers of Other Religions: The Islamic Resistance Movement Is A Humanistic Movement:**

#### *Article Thirty-One:*

The Islamic Resistance Movement is a humanistic movement. It takes care of human rights and is guided by Islamic tolerance when dealing with the followers of other religions. It does not antagonize anyone of them except if it is antagonized by it or stands in its way to hamper its moves and waste its efforts.

Under the wing of Islam, it is possible for the followers of the three religions - Islam, Christianity and Judaism - to coexist in peace and quiet with each other. Peace and quiet would not be possible except under the wing of Islam. Past and present history are the best witness to that.

It is the duty of the followers of other religions to stop disputing the sovereignty of Islam in this region, because the day these followers should take over there will be nothing but carnage, displacement and terror. Everyone of them is at variance with his fellow-religionists, not to speak about followers of other religionists. Past and present history are full of examples to prove this fact.

"They will not fight against you in a body, except in fenced towns, or from behind walls. Their strength in war among themselves is great: thou thinkest them to be united; but their hearts are divided. This, because they are people who do not understand." (The Emigration - verse 14).

Islam confers upon everyone his legitimate rights. Islam prevents the incursion on other people's rights. The Zionist Nazi activities against our people will not last for long. "For the state of injustice lasts but one day, while the state of justice lasts till Doomsday."

"As to those who have not borne arms against you on account of religion, nor turned you out of your dwellings, Allah forbiddeth you not to deal kindly with them, and to behave justly towards them; for Allah loveth those who act justly." (The Tried - verse 8).

### **The Attempt to Isolate the Palestinian People:**

#### *Article Thirty-Two:*

World Zionism, together with imperialistic powers, try through a studied plan and an intelligent strategy to remove one Arab state after another from the circle of struggle against Zionism, in order to have it finally face the Palestinian people only. Egypt was, to a great extent, removed from the circle of the struggle, through the treacherous Camp David Agreement. They are trying to draw other Arab countries into similar agreements and to bring them outside the circle of struggle.

The Islamic Resistance Movement calls on Arab and Islamic nations to take up the line of serious and persevering action to prevent the success of this horrendous plan, to warn the people of the danger emanating from leaving the circle of struggle against Zionism. Today it is Palestine, tomorrow it will be one country or another. The Zionist plan is limitless. After Palestine, the Zionists aspire to expand from the Nile to the Euphrates. When they will have digested the region they overtook, they will aspire to further expansion, and so on. Their plan is embodied in the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion", and their present conduct is the best proof of what we are saying.

Leaving the circle of struggle with Zionism is high treason, and cursed be he who does that. "for whoso shall turn his back unto them on that day, unless he turneth aside to fight, or retreateth to another party of the faithful, shall draw on himself the indignation of Allah, and his abode shall be hell; an ill journey shall it be thither." (The Spoils - verse 16). There is no way out except by concentrating all powers and energies to face this Nazi, vicious Tatar invasion. The alternative is loss of one's country, the dispersion of citizens, the spread of vice on earth and the destruction of religious values. Let every person know that he is responsible before Allah, for "the doer of the slightest good deed is rewarded in like, and the doer of the slightest evil deed is also rewarded in like."

The Islamic Resistance Movement consider itself to be the spearhead of the circle of struggle with world Zionism and a step on the road. The Movement adds its efforts to the efforts of all those who are active in the Palestinian arena. Arab and Islamic Peoples should augment by further steps on their part; Islamic groupings all over the Arab world should also do the same, since all of these are the best-equipped for the future role in the fight with the warmongering Jews.

"..and we have put enmity and hatred between them, until the day of resurrection. So often as they shall kindle a fire of war, Allah shall extinguish it; and they shall set their minds to act corruptly in the earth, but Allah loveth not the corrupt doers." (The Table - verse 64).

### *Article Thirty-Three:*

The Islamic Resistance Movement, being based on the common coordinated and interdependent conceptions of the laws of the universe, and flowing in the stream of destiny in confronting and fighting the enemies in defence of the Moslems and Islamic civilization and sacred sites, the first among which is the Aqsa Mosque, urges the Arab and Islamic peoples, their governments, popular and official groupings, to fear Allah where their view of the Islamic Resistance Movement and their dealings with it are concerned. They should back and support it, as Allah wants them to, extending to it more and more funds till Allah's purpose is achieved when ranks will close up, fighters join other fighters and masses everywhere in the Islamic world will come forward in response to the call of duty while loudly proclaiming: Hail to Jihad. Their cry will reach the heavens and will go on being resounded until liberation is achieved, the invaders vanquished and Allah's victory comes about.

"And Allah will certainly assist him who shall be on his side: for Allah is strong and mighty." (The Pilgrimage - verse 40).

## The Testimony of History

### **Across History in Confronting the Invaders:**

#### *Article Thirty-Four:*

Palestine is the navel of the globe and the crossroad of the continents. Since the dawn of history, it has been the target of expansionists. The Prophet, Allah bless him and grant him

salvation, had himself pointed to this fact in the noble Hadith in which he called on his honourable companion, Ma'adh ben-Jabal, saying: O Ma'ath, Allah throw open before you, when I am gone, Syria, from Al-Arish to the Euphrates. Its men, women and slaves will stay firmly there till the Day of Judgement. Whoever of you should choose one of the Syrian shores, or the Holy Land, he will be in constant struggle till the Day of Judgement."

Expansionists have more than once put their eye on Palestine which they attacked with their armies to fulfill their designs on it. Thus it was that the Crusaders came with their armies, bringing with them their creed and carrying their Cross. They were able to defeat the Moslems for a while, but the Moslems were able to retrieve the land only when they stood under the wing of their religious banner, united their word, hallowed the name of Allah and surged out fighting under the leadership of Salah ed-Din al-Ayyubi. They fought for almost twenty years and at the end the Crusaders were defeated and Palestine was liberated.

"Say unto those who believe not, Ye shall be overcome, and thrown together into hell; an unhappy couch it shall be." (The Family of Imran - verse 12).

This is the only way to liberate Palestine. There is no doubt about the testimony of history. It is one of the laws of the universe and one of the rules of existence. Nothing can overcome iron except iron. Their false futile creed can only be defeated by the righteous Islamic creed. A creed could not be fought except by a creed, and in the last analysis, victory is for the just, for justice is certainly victorious.

"Our word hath formerly been given unto our servants the apostles; that they should certainly be assisted against the infidels, and that our armies should surely be the conquerors." (Those Who Rank Themselves - verses 171-172).

### *Article Thirty-Five:*

The Islamic Resistance Movement views seriously the defeat of the Crusaders at the hands of Salah ed-Din al-Ayyubi and the rescuing of Palestine from their hands, as well as the defeat of the Tatars at Ein Galot, breaking their power at the hands of Qataz and Al-Dhafer Bivers and saving the Arab world from the Tatar onslaught which aimed at the destruction of every meaning of human civilization. The Movement draws lessons and examples from all this. The present Zionist onslaught has also been preceded by Crusading raids from the West and other Tatar raids from the East. Just as the Moslems faced those raids and planned fighting and defeating them, they should be able to confront the Zionist invasion and defeat it. This is indeed no problem for the Almighty Allah, provided that the intentions are pure, the

determination is true and that Moslems have benefited from past experiences, rid themselves of the effects of ideological invasion and followed the customs of their ancestors.

### **The Islamic Resistance Movement is Composed of Soldiers:**

#### *Article Thirty-Six:*

While paving its way, the Islamic Resistance Movement, emphasizes time and again to all the sons of our people, to the Arab and Islamic nations, that it does not seek personal fame, material gain, or social prominence. It does not aim to compete against any one from among our people, or take his place. Nothing of the sort at all. It will not act against any of the sons of Moslems or those who are peaceful towards it from among non-Moslems, be they here or anywhere else. It will only serve as a support for all groupings and organizations operating against the Zionist enemy and its lackeys.

The Islamic Resistance Movement adopts Islam as its way of life. Islam is its creed and religion. Whoever takes Islam as his way of life, be it an organization, a grouping, a country or any other body, the Islamic Resistance Movement considers itself as their soldiers and nothing more.

We ask Allah to show us the right course, to make us an example to others and to judge between us and our people with truth. "O Lord, do thou judge between us and our nation with truth; for thou art the best judge." (Al Araf - Verse 89).

The last of our prayers will be praise to Allah, the Master of the Universe.

iii. English Translation of the Hamas Charter 2017

Sourced from the Middle East Eye<sup>14</sup>

**A Document of General Principles and Policies**

May 1, 2017

**In the Name of Allah Most Gracious Most Merciful**

**The Islamic Resistance Movement “Hamas”**

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of all worlds. May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon Muhammad, the Master of Messengers and the Leader of the mujahidin, and upon his household and all his companions.

**Preamble:**

Palestine is the land of the Arab Palestinian people, from it they originate, to it they adhere and belong, and about it they reach out and communicate.

Palestine is a land whose status has been elevated by Islam, a faith that holds it in high esteem, that breathes through it its spirit and just values and that lays the foundation for the doctrine of defending and protecting it.

Palestine is the cause of a people who have been let down by a world that fails to secure their rights and restore to them what has been usurped from them, a people whose land continues to suffer one of the worst types of occupation in this world.

Palestine is a land that was seized by a racist, anti-human and colonial Zionist project that was founded on a false promise (the Balfour Declaration), on recognition of a usurping entity and on imposing a fait accompli by force.

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<sup>14</sup> See <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/hamas-2017-document-full>, last accessed 3 September 2024.

Palestine symbolises the resistance that shall continue until liberation is accomplished, until the return is fulfilled and until a fully sovereign state is established with Jerusalem as its capital.

Palestine is the true partnership among Palestinians of all affiliations for the sublime objective of liberation.

Palestine is the spirit of the Ummah and its central cause; it is the soul of humanity and its living conscience.

This document is the product of deep deliberations that led us to a strong consensus. As a movement, we agree about both the theory and the practice of the vision that is outlined in the pages that follow. It is a vision that stands on solid grounds and on well-established principles. This document unveils the goals, the milestones and the way in which national unity can be enforced. It also establishes our common understanding of the Palestinian cause, the working principles which we use to further it, and the limits of flexibility used to interpret it.

### **The Movement**

1. The Islamic Resistance Movement “Hamas” is a Palestinian Islamic national liberation and resistance movement. Its goal is to liberate Palestine and confront the Zionist project. Its frame of reference is Islam, which determines its principles, objectives and means.

### **The Land of Palestine**

2. Palestine, which extends from the River Jordan in the east to the Mediterranean in the west and from Ras al-Naqurah in the north to Umm al-Rashrash in the south, is an integral territorial unit. It is the land and the home of the Palestinian people. The expulsion and banishment of the Palestinian people from their land and the establishment of the Zionist entity therein do not annul the right of the Palestinian people to their entire land and do not entrench any rights therein for the usurping Zionist entity.

3. Palestine is an Arab Islamic land. It is a blessed sacred land that has a special place in the heart of every Arab and every Muslim.

### **The Palestinian People**

4. The Palestinians are the Arabs who lived in Palestine until 1947, irrespective of whether they were expelled from it, or stayed in it; and every person that was born to an Arab Palestinian father after that date, whether inside or outside Palestine, is a Palestinian.

5. The Palestinian identity is authentic and timeless; it is passed from generation to generation. The catastrophes that have befallen the Palestinian people, as a consequence of the Zionist occupation and its policy of displacement, cannot erase the identity of the Palestinian people nor can they negate it. A Palestinian shall not lose his or her national identity or rights by acquiring a second nationality.

6. The Palestinian people are one people, made up of all Palestinians, inside and outside of Palestine, irrespective of their religion, culture or political affiliation.

### **Islam and Palestine**

7. Palestine is at the heart of the Arab and Islamic Ummah and enjoys a special status. Within Palestine there exists Jerusalem, whose precincts are blessed by Allah. Palestine is the Holy Land, which Allah has blessed for humanity. It is the Muslims' first Qiblah and the destination of the journey performed at night by Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him. It is the location from where he ascended to the upper heavens. It is the birthplace of Jesus Christ, peace be upon him. Its soil contains the remains of thousands of prophets, companions and mujahidin. It is the land of people who are determined to defend the truth – within Jerusalem and its surroundings – who are not deterred or intimidated by those who oppose them and by those who betray them, and they will continue their mission until the Promise of Allah is fulfilled.

8. By virtue of its justly balanced middle way and moderate spirit, Islam – for Hamas - provides a comprehensive way of life and an order that is fit for purpose at all times and in all places. Islam is a religion of peace and tolerance. It provides an umbrella for the followers of other creeds and religions who can practice their beliefs in security and safety. Hamas also believes that Palestine has always been and will always be a model of coexistence, tolerance and civilizational innovation.

9. Hamas believes that the message of Islam upholds the values of truth, justice, freedom and dignity and prohibits all forms of injustice and incriminates oppressors irrespective of their religion, race, gender or nationality. Islam is against all forms of religious, ethnic or sectarian extremism and bigotry. It is the religion that inculcates in its followers the value of standing up to aggression and of supporting the oppressed; it motivates them to give generously and make sacrifices in defence of their dignity, their land, their peoples and their holy places.

### **Jerusalem**

10. Jerusalem is the capital of Palestine. Its religious, historic and civilisational status is fundamental to the Arabs, Muslims and the world at large. Its Islamic and Christian holy places belong exclusively to the Palestinian people and to the Arab and Islamic Ummah. Not one stone of Jerusalem can be surrendered or relinquished. The measures undertaken by the occupiers in Jerusalem, such as Judaisation, settlement building, and establishing facts on the ground are fundamentally null and void.



**11.** The blessed al-Aqsa Mosque belongs exclusively to our people and our Ummah, and the occupation has no right to it whatsoever. The occupation's plots, measures and attempts to judaize al-Aqsa and divide it are null, void and illegitimate.

### **Refugees and the Right of Return**

**12.** The Palestinian cause in its essence is a cause of an occupied land and a displaced people. The right of the Palestinian refugees and the displaced to return to their homes from which they were banished or were banned from returning to – whether in the lands occupied in 1948 or in 1967 (that is the whole of Palestine), is a natural right, both individual and collective. This right is confirmed by all divine laws as well as by the basic principles of human rights and international law. It is an inalienable right and cannot be dispensed with by any party, whether Palestinian, Arab or international.

**13.** Hamas rejects all attempts to erase the rights of the refugees, including the attempts to settle them outside Palestine and through the projects of the alternative homeland. Compensation to the Palestinian refugees for the harm they have suffered as a consequence of banishing them and occupying their land is an absolute right that goes hand in hand with their right to return. They are to receive compensation upon their return and this does not negate or diminish their right to return.

### **The Zionist Project**

**14.** The Zionist project is a racist, aggressive, colonial and expansionist project based on seizing the properties of others; it is hostile to the Palestinian people and to their aspiration for freedom, liberation, return and self-determination. The Israeli entity is the plaything of the Zionist project and its base of aggression.

**15.** The Zionist project does not target the Palestinian people alone; it is the enemy of the Arab and Islamic Ummah posing a grave threat to its security and interests. It is also hostile to the Ummah's aspirations for unity, renaissance and liberation and has been the major source of its troubles. The Zionist project also poses a danger to international security and peace and to mankind and its interests and stability.

**16.** Hamas affirms that its conflict is with the Zionist project not with the Jews because of their religion. Hamas does not wage a struggle against the Jews because they are Jewish but wages a struggle against the Zionists who occupy Palestine. Yet, it is the Zionists who constantly identify Judaism and the Jews with their own colonial project and illegal entity.

**17.** Hamas rejects the persecution of any human being or the undermining of his or her rights on nationalist, religious or sectarian grounds. Hamas is of the view that the Jewish problem, anti-Semitism and the persecution of the Jews are phenomena fundamentally linked to European history and not to the history of the Arabs and the Muslims or to their heritage. The Zionist movement,

which was able with the help of Western powers to occupy Palestine, is the most dangerous form of settlement occupation which has already disappeared from much of the world and must disappear from Palestine.

### **The position toward Occupation and Political Solutions**

**18.** The following are considered null and void: the Balfour Declaration, the British Mandate Document, the UN Palestine Partition Resolution, and whatever resolutions and measures that derive from them or are similar to them. The establishment of "Israel" is entirely illegal and contravenes the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and goes against their will and the will of the Ummah; it is also in violation of human rights that are guaranteed by international conventions, foremost among them is the right to self-determination.

**19.** There shall be no recognition of the legitimacy of the Zionist entity. Whatever has befallen the land of Palestine in terms of occupation, settlement building, judaisation or changes to its features or falsification of facts is illegitimate. Rights never lapse.

**20.** Hamas believes that no part of the land of Palestine shall be compromised or conceded, irrespective of the causes, the circumstances and the pressures and no matter how long the occupation lasts. Hamas rejects any alternative to the full and complete liberation of Palestine, from the river to the sea. However, without compromising its rejection of the Zionist entity and without relinquishing any Palestinian rights, Hamas considers the establishment of a fully sovereign and independent Palestinian state, with Jerusalem as its capital along the lines of the 4th of June 1967, with the return of the refugees and the displaced to their homes from which they were expelled, to be a formula of national consensus.

**21.** Hamas affirms that the Oslo Accords and their addenda contravene the governing rules of international law in that they generate commitments that violate the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. Therefore, the Movement rejects these agreements and all that flows from them, such as the obligations that are detrimental to the interests of our people, especially security coordination (collaboration).

**22.** Hamas rejects all the agreements, initiatives and settlement projects that are aimed at undermining the Palestinian cause and the rights of our Palestinian people. In this regard, any stance, initiative or political programme must not in any way violate these rights and should not contravene them or contradict them.

**23.** Hamas stresses that transgression against the Palestinian people, usurping their land and banishing them from their homeland cannot be called peace. Any settlements reached on this basis will not lead to peace. Resistance and jihad for the liberation of Palestine will remain a legitimate right, a duty and an honour for all the sons and daughters of our people and our Ummah.

### Resistance and Liberation

**24.** The liberation of Palestine is the duty of the Palestinian people in particular and the duty of the Arab and Islamic Ummah in general. It is also a humanitarian obligation as necessitated by the dictates of truth and justice. The agencies working for Palestine, whether national, Arab, Islamic or humanitarian, complement each other and are harmonious and not in conflict with each other.

**25.** Resisting the occupation with all means and methods is a legitimate right guaranteed by divine laws and by international norms and laws. At the heart of these lies armed resistance, which is regarded as the strategic choice for protecting the principles and the rights of the Palestinian people.

**26.** Hamas rejects any attempt to undermine the resistance and its arms. It also affirms the right of our people to develop the means and mechanisms of resistance. Managing resistance, in terms of escalation or de-escalation, or in terms of diversifying the means and methods, is an integral part of the process of managing the conflict and should not be at the expense of the principle of resistance.

### The Palestinian Political System

**27.** A real state of Palestine is a state that has been liberated. There is no alternative to a fully sovereign Palestinian State on the entire national Palestinian soil, with Jerusalem as its capital.

**28.** Hamas believes in, and adheres to, managing its Palestinian relations on the basis of pluralism, democracy, national partnership, acceptance of the other and the adoption of dialogue. The aim is to bolster the unity of ranks and joint action for the purpose of accomplishing national goals and fulfilling the aspirations of the Palestinian people.

**29.** The PLO is a national framework for the Palestinian people inside and outside of Palestine. It should therefore be preserved, developed and rebuilt on democratic foundations so as to secure the participation of all the constituents and forces of the Palestinian people, in a manner that safeguards Palestinian rights.

**30.** Hamas stresses the necessity of building Palestinian national institutions on sound democratic principles, foremost among them are free and fair elections. Such process should be on the basis of national partnership and in accordance with a clear programme and a clear strategy that adhere to the rights, including the right of resistance, and which fulfil the aspirations of the Palestinian people.

**31.** Hamas affirms that the role of the Palestinian Authority should be to serve the Palestinian people and safeguard their security, their rights and their national project.

**32.** Hamas stresses the necessity of maintaining the independence of Palestinian national decision-making. Outside forces should not be allowed to intervene. At the same time, Hamas affirms the responsibility of the Arabs and the Muslims and their duty and role in the liberation of Palestine from Zionist occupation.

**33.** Palestinian society is enriched by its prominent personalities, figures, dignitaries, civil society institutions, and youth, students, trade unionist and women's groups who together work for the achievement of national goals and societal building, pursue resistance, and achieve liberation.

**34.** The role of Palestinian women is fundamental in the process of building the present and the future, just as it has always been in the process of making Palestinian history. It is a pivotal role in the project of resistance, liberation and building the political system.

### **The Arab and Islamic Ummah**

**35.** Hamas believes that the Palestinian issue is the central cause for the Arab and Islamic Ummah.

**36.** Hamas believes in the unity of the Ummah with all its diverse constituents and is aware of the need to avoid anything that could fragment the Ummah and undermine its unity.

**37.** Hamas believes in cooperating with all states that support the rights of the Palestinian people. It opposes intervention in the internal affairs of any country. It also refuses to be drawn into disputes and conflicts that take place among different countries. Hamas adopts the policy of opening up to different states in the world, especially the Arab and Islamic states. It endeavours to establish balanced relations on the basis of combining the requirements of the Palestinian cause and the Palestinian people's interests on the one hand with the interests of the Ummah, its renaissance and its security on the other.

### **The Humanitarian and International Aspect**

**38.** The Palestinian issue is one that has major humanitarian and international dimensions. Supporting and backing this cause is a humanitarian and civilisational task that is required by the prerequisites of truth, justice and common humanitarian values.

**39.** From a legal and humanitarian perspective, the liberation of Palestine is a legitimate activity, it is an act of self-defence, and it is the expression of the natural right of all peoples to self-determination.

**40.** In its relations with world nations and peoples, Hamas believes in the values of cooperation, justice, freedom and respect of the will of the people.

**41.** Hamas welcomes the stances of states, organisations and institutions that support the rights of the Palestinian people. It salutes the free peoples of the world who support the Palestinian cause. At the same time, it denounces the support granted by any party to the Zionist entity or the attempts to cover up its crimes and aggression against the Palestinians and calls for the prosecution of Zionist war criminals.

**42.** Hamas rejects the attempts to impose hegemony on the Arab and Islamic Ummah just as it rejects the attempts to impose hegemony on the rest of the world's nations and peoples. Hamas also condemns all forms of colonialism, occupation, discrimination, oppression and aggression in the world.

May 2017

## Schedule 9 – Letter from Public Lawyers to Lord Grade

LONDON

11.10.23

Dear Lord Grade,

On 7<sup>th</sup> October 2023, Hamas launched a large invasion of the State of the Israel which resulted variously in the slaughter, rape and abduction of over a thousand Israeli citizens.

There is nothing controversial about that. It is a fact.

The BBC has fallen well below the standards expressed in its Editorial Values in its reporting of that invasion and the consequences therefrom.

In particular, §1.2 of its Editorial Values states that in operating in the public interest the BBC seeks to establish the truth and use the highest reporting standards to provide coverage that is “fair and accurate”, stating expressly:

“We are **impartial**, seeking to reflect the views and experiences of our audiences – so that our output as a whole includes a breadth and diversity of opinion and no significant strand of thought is under-represented or omitted. We are independent of outside interests and arrangements that could compromise our **editorial integrity**. Our **editorial standards do not require absolute neutrality on every issue or detachment from fundamental democratic principles.**”

In terms of **impartiality**, it is beyond doubt that the BBC has not shown impartiality in terms of the nomenclature it uses to refer to Hamas as “militants”.<sup>1</sup>

Impartiality necessarily means not supporting any sides. This means providing the most unequivocally accurate and/or universally agreed descriptor in a case such as this.

The principal source for such language is statute, or case law, which establishes the categorisation of the organisation in question as a matter of law.

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<sup>1</sup> There are numerous examples of this use of language, e.g. “[Watch: Israeli festivalgoer kidnapped by Hamas militants](#)” (10 October 2023); “[Inside Kfar Aza where Hamas militants killed families in their homes](#)” (11 October 2023”).

For example, it is entirely impartial and obviously right to refer to someone as a “murderer” after their conviction by a Court. It does not involve the taking of sides because it is a purely factual definition, reflecting the true position of guilt established in a Court of law.

As to this in the present context, The Terrorism Act 2000 (“the Act”) provides a comprehensive definition of what is terrorism, principally at section 1(1) and (2) of the Act, as follows:

- (1) In this Act “terrorism” means the use or threat of action where—
  - (a) the action falls within subsection (2),
  - (b) the use or threat is designed to influence the government [F1 or an international governmental organisation] or to intimidate the public or a section of the public, and
  - (c) the use or threat is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious [F2, racial] or ideological cause.
- (2) Action falls within this subsection if it—
  - (a) involves serious violence against a person,
  - (b) involves serious damage to property,
  - (c) endangers a person’s life, other than that of the person committing the action,
  - (d) creates a serious risk to the health or safety of the public or a section of the public, or
  - (e) is designed seriously to interfere with or seriously to disrupt an electronic system.

At section 3, it provides that an organisation is proscribed if it is listed in Schedule 2 of the Act, such organisation only being added to Schedule 2 if the Secretary of State believes that it is “concerned in terrorism” (section 3(4)).

Hamas was added to Schedule 2 of the Act by [The Terrorism Act 2000 \(proscribed Organisations\) \(Amendment\) \(No.3\) Order 2021 \(SI 2021/1318\)](#).

Accordingly, the legal position in this country is that Hamas is a proscribed terrorist organisation. That is not a matter of debate or discussion. It is a matter of legal fact.

The question then arises: how can it be impartial (i.e. not taking sides) to describe an organisation in terms which **departs** from its established legal meaning and **substitutes** a word which refers to an organisation which is violent or aggressive but not necessarily engaged in terrorism and not necessarily proscribed? In short, by a significantly “watered-down” descriptor which is less legally precise.

The answer is it cannot be impartial to do so. It necessarily involves the BBC “stepping into the arena” and taking sides so as to describe Hamas in more sympathetic terms.

Put another: in trying to be impartial, the BBC has become partial.

There is a wider point. The legal descriptor is correct and reflects the indisputable reality of Hamas. To give but two examples: it is an organisation which murders (and has just murdered) many hundreds of non-combatant innocents; and it is an organisation which calls for the genocide of the Jewish people by virtue of its founding Charter.

Therefore, the use of the word “terrorism” is neither confusing nor imprecise. It is a very accurate statement within the natural use of the English language as to what Hamas is engaged in.

This is behaviour which the BBC readily understands is terror/terrorism in other contexts, e.g. in its coverage of the Manchester bombings – “[Terror attack survivors condemn compensation body](#)” (17 July 2023); “ and see also the [BBC “Bitesize” guide for GCSE students](#) which refers to Al Qaeda and the IRA as terrorist groups.

If the BBC is **only** declining to use the word “terrorist” in the context of Israel then this is further evidence of partiality (by specifically discriminating in this case only).

You will be aware that the leader of every major political party agrees with this analysis, as does the BBC’s celebrated correspondent Jon Sopel who tweeted yesterday at 9:09pm:

Dear friends and former colleagues

@BBCNews, If this doesn’t describe an act of pure terror by terrorists what does? The guidelines that I followed for years are no longer fit for purpose, and sadly have the effect of sanitising

We would be grateful for your urgent consideration of this matter.

JEREMY BRIER KC

LORD POLAK

LORD WOLFSON KC

LORD PANNICK KC

LORD GRABINER KC



## Schedule 10 – UKLFI Briefing Note



### **BRIEFING NOTE ON PALESTINIAN CASUALTY FIGURES**

#### Introduction

1. Palestinian casualty figures issued by Hamas-controlled Gaza Ministries and circulated by the UN OCHA<sup>1</sup> have been frequently quoted in the course of the current war. However, their reliability has been challenged by a number of studies. Moreover the figures do not differentiate between combatants and civilians, and the fact that they include combatants and the number of combatants killed are rarely mentioned.
2. This note discusses the reliability of the figures, estimates the true numbers of Palestinian civilians and combatants killed as at 29 February and 31 July 2024, compares the ratio of civilian to combatant deaths in the Gaza Strip to other urban conflicts, and makes recommendations to media organisations.

#### The figures produced by Gaza Ministries

3. It is important to understand how the figures have been produced by the Gaza Ministries, which has varied over the course of the current war. At the beginning of the war on 7 October 2023, statistics were produced by the Gaza Health Ministry based on identified persons who were recorded as dead at hospitals or morgues. This process was similar to that used in previous conflicts, although, in contrast to previous conflicts, the figures were not verified by international organisations and Palestinian NGOs. These figures included breakdowns for men, women and “children” of 18 or younger.<sup>2</sup>
4. From 3 November 2023 onwards, the Gaza Health Ministry also included figures derived from unidentified “reliable media reports”. Then on 6 January 2024, the Gaza Health Ministry introduced a further counting method, by providing an online Google form for Gazans to submit details of fatalities, including missing persons presumed dead.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. See e.g. <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-3-july-2024>

<sup>2</sup> Gabriel Epstein, “How Hamas Manipulates Gaza Fatality Numbers” <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/how-hamas-manipulates-gaza-fatality-numbers-examining-male-undercount-and-other>

<sup>3</sup> Gabriel Epstein, “How Hamas Manipulates Gaza Fatality Numbers” <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/how-hamas-manipulates-gaza-fatality-numbers-examining-male-undercount-and-other>; “Gaza Fatality Data Has Become Completely Unreliable”

5. The proportion of the total casualty figures in the Health Ministry figures contributed by the media reports and Google form has steadily grown. By 11 December 2023, out of a total of 18,412 reported deaths, 4,143 (22.5%) were derived from media reports. By 29 February 2024, out of 30,228 total reported deaths, 12,943 (42.8%) were derived from the media reports or the Google form. By 31 March 2024, out of 32,845 total reported deaths, 15,070 (45.9%) were derived from the media reports or the Google form.<sup>4</sup>
6. From 12 November 2023 onwards, casualty figures have also been reported by the Gaza Government Media Office (GMO). Between 10 November 2023 and 1 December 2023 the Gaza Health Ministry did not report numbers on a daily basis, although it provided information sporadically to the Palestinian Health Ministry in Ramallah. The Gaza Health Ministry resumed daily reporting on 2 December 2023 alongside the GMO.<sup>5</sup>
7. From 1 April 2024, the Gaza Health Ministry and GMO used the terms “identified” and “unidentified” for the different categories of data. The “identified” category comprised those recorded at hospitals or morgues together with some of those derived from media sources or the Google form, while the “unidentified” category comprised the remaining claimed fatalities derived from media sources or the Google form. On 1 April 2024, the total reported deaths were 32,916, of which 17,789 (54.0%) were recorded at hospitals or morgues and included in the “identified” category; 2,864 (8.7%) were derived from media sources or the Google form and also included in the “identified” category; and the remaining 12,263 (37.3%) were derived from media sources or the Google form and described as “unidentified”.<sup>6</sup> Thus 81.1% of those derived from media sources or the Google form were “unidentified”, while 18.9% of these were said to be “identified”.
8. However, it appears that the Gaza Ministries have not specified the number of “identified” fatalities since 30 April 2024. By that date, according to the Gaza Health Ministry there were 34,535 Palestinian deaths of which 24,686 (71.5%) were “identified”,<sup>7</sup> leaving 9,849 (28.5%) “unidentified”. This indicates a significantly higher rate of identification than in the figures provided on 1 April 2024, suggesting

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<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/gaza-fatality-data-has-become-completely-unreliable>;

<sup>4</sup> Gabriel Epstein, “Gaza Fatality Data Has Become Completely Unreliable”

<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/gaza-fatality-data-has-become-completely-unreliable>: see the downloadable database

<sup>5</sup> Gabriel Epstein, “How Hamas Manipulates Gaza Fatality Numbers”

<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/how-hamas-manipulates-gaza-fatality-numbers-examining-male-undercount-and-other>

<sup>6</sup> <https://t.me/MOHMediaGaza/5258>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-3-july-2024>

that one or both sets of figures may not be justified. It is not clear how the “identification” was carried out.

Evidence of fabrication and manipulation

9. The media reports and Google form are particularly open to fabrication and manipulation by Hamas personnel or others making fictitious reports in order to exaggerate civilian casualties for propaganda purposes. There is also a substantial risk of duplication resulting from this form of reporting even when used in good faith. However, the figures based on hospital and morgue reports are not immune from interference.
10. Evidence of fabrication and manipulation of has been identified in published reports and notes by
  - (a) Gabriel Epstein for the Washington Institute<sup>8</sup>
  - (b) Prof. Abraham Wyner<sup>9</sup>
  - (c) Dr Tom Simpson, Prof Lewi Stone and Prof Gregory Rose<sup>10</sup>
  - (d) Prof Michael Spagat<sup>11</sup>and in posts by
  - (e) Salo Aizenberg<sup>12</sup>
  - (f) Mark Zlochin<sup>13</sup>
  - (g) David Adesnik<sup>14</sup> and

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<sup>8</sup> “How Hamas Manipulates Gaza Fatality Numbers” <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/how-hamas-manipulates-gaza-fatality-numbers-examining-male-undercount-and-other>; “Gaza Fatality Data Has Become Completely Unreliable” <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/gaza-fatality-data-has-become-completely-unreliable>; “Untangling the UN’s Gaza Fatality Data” <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/untangling-uns-gaza-fatality-data>; “Here’s the Real Problem with the UN’s Revised Gaza Death Toll” <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/heres-real-problem-uns-revised-gaza-death-toll>

<sup>9</sup> “How the Gaza Ministry of Health Fakes Casualty Numbers” <https://www.tabletmag.com/sections/news/articles/how-gaza-health-ministry-fakes-casualty-numbers>

<sup>10</sup> “Statistically Impossible: A Critical Analysis of Hamas’s Women and Children Casualty Figures” <https://fathomjournal.org/statistically-impossible-a-critical-analysis-of-hamass-women-and-children-casualty-figures/>

<sup>11</sup> “Analysis of new death data from Gaza’s Health Ministry reveals several concerns” <https://aoav.org.uk/2024/analysis-of-new-death-data-from-gazas-health-ministry-reveals-several-concerns/>; “Gaza Ministry of Health releases detailed new casualty data amidst confusion of UN’s death numbers in Gaza” <https://aoav.org.uk/2024/gaza-ministry-of-health-releases-detailed-new-casualty-amidst-confusion-of-uns-death-numbers-in-gaza/>; “A critical analysis of The Lancet’s letter ‘Counting the Dead in Gaza: Difficult but Essential’” <https://aoav.org.uk/2024/a-critical-analysis-of-the-lancets-letter-counting-the-dead-in-gaza-difficult-but-essential-professor-mike-spagat-reviews-the-claim-the-total-gaza-death-toll-may-reach-upwards-of-186000/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://x.com/Aizenberg55>

<sup>13</sup> <https://x.com/MarkZlochin>; “The numbers of dead in Gaza don’t add up – and there is no easy explanation” <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/global-health/terror-and-security/unrwa-staff-death-toll-gaza-israel-hamas-war-data/>

<sup>14</sup> <https://x.com/adesnik>

- (h) UKLFI.<sup>15</sup>
11. The evidence of fabrication and manipulation provided by these analyses includes:
- (a) The proportions of women and children in the figures derived from media sources are much higher than those identified at hospitals and morgues; indeed, implausibly high at over 90% and in the case of GMO data in 2023 at over 99%.<sup>16</sup> The extraordinarily high proportion of women and children in the figures derived from media sources ensured that the proportion of women and children in the total figures remained above 70% with surprising consistency, even as the proportion of women and children in deaths recorded in hospitals and morgues decreased to 42% in January and February 2024.<sup>17</sup>
  - (b) From 1-8 December 2023, the recorded number of dead men was reduced from 4850 to 3499, a reduction of 1351 or 28%. In the same period, the recorded number of dead women and children was increased from 10664 to 13991, an increase of 3327 or 31%. These changes increased the proportion of women and children casualties from 68% of the total to 80% of the total.<sup>18</sup>
12. Although inherently less susceptible to manipulation, there is also evidence of manipulation and unreliability in the deaths recorded at hospitals and morgues or latterly categorised as “identified”, for example:
- (a) At all times since 17 October 2023, the figures have included 471 alleged deaths in an explosion initially alleged to be from an Israeli strike on the Al Ahli hospital in Gaza City. It was quickly shown that the explosion was not from an Israeli attack on the hospital, but from a Palestinian rocket falling short in the car park outside the hospital, without damaging the hospital itself. The figure of 471 deaths from this explosion is implausible and appears to have been fabricated to support the initial allegation that an Israeli strike on a hospital had killed around 500 innocent civilians. The figure also includes a particularly high number of women, consistent with a Hamas policy of

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<sup>15</sup> <https://www.uklfi.com/false-al-ahli-casualties-still-included-in-hamas-un-data>

<sup>16</sup> Simpson, Stone and Bell, “Statistically Impossible: A Critical Analysis of Hamas’s Women and Children Casualty Figures” <https://fathomjournal.org/statistically-impossible-a-critical-analysis-of-hamass-women-and-children-casualty-figures/>; Gabriel Epstein, “How Hamas Manipulates Gaza Fatality Numbers” <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/how-hamas-manipulates-gaza-fatality-numbers-examining-male-undercount-and-other>

<sup>17</sup> Simpson, Stone and Bell, “Statistically Impossible: A Critical Analysis of Hamas’s Women and Children Casualty Figures” <https://fathomjournal.org/statistically-impossible-a-critical-analysis-of-hamass-women-and-children-casualty-figures/>; Michael Spagat “Analysis of new death data from Gaza’s Health Ministry reveals several concerns” <https://aoav.org.uk/2024/analysis-of-new-death-data-from-gazas-health-ministry-reveals-several-concerns/>

<sup>18</sup> Simpson, Stone and Bell, “Statistically Impossible: A Critical Analysis of Hamas’s Women and Children Casualty Figures” <https://fathomjournal.org/statistically-impossible-a-critical-analysis-of-hamass-women-and-children-casualty-figures/>;

exaggerating the number of women and children when fabricating casualty figures.<sup>19</sup>

- (b) In the list of 21703 “identified” deaths provided by the Health Ministry on 1 April 2024, 440 had duplicate IDs, 470 had no IDs, 792 had the wrong number of digits in their IDs, and a further 1,486 had invalid IDs.<sup>20</sup> In the list of 23,447 “identified” deaths provided by the Health Ministry on 30 April 2024, 1674 had no IDs, 829 had IDs with the wrong number of digits, and 1519 had invalid IDs. Additionally, 1206 entries were missing ages but were still classified demographically.<sup>21</sup>
  - (c) Some of those categorised in the Gaza Health Ministry data as “identified” women dead were known male terrorists.<sup>22</sup>
13. Examination of the combined data in the period 26 October to 10 November 2023 showed further anomalies indicative of fabrication and/or manipulation:
- (a) The total number of recorded deaths increased with a surprising degree of uniformity;
  - (b) There was a complete lack of correlation, normally expected, between the recorded numbers of women and the recorded numbers of children killed;
  - (c) There was a strong negative correlation between the recorded numbers of men and women deaths.<sup>23</sup>
14. In figures provided by UNRWA for the period 7 October 2023 to 4 January 2024, men accounted for 62% of deaths, despite representing only 41% of the UNRWA staff in the Gaza Strip. Thus the proportion of UNRWA’s male staff who were killed was 2.3 times that of female staff, a disproportion much higher than in the total figures recorded by the Gaza ministries. It is possible that many of these male staff were targeted as Hamas combatants; this would be consistent with Israel’s view that

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<sup>19</sup> UKLFI and Tom Simpson, “False al-Ahli casualties still included in Hamas/UN data”

<https://www.uklfi.com/false-al-ahli-casualties-still-included-in-hamas-un-data>

<sup>20</sup> Michael Spagat “Analysis of new death data from Gaza’s Health Ministry reveals several concerns”

<https://aoav.org.uk/2024/analysis-of-new-death-data-from-gazas-health-ministry-reveals-several-concerns/>

<sup>21</sup> Michael Spagat, “Gaza Ministry of Health releases detailed new casualty data amidst confusion of UN’s death numbers in Gaza” <https://aoav.org.uk/2024/gaza-ministry-of-health-releases-detailed-new-casualty-amidst-confusion-of-uns-death-numbers-in-gaza/>

<sup>22</sup> See e.g. <https://x.com/Aizenberg55/status/1805237588862632156>

<sup>23</sup> Abraham Wyner “How the Gaza Ministry of Health Fakes Casualty Numbers”

<https://www.tabletmag.com/sections/news/articles/how-gaza-health-ministry-fakes-casualty-numbers>

UNRWA has been heavily infiltrated by Hamas.<sup>24</sup> On the other hand, the female UNRWA staff deaths as a proportion of all female UNRWA staff in the Gaza Strip closely matched the total deaths recorded in hospitals and morgues as a proportion of the total population of the Gaza Strip. There was also a close correlation geographically between the deaths of female UNRWA staff and the overall deaths in the Gaza Strip recorded in hospitals and morgues in this period. This suggests that the numbers of deaths recorded at hospitals and morgues can be used as a proxy for the total mortalities in the Gaza Strip. This would indicate total Palestinian deaths in the Gaza Strip from 7 October 2023 to 28 March 2024 of around 18,000 instead of the Gaza Ministry figures totalling 32,414.<sup>25</sup>

15. It has been suggested that the figures for Palestinian fatalities in the war to date should be multiplied to take into account future deaths that might be attributable to destruction, impoverishment, hardship, trauma, etc.<sup>26</sup> This argument is highly speculative, and extrapolations based on very different conflicts are unsound.<sup>27</sup> In any case, making such extrapolations in relation to this conflict would produce false comparisons with figures relating to other conflicts that have not been similarly multiplied.

### Estimating total numbers of Palestinians killed

16. Since the data is so unsatisfactory, it is impossible to provide a reliable estimate of the numbers of Palestinians killed in the current war. One approach for the figures down to 31 March 2024 would be to use only the numbers of dead persons said to have been identified at hospitals and morgues, without adding the figures for casualties said to be reported by media sources or the Google form. While there may be some additional fatalities not examined in hospitals and morgues, these would be counterbalanced to some extent by false data in the latter, such as the supposed casualties of the explosion outside the Al Ahli hospital.
17. A less stringent approach, adopted in the table below, is to add to the numbers of dead persons identified at hospitals and morgues additional figures representing the same proportion of additional fatalities recorded from media reports and the Google form as were said to have been identified on 1 April, i.e. 18.9%. On this basis, the

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<sup>24</sup> <https://govextra.gov.il/unrwa/unrwa/> and see also <https://unwatch.org/evidence-of-unrwa-aid-to-hamas-on-and-after-october-7th/>; <https://unwatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/United-Nations-Watch-Submission-to-UNRWA-Review-Group.pdf>

<sup>25</sup> Mark Zlochin “The numbers of dead in Gaza don’t add up – and there is no easy explanation” <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/global-health/terror-and-security/unrwa-staff-death-toll-gaza-israel-hamas-war-data/>

<sup>26</sup> [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(24\)01169-3/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(24)01169-3/fulltext)

<sup>27</sup> Michael Spagat “A critical analysis of The Lancet’s letter ‘Counting the Dead in Gaza: Difficult but Essential’” <https://aoav.org.uk/2024/a-critical-analysis-of-the-lancets-letter-counting-the-dead-in-gaza-difficult-but-essential-professor-mike-spagat-reviews-the-claim-the-total-gaza-death-toll-may-reach-upwards-of-186000/>

cumulative total of Palestinian deaths in the Gaza Strip from 7 October 2023 to 29 February 2024 is estimated at 19,731.

18. A different approach is required for figures since 1 May 2024, in the absence of breakdowns as to the sources of the figures or how many of the claimed fatalities have been “identified”. In the table below we have taken the total number of dead asserted by the Hamas-controlled Gaza Ministries as at 31 July 2024 and discounted it by the proportion of the total that were not said to be “identified” as at 30 April 2024 (this being the last date for which this breakdown is available).
19. As noted above, the rate of “identification” was significantly higher (and the rate of “non-identification” correspondingly lower) at 30 April 2024 than at 1 April 2024. It is possible that the higher rate of identification on the later date reflects further work, but it is also possible that the unspecified process of identification has resulted in false identifications due to error or manipulation. Indeed, examination of the “identified” deaths at 30 April 2024 has found a significant number of false records and that “The decline in data quality ... continues”.<sup>28</sup>
20. The resulting estimated total of Palestinian deaths down to 31 July 2024, 27,106, could therefore be too high. On any view, it should not be compared with the figure at 29 February 2024, since the figures have been estimated in different ways.

### Palestinian mortality figures in the present war do not distinguish between combatants and civilians

21. The figures for Palestinian casualties produced by the Gaza ministries in the present war describe all mortalities as “martyrs” and do not distinguish between fighters and civilians. This contrasts with previous conflicts in the Gaza Strip where figures for Palestinian casualties produced by the Gaza Health Ministry were broken down into combatants and civilians. Those breakdowns were shown to have greatly exaggerated the proportions of civilian casualties, resulting in false conclusions being drawn as to the supposed illegitimacy of Israeli military actions.<sup>29</sup>

### Recruitment of teenagers and classification as “children” in Palestinian casualty figures

22. It has been suggested that women and children killed cannot be combatants and must be taken to be innocent civilians. However, Hamas and other Palestinian

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<sup>28</sup> Michael Spagat, “Gaza Ministry of Health releases detailed new casualty data amidst confusion of UN’s death numbers in Gaza” <https://aoav.org.uk/2024/gaza-ministry-of-health-releases-detailed-new-casualty-amidst-confusion-of-uns-death-numbers-in-gaza/>

<sup>29</sup> See <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/cpp4f6tgd1eb70v7j3o4k/Casualties-in-Israeli-military-operations-in-the-Gaza-Strip.pdf?rlkey=eav5rvmhjwcry70ok0wvm3yd5k&dl=0> at paras 17 and 56-65

terrorist organisations actively recruit teenagers<sup>30</sup> while Palestinian mortality figures categorise teenagers up to and including 18 years old as “children”.<sup>31</sup> Thus the numbers of “children” in the casualty figures are likely to include teenage combatants. There is also evidence that Hamas recruits women in military roles, albeit to a lesser extent.<sup>32</sup> Therefore it cannot be assumed that the figures for “children” and women killed exclude combatants.

23. In view of this and also the evidence that the Palestinian fatality figures produced by the Gaza Ministries have artificially inflated the number of women and children casualties, the Gaza Ministries’ breakdowns should not affect the correct estimation of the numbers of Palestinian combatants killed.

### Estimates of Palestinian combatants killed

24. Various Israeli estimates of the number of Palestinian combatants killed have been published, in some cases directly by Israeli officials and in other cases by journalists following briefings. Detailed explanations have not been given as to how these estimates have been made and the figures are not entirely consistent. They should therefore be treated with caution.
25. On 29 December 2023 IDF Spokesperson, Major Doron Spielman, told Sky News Australia that, based on intelligence, the IDF assumed that approximately 8,000 Palestinian fighters had been killed, but it could be 1,000 more.<sup>33</sup> On 22 January 2024, Israeli newspaper, Maariv, reported that the IDF then estimated that it had killed 9,000 Hamas terrorists.
26. On 12 February 2024, Reuters and the Jerusalem Post reported Israeli government spokesperson, Eylon Levy, as saying in a briefing that over 12,000 Palestinian

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<sup>30</sup> [https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog\\_entry/idf-accuses-hamas-islamic-jihad-of-using-child-soldiers/](https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/idf-accuses-hamas-islamic-jihad-of-using-child-soldiers/); <https://www.wionews.com/world/are-hamas-resorted-to-training-kids-to-defend-gaza-reports-suggests-so-647418>; <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-12634107/Hamas-resorts-training-children-defend-Gaza-Israeli-troops-mass-border.html>; [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G\\_qOZCxvmNg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G_qOZCxvmNg); <https://www.jpost.com/arab-israeli-conflict/hamas-continues-recruiting-child-soldiers-so-where-is-the-condemnation-672163>; <https://www.timesofisrael.com/shin-bet-hamas-recruiting-teens-to-carry-out-terror-attacks-kidnappings/>; <https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2021/07/hamas-defends-its-military-summer-camps-for-children-and-teenagers.php>; <https://www.haaretz.com/2015-02-11/ty-article/.premium/hamas-training-camps-for-gaza-kids-a-hit/0000017f-db2e-df62-a9ff-dfff906c0000>; [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/heres-what-a-hamas-training-camp-for-teens-looks-like/2015/01/29/ef0b4092-a33f-11e4-9f89-561284a573f8\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/heres-what-a-hamas-training-camp-for-teens-looks-like/2015/01/29/ef0b4092-a33f-11e4-9f89-561284a573f8_story.html).

<sup>31</sup> Michael Spagat “Gaza Ministry of Health releases detailed new casualty data amidst confusion of UN’s death numbers in Gaza” <https://aoav.org.uk/2024/gaza-ministry-of-health-releases-detailed-new-casualty-amidst-confusion-of-uns-death-numbers-in-gaza/>

<sup>32</sup> <https://dearborn.org/preview/qassam-masked-women-what-does-the-information-say-about-the-armed-hamas-women-43358>; <https://www.palestinechronicle.com/was-al-qassam-fighter-who-released-israeli-captives-a-woman-fact-check/>

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.skynews.com.au/world-news/global-affairs/around-8000-hamas-fighters-killed-in-gaza-war-says-idf-spokesman/video/1bc009f0e121da67ff8671cebe72c1e0>



gunmen had been killed.<sup>34</sup> On 20 February 2024 the Times of Israel reported that the IDF stated the day before that 12,000 Hamas gunmen had been killed.<sup>35</sup> The BBC said in an article dated 29 February 2024 that it had put this figure to the IDF, which had replied in two separate responses that the figure was “approximately 10,000” or “more than 10,000”.<sup>36</sup> It is not clear whom the BBC asked or when the responses were provided. In the event, on 29 February 2024, the IDF Spokesperson, Brig. Gen. Daniel Hagari stated in a briefing that the IDF had eliminated over 13,000 terrorists since the beginning of the war.<sup>37</sup> This may have included Palestinian terrorists killed in Israel on 7-9 October 2023.

27. On 10 March 2024, Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, said in an interview for Politico that some 13,000 Palestinian fighters had been killed<sup>38</sup>. Again, this may have included Palestinian terrorists killed in Israel following the Hamas-led invasion. On 2 April 2024, the IDF stated on its website that more than 12,000 terrorists had been eliminated.<sup>39</sup> Israeli news portal, Mako, similarly reported on 7 April 2024 the IDF spokesperson as stating that the IDF had eliminated more than 12,000 terrorists.<sup>40</sup> On 12 May 2024, Netanyahu said that in excess of 14,000 Palestinian combatants had been killed.<sup>41</sup> This was confirmed by the Israeli government spokesperson, Avi Hyman, the following day.<sup>42</sup>
28. The Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies (BESA) stated in an update for the period to 19 June 2024 that, according to the IDF, at least 15,000 Hamas and other terrorists had been killed.<sup>43</sup> On 16 July 2024, the IDF issued a press release stating that the IDF had eliminated and apprehended approximately 14,000 Hamas terrorists.<sup>44</sup> However, it appears that this referred only to Hamas terrorists and did not include other terrorists. On the other hand, since it included Hamas terrorists that had been “apprehended” as well as “eliminated”, it suggests that fewer than 14,000 Hamas terrorists had been killed. In this regard, it was reported on 29 May

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<sup>34</sup> <https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/article-786518>

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-says-12000-hamas-fighters-killed-in-gaza-war-double-the-terror-groups-claim>

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-68387864#:~:text=BBC%20Verify%20examines%20Israel's%20claims,which%20killed%20about%201%2C200%20people.>

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.idf.il/en/mini-sites/hamas-israel-war-24/briefings-by-idf-spokesperson-rear-admiral-daniel-hagari/february-24-press-briefings/press-briefing-by-idf-spokesperson-rear-admiral-daniel-hagari-february-29th-2024/>

<sup>38</sup> <https://www.politico.eu/article/israels-netanyahu-says-he-will-defy-bidens-red-line-and-invade-rafah/>

<sup>39</sup> <https://www.idf.il/189471>

<sup>40</sup> [https://www.mako.co.il/news-specials/data\\_n12/Article-acafc1687e0be81026.htm](https://www.mako.co.il/news-specials/data_n12/Article-acafc1687e0be81026.htm)

<sup>41</sup> <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/israel-hamas-war-gaza-death-toll-netanyahu-un-civilians-women-children/>; [https://x.com/search?q=Avi%20Hyman%2014%2C000%2016%2C000&src=typed\\_query](https://x.com/search?q=Avi%20Hyman%2014%2C000%2016%2C000&src=typed_query)

<sup>42</sup> <https://x.com/AviHyman/status/1790024952860627423>

<sup>43</sup> <https://besacenter.org/the-gaza-terror-offensive-october-7-8-2023/>

<sup>44</sup> <https://www.idf.il/en/mini-sites/idf-press-releases-regarding-the-hamas-israel-war/july-24-pr/operational-summary-of-idf-activity-over-the-past-9-months-in-gaza/>

2024 that approximately 2,300 Palestinian terrorist suspects had been detained in Gaza,<sup>45</sup> but this figure may have included persons who were not terrorists or terrorists other than Hamas. The BESA update for the period to 31 July 2024 stated that the number of captured Palestinian terrorists can be estimated from “anecdotal information” as approaching 3,500. It also stated that, according to the IDF, at least 16,000 Hamas and other terrorists had been killed.<sup>46</sup>

29. On 19 February 2024 a Hamas official in Qatar told Reuters that Hamas estimated that it had lost 6,000 fighters in the course of the conflict down to that date.<sup>47</sup> According to an article on the BBC’s website, Hamas denied that figure to the BBC, but the BBC does not quote its question or the response.<sup>48</sup>
30. Taking these considerations together, on the information currently available, we cautiously estimate the total number of Palestinian combatants killed in the Gaza Strip in the current war at 9,000 by 29 February 2024 and 12,000 by 31 July 2024. The first figure is in the middle of the range between Israeli estimates at that date and the admission made by a Hamas official to Reuters. It is 25% less than the figure estimated by the IDF on the same date, after discounting this figure by 1000 to take into account terrorists killed within Israel. The second figure is 25% less than the figure reported by BESA on 31 July 2024. It is quite possible that the true figures for Palestinian combatant casualties are much closer to the IDF estimates or even that they are greater than the IDF estimates.

### Civilian / combatant ratios in other conflicts

31. A UN survey of civilian casualties in conflicts worldwide found that 89% of casualties in armed conflicts in urban and populated areas were civilians, i.e. the ratio of civilian to combatant casualties was 8 or 9:1.<sup>49</sup>
32. In the battle for Mosul in 2016-2017 around 10,000 civilians and 4,000 ISIS terrorists were killed, a civilian to combatant ratio of 2.5:1.<sup>50</sup> That was a significantly less difficult theatre than the Gaza Strip since most of the residents could flee to areas where Iraqi and allied forces were not operating, and the ISIS

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<sup>45</sup> [https://www.business-standard.com/world-news/israeli-advisory-panel-to-examine-treatment-of-imprisoned-hamas-terrorists-124052900055\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/world-news/israeli-advisory-panel-to-examine-treatment-of-imprisoned-hamas-terrorists-124052900055_1.html)

<sup>46</sup>

<sup>47</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israels-six-week-drive-hit-hamas-rafah-scale-back-war-2024-02-19/>

<sup>48</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-68387864#:~:text=BBC%20Verify%20examines%20Israel's%20claims,which%20killed%20about%201%2C200%20people.>

<sup>49</sup> [https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/S\\_2022\\_381.pdf](https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/S_2022_381.pdf)

<sup>50</sup> Maj. John Spencer (Chair of Urban Warfare Studies, Modern War Institute, West Point US Military Academy) <https://x.com/SpencerGuard/status/1786612914117349769>, “Israel Has Created a New Standard for Urban Warfare. Why Will No One Admit It?”, Newsweek 25/3/2024

terrorists did not have anything like the scale of underground infrastructure built by Hamas.

### Palestinians killed by Palestinian rockets and fire

33. A significant proportion of Palestinian rockets fall short. For example, an update on the BESA website for 7-12 November 2023 reports that 1150 out of 9500 rockets (12%) aimed at Israel had fallen short in the Gaza Strip.<sup>51</sup> At least one of these, which landed in the carpark outside the Al Ahli Hospital on 17 October 2023, caused casualties, although the number of fatalities was exaggerated by the Gaza authorities. It seems likely that additional Palestinians have been killed by Palestinian rockets in this conflict, as in previous attacks by Hamas.<sup>52</sup>
34. It is also likely that some Palestinians have been killed by Palestinian fire in the course of combat with the IDF in dense urban areas, and there is evidence suggesting that Hamas has sometimes fired at Palestinians seeking to evacuate areas in which the IDF has indicated an intention to operate.<sup>53</sup>
35. It is not possible to make any estimate of the number of Palestinians killed by Palestinian ordnance on the available information. Moreover, when making comparisons with other urban conflicts, the figures for civilian and combatant casualties on each side have usually included those from own side fire. However, the fact that at least some of the Palestinian casualties were from Palestinian rockets and fire should have been mentioned in media coverage to support a balanced understanding by viewers, even if a figure could not be given.

### Death from natural causes

36. It is not clear whether the figures produced by the Gaza Ministries include deaths from natural causes that would have occurred had there been no war. The number of elderly people included in the figures is somewhat high in relation to their proportion of the whole population, but there could be other reasons for this. It is also possible that different hospitals may have different approaches to this issue. In some hospitals the data may be recorded by staff who seek to help the Palestinian cause by putting a higher figure on civilian deaths; in other hospitals the staff may not be inclined to describe those who died from natural causes as “martyrs”.

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<sup>51</sup> <https://besacenter.org/the-gaza-terror-offensive-october-7-8-2023/>

<sup>52</sup> [https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog\\_entry/idf-says-26-civilians-killed-in-gaza-fighting-15-by-terror-groups-rocket-misfires/](https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/idf-says-26-civilians-killed-in-gaza-fighting-15-by-terror-groups-rocket-misfires/); <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/08/12/palestinian-rockets-may-killed-civilians-israel-gaza>

<sup>53</sup> E.g. <https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/article-770242>

37. On the basis of the 2022 mortality rate in the Gaza Strip of 2.91 per 1000<sup>54</sup> and a current population of 2.3 million, the number of expected deaths from natural causes would have been 2659 over 145 days from 7 October 2023 to 29 February 2024 and 5483 over 299 days from down to 31 July 2024.
38. In view of the above considerations, and on the information currently available, we conservatively discount the total Palestinian fatalities by 20% of the likely total deaths that would have occurred from natural causes, i.e. 532 down to 29 February 2024 and 1097 down to 31 July 2024.

Summary of estimated figures

39. In the light of the above analysis, we tentatively put forward the following estimates regarding the figures for Palestinian deaths from the commencement of the war on 7 October 2023 down to 29 February 2024 and 31 July 2024:

	<b>29 Feb 24</b>	<b>31 Jul 24</b>
Total deaths per Gaza Ministries – before deductions	30,228	39,445
Less, deaths reported by media sources or Google form	(12,943)	
Add back estimated deaths reported by media sources or Google form that were identified (18.9%)	2,446	
Less estimated reports of deaths that have not been identified (28.5% of total)		(11,242)
Less, estimated deaths due to natural causes (20% of expected total due to natural causes if no war)	(532)	(1097)
Estimated total Palestinians killed due to war	19,199	27,106
Estimated Palestinian combatants killed (IDF estimates discounted by 25%)	(9,000)	(12,000)
Estimated Palestinian civilians killed (total deaths, less deaths of combatants)	10,199	15,106
Estimated Palestinian civilian: combatant deaths ratio	1.1	1.3

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<sup>54</sup> <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/about/archives/2022/countries/gaza-strip/#people-and-society>

40. We therefore estimate the Palestinian civilian: combatant ratio in the current war in the Gaza Strip at 1.1:1 in the period down to 29 February 2024 and at 1.3:1 in the period down to 31 July 2024. Although every civilian death is a tragedy, this is an order of magnitude lower than the average civilian: combatant casualty ratio in urban armed conflict worldwide in 2021 (over 8:1) and half of the ratio in the Mosul battle of 2016-2017 (2.5:1), despite the exceptional difficulty of operating in the Gaza Strip.
41. We emphasise that any estimates based on the highly unreliable data that is available are inevitably themselves unreliable. Nevertheless, since unreliable figures provided by the Hamas-run Gaza Ministries have been repeatedly presented without qualification, it is desirable to show how they might be affected by adjustments reflecting qualifications that should accompany them if they are presented at all.

Recommendations for media organisations

42. Significant criticisms can be made of both the figures provided by the Hamas-run Gaza Ministries for the total Palestinian deaths and those provided by Israeli sources for the numbers of Palestinian combatants killed. Production of the former has involved unreliable methodologies and there is extensive evidence of fabrication and manipulation. In the case of the latter, no specific information has been provided as to the methodologies used.
43. It might have been justified to avoid coverage of any of the figures on the ground that they are unreliable. However, since the Gaza Ministries' figures of the totals allegedly killed have been repeatedly stated in media coverage, it is unbalanced and misleading not to state with similar regularity the figures provided by the IDF of the Palestinian combatants killed. This unbalanced and misleading media coverage is likely to be a major cause of rising antisemitism.
44. Quality media coverage would also explain that the figures are unreliable and would put the figures in the context of other armed conflicts in urban areas in modern times, in particular the ratio of civilians to combatants killed in other conflicts. While such explanations need not be done in the course of every news bulletin, they should be prominently provided in media coverage of the conflict, especially given the importance attached to the subject by media organisations and many members of the public.

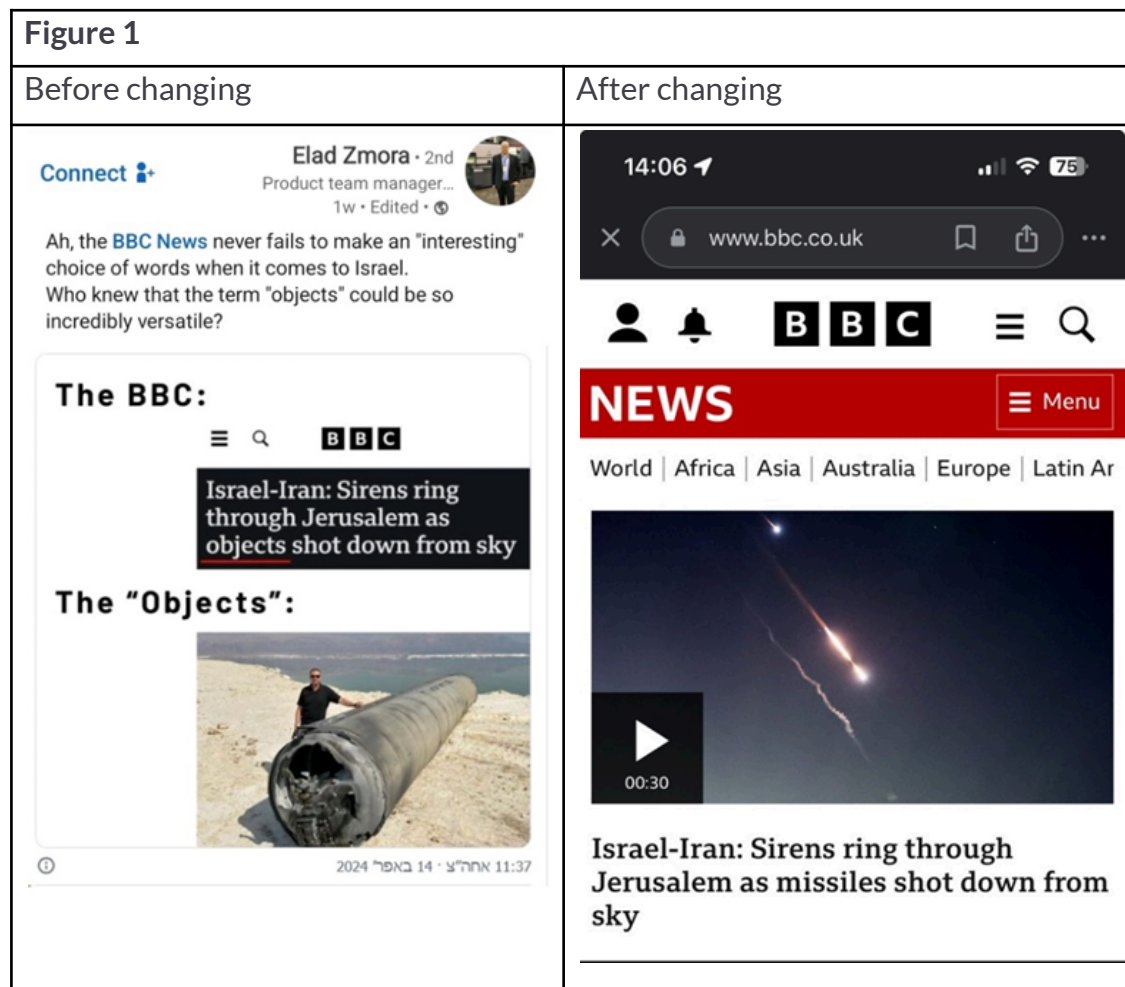
Jonathan Turner  
UKLFI Charitable Trust  
11 August 2024

## Schedule 11 - Partial Language Methodology

### An analysis of partiality in reporting of casualties by the BBC during the Israel-Hamas conflict

#### i. Introduction

It seems the BBC sometimes uses ambiguous terminology or convoluted phrasing that could confuse the 'casual' reader. This is especially true when the body of the article is scanned briefly, rather than read in depth. We hypothesised that this may create a bias in outlook, as highlighted in the examples below:



**Figure 1** details a story about Iran launching armed drones and missiles, targeting multiple locations in Israel, including Jerusalem. To the ‘casual’ reader, however, the BBC’s ambiguity in the original headline may lead to a misunderstanding of the facts.

This mistake is anecdotal, but we wanted to ascertain:

- a. Whether there were patterns of errors as a result of using ambiguous language;
- b. Whether any patterns were bias towards one side of the conflict.

We focused our experiment on the topic of casualties – a topic that the BBC regularly reports on - given the magnitude of loss to both sides of the conflict.

Consider the following three examples:

Ambiguity - The 1,200 Israelis are described as “people killed” here, however their nationality is unclear. Could they, for example, be Hamas terrorists? Conversely, the 27,500 individuals in the next sentence are clearly Palestinians.

Around 1,200 people were killed during the Hamas attacks on southern Israel on 7 October last year.

More than 27,500 Palestinians have been killed and at least 65,000 wounded by the war launched by Israel in response, according to the Hamas-run health ministry.

Ambiguity - The nationalities of the casualties and the total death toll here are both unclear.

The death toll in Israel has reached 1,200, with more than 900 people killed by Israeli air strikes on Gaza.

Ambiguity - The nationality of the 1,400 people is unclear – could they be Iranian? Conversely, the 4,600 deaths are clearly Palestinians.

Iran supports both Hamas, which attacked Israel two weeks ago killing 1,400 people, and Lebanon’s Hezbollah. More than 4,600 Palestinians have been killed in the last two weeks in Gaza, according to the Hamas-run health ministry, and Israel announced on Saturday that it was intensifying air strikes.

### ii. Methodology

We analysed every BBC web based article from 7 October 2023 until 7 February 2024, selected as the Dataset.

#### Use of ChatGPT 4

We used ChatGPT4 to conduct the analysis. Chat GPT is an AI chatbot that uses natural language processing to create humanlike conversational dialogue. As a large language model, it can respond to questions and compose dialogue based on user prompts, and is being used to compose music, script social media, play games, problem solve and generate art. Due to its humanlike understanding, the volume of data it hold, and the advanced nature of the fourth generation (i.e. ChatGPT 4), we can draw an analogy between the logic, reason and understanding of ChatGPT 4, and the 'casual' everyday news reader.

Each BBC article was presented with a request to ChatGPT4 to analyse the text of the article and asked to:

1. State the number of Israeli casualties identified
2. State the number of Palestinian casualties identified

We then compared the data gathered from ChatGPT4 with a small set of human readers, who also read the same BBC articles within the same date period and gave their answers to the same questions put to ChatGPT4. This then enabled us to measure any discrepancies.

#### Types of error

There are two main type of error that ChatGPT 4 makes, defined as follows:

- Overestimation errors i.e. the ChatGPT 4 extracted number of casualties is higher than the number identified in the human reader analysis
- Underestimation errors i.e. the ChatGPT 4 extracted number of casualties is lower than the number identified in the human reader analysis

#### Defining partiality



Once we are able to quantify the types of error that ChatGPT 4 makes in comparison to our human reader, we can analyse the differences between these errors as follows:

- The intra-group error ratio focuses on the error type. The intra-error ratio for underestimation is the ratio between the Palestinian underestimation error vs the Israeli underestimation error. Separately, the intra-error ratio for overestimation is the ratio between Palestinian over-estimation error and Israeli overestimation error.
- 
- The inter-group error ratio is the ratio between the under and over estimation in each group, when considered separately. I.e. the difference between how often ChatGPT 4 under estimates vs. overestimates casualty figures on the Palestinian side, compared and contrasted with how often ChatGPT 4 underestimates vs. overestimates casualty figures on the Israeli side.

We then can empirically define impartiality, a ratio of one (or almost one) in each error ratio will dim that error ratio as impartial yet the more skewed the ratio is the more partiality is detected.

While the definitions above focus on the existence of an error we should reflect on the magnitude of the error as well i.e. the difference between the number obtained from chatGPT4 and the numbers obtained from experts per group, while errors can be made the difference can “balance itself out” if it does not this defines impartiality as well.

In doing this, we can apply a figure on the magnitude of effect, indicating levels of bias that builds over time.

### iii. Results

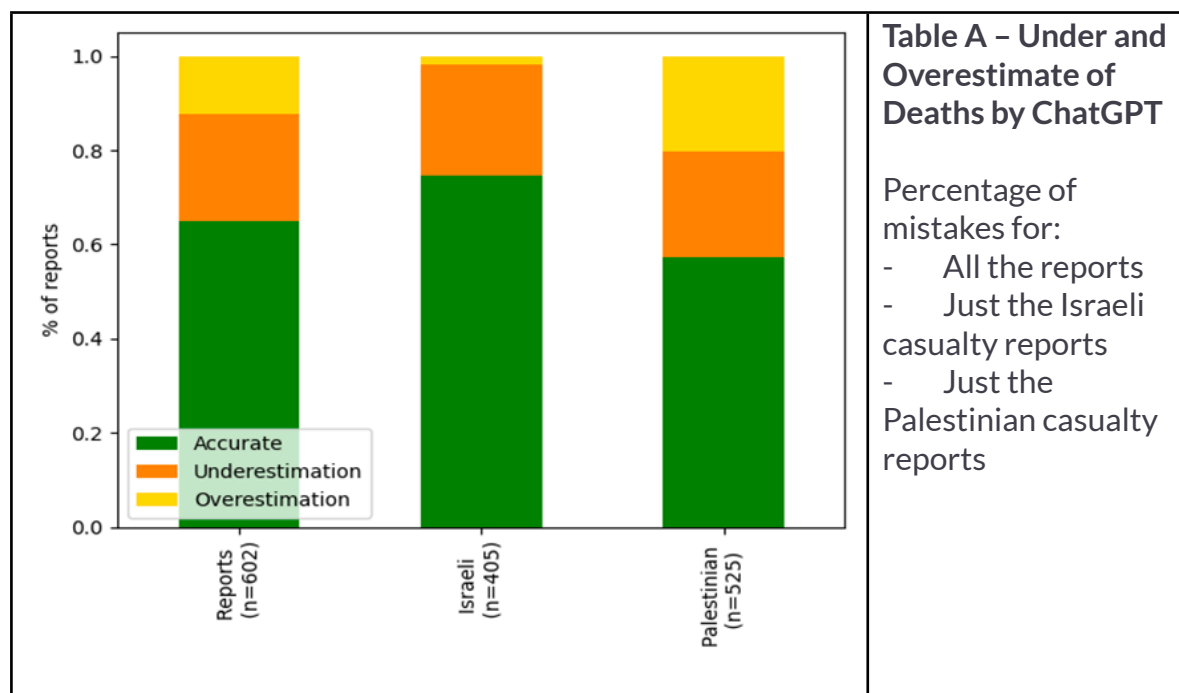
#### **ChatGPT 4 is accurate**

ChatGPT4 and the human analysts reported the same casualty figures 64.8% of the time. Where the results between ChatGPT4 and the human reader were inconsistent, the errors in ChatGPT4 were predominantly under-estimation or over-estimation errors, stemming from ambiguous or convoluted language, left open for misinterpretation by ChatGPT 4 and, by analogy, our ‘casual’ reader.

### 1. The BBC is intra-group partial

In line with impartial reporting, both the underestimation and the overestimation errors should be randomly spread. We can assume that ChatGPT 4 should make similar numbers of errors in both directions (i.e. overestimations and underestimations for Palestinian and for Israeli casualty figures).

This expectation was met with some accuracy when reporting of Palestinian deaths. This expectation was not met with the reporting of Israeli deaths. Almost all the ‘errors’ by ChatGPT 4 were underestimations.

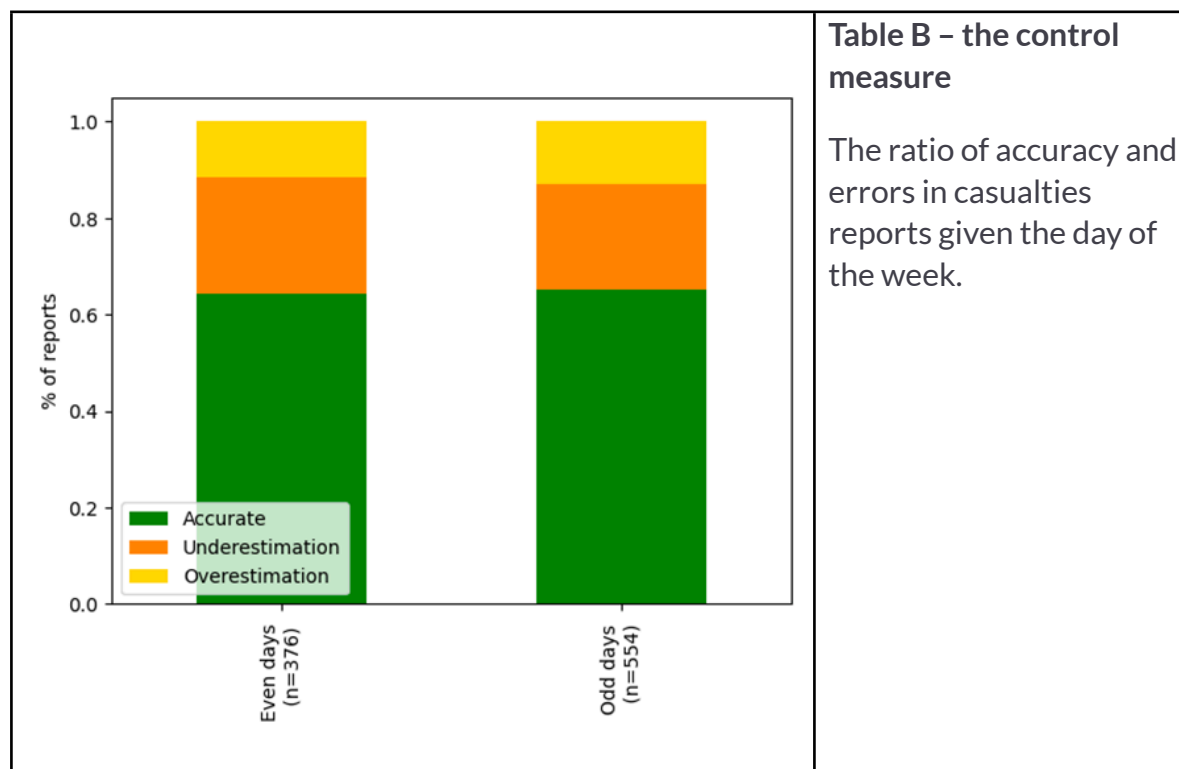


### 2. The BBC is (intra-group) impartial against a control measure

By dividing the errors according to days of the week (grouping odd and even days), we created a control measure, showing how the error structure would look if the results were due to chance alone.

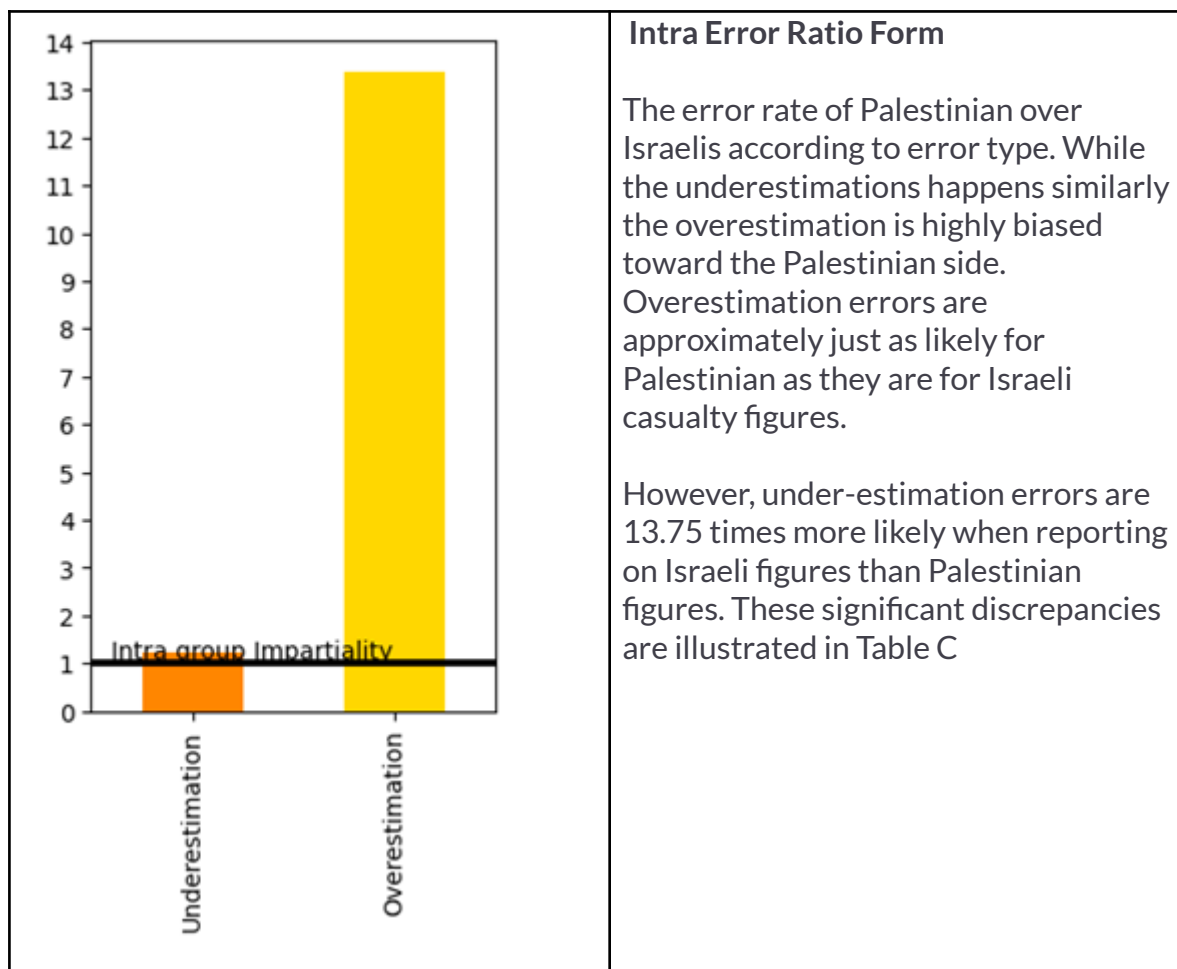
If the results of our control measure mirror the results in Table A, it would suggest that the error pattern was due to chance. If the results of the control measure were dissimilar to the results in Table A, this would suggest a significant error pattern (i.e. a statistically significant, p-value <0.01) that was not the result of chance.

Upon analysis in Table B, we see that the columns of ‘odd days’ vs ‘even days’ look alike (i.e. the difference between them can be attributed to random ‘noise’).



These results indicate that the differences between the errors in the Israel casualty figures versus the errors in the Palestinian casualty figures do not occur by chance. The difference in casualty estimation between the Israeli side and the Palestinian side is statistically significant (p-value <0.00001) while the division by day is not (p-value=0.6).

To reflect the level of bias we present the intra error ratio form:



### 3. BBC (inter group) is mixed

The results of this experiment have identified and verified (through a control measure) two key points:

- That ChatGPT4 reports the correct casualty figures 64.8% of the time
- That the error pattern between the Israeli figures and the Palestinian figures is different, showing partiality and bias towards under estimation of casualty figures on the Israeli side

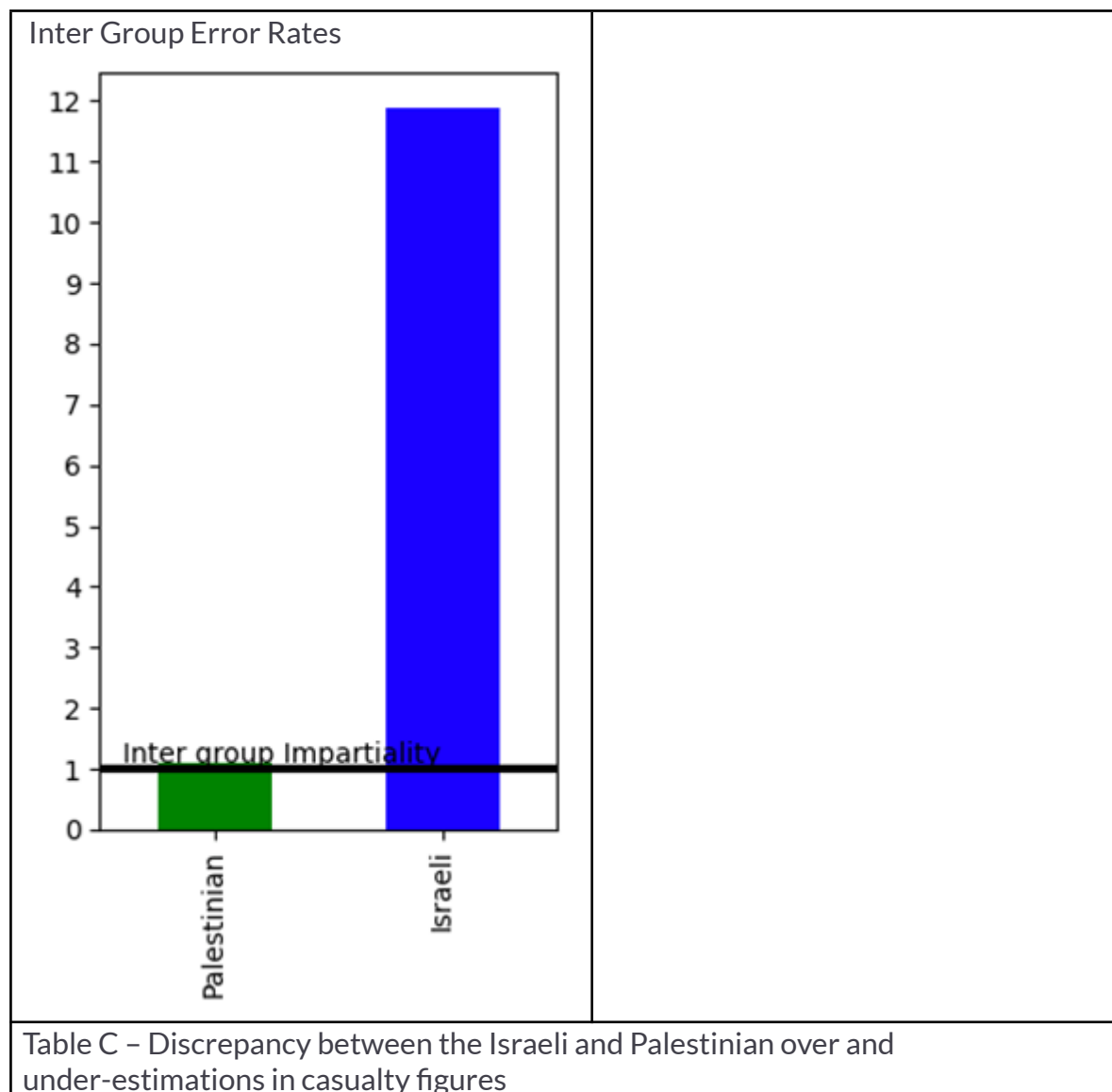
#### *Palestinian casualty figures - Inter group error ratio*

The occurrence of under estimation (117 times) is almost the same as the occurrence of over estimation (107 times), resulting in a ratio of close to 1. This number represents impartiality i.e. making approximately the same number of mistakes in cases of over vs. under representation of the casualty figures.

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*Israeli casualty figures – Inter group error ratio*

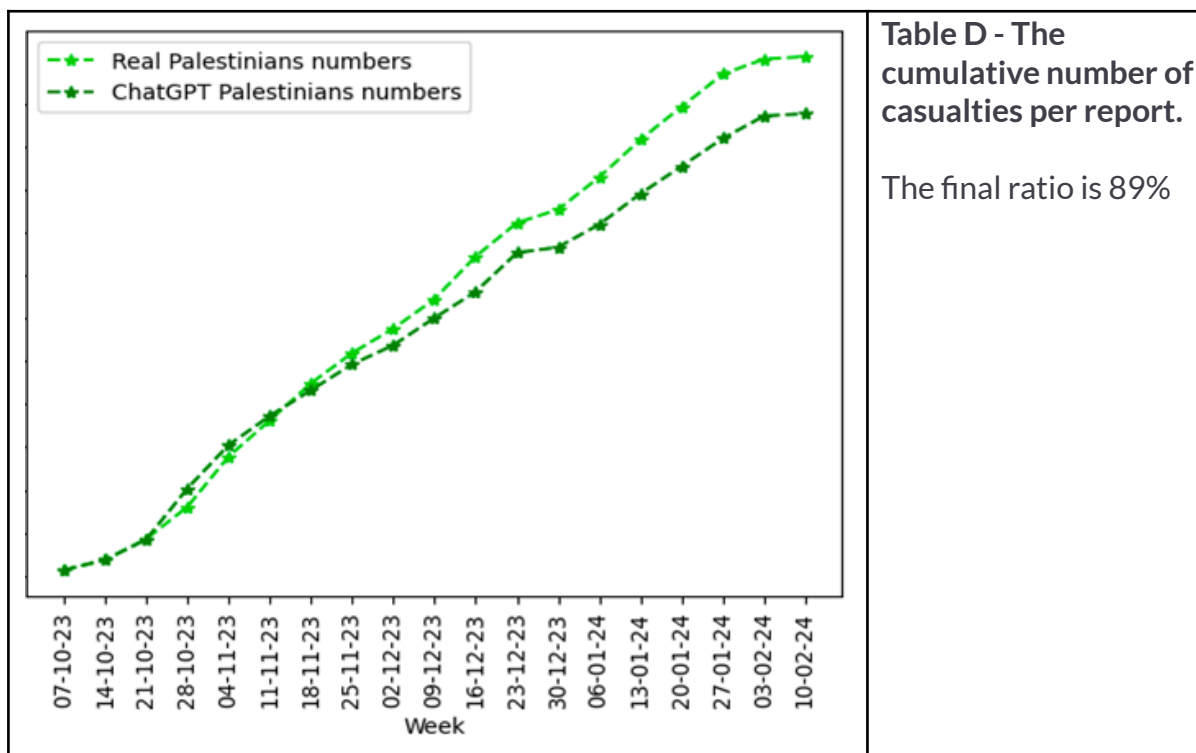
The occurrence of under estimation (95 times) is significantly lower than the occurrence of under estimation (8 times). This represents a ratio of 11.8, i.e. the ambiguous choice of language by the BBC when reporting Israeli deaths causes ChatGPT4 to make under-representation errors about the Israeli casualty figures almost 12 times more often than it is making over-representation errors.

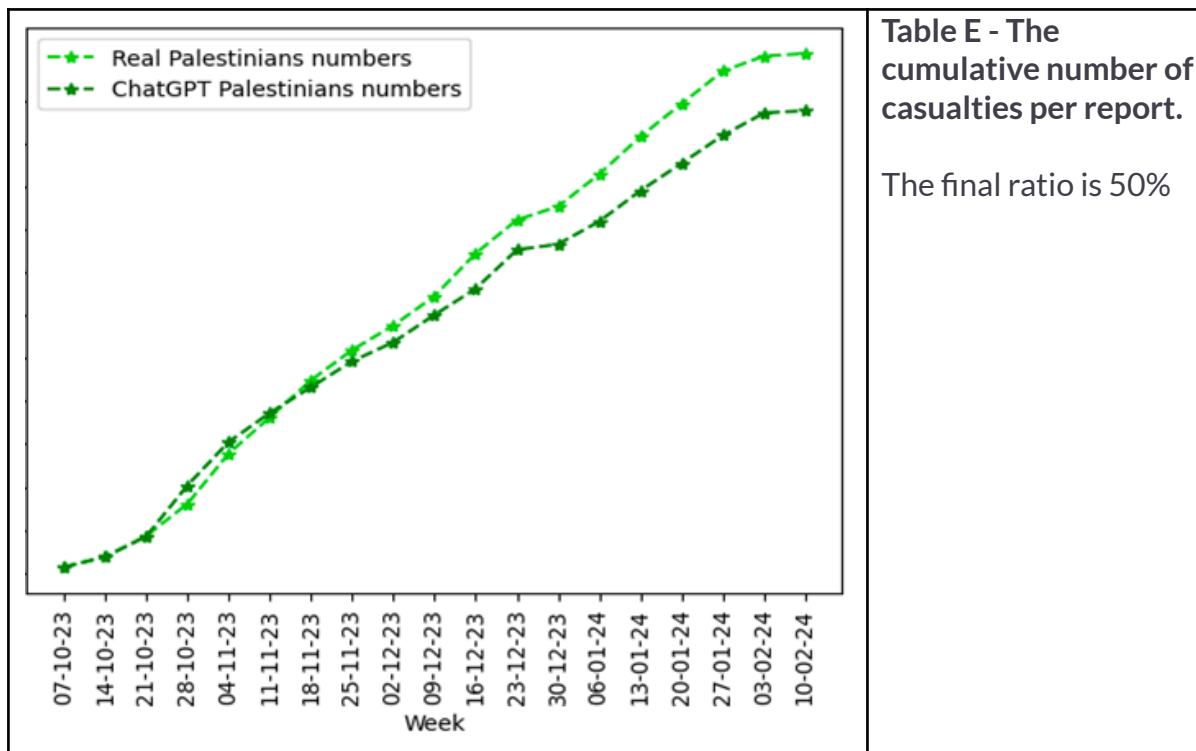


#### 4. Analysis of Magnitude

We have shown that the discrepancy in under-reporting Israeli deaths is statistically significant ( $p$ -value  $< 0.01$ ) and cannot be explained by chance. This indicates an intentional use of ambiguous language by the BBC, which is causing ChatGPT4 – reflective of a ‘casual’ reader – to make these errors. Whether this intention is conscious is not in the scope of this experiment but, important to note, this ambiguity is only present when reporting Israeli casualty figures.

The BBC has chosen to report the number of deaths on both sides of the conflict very frequently. While amending the Palestinian casualty figures on an almost daily basis, in line with those published by the Hamas-run Health Ministry, the BBC virtually never amends the Israeli casualty figures, as published daily by the IDF. Over time, the effect of this magnifies the discrepancy noticed by this study.





In total, the number of deaths of Palestinians cumulatively reported by 7 February 2024 was circa 5.5 million. The effect of the erroneous under-reporting (due to ambiguous language) was, to a material degree, offset by the erroneous over-reporting (due to ambiguous language). The cumulative net under-reporting difference is 11% - a similar order of magnitude with or without the erroneous reading.

By comparison, the number of deaths of Israelis cumulatively reported by 7 February 2024 was circa 70,000. However, when we factor in the erroneous under-reporting (due to ambiguous language), it was only circa 38,000. This is approximately 54% of the correct figure - a materially different order of magnitude to the actual reported number.

### 5. Arabic Data Comparison

Using the same methodology, we repeated our analysis with the reports from BBC Arabic.

We did not identify impartiality in the BBC Arabic phrasing, out of 83 reports referencing Israeli casualties we identified 2 errors by ChatGPT, and out of 121 reports referencing Palestinians casualties we identified three errors.

We then investigated omissions, we regarded omission as if the BBC English reported casualties in a certain day but BBC Arabic did not. In the following figure we see in the upper plot a bar per day that an Israeli casualties was reported in BBC English below it in orange we see the same for BBC Arabic, we identified the rate of omissions is 40%

When repeating the same analysis for Palestinian casualties we identified a lower 30% rate of omissions. Presented in the figure below

Following is a table summarising the omissions

	Israeli casualties	Palestinian casualties
Days with mention in both	70	84
Days with mention in English only	49	36
Days with mention in Arabic only	2	1

In the time period there were 123 with casualties reported for BBC English and 94 days for BBC Arabic.



### iv. Conclusions

From the analysis performed, we can draw multiple key conclusions:

- a. A level of ambiguous language exists across the BBC articles in the timeframe analysed. The ambiguous language that we focused on were the casualty figures for the conflict within 1529 web based articles during the period 7 October 2023 – 7 February 2024.
- b. The reporting of casualty figures is a crucial, yet controversial topic. Considerable stress has been placed on reporting the conflict based on the contrast between death figures on the two sides. We note that this use of ambiguous language in reporting may well spill over into other areas of the conflict.
- c. As such, the reporting of casualty figures should be clearly laid out, in plain and easily accessible and understandable language
- d. We find a material difference between the way deaths on the two sides are reported. Deaths of Palestinians are reported with an even number of ambiguous statements, misread by ChatGPT4 (our casual reader) which both underestimate and overestimate Palestinian deaths.
- e. By marked contrast, the ambiguous language used to describe Israeli casualty figures causes ChatGPT4 (our casual reader) to overwhelmingly and materially underestimate the number of Israeli deaths.
- f. With statistically significant results ( $p$ -value  $< 0.01$ ), which we have shown are not due to chance, this marked discrepancy strongly suggests the existence of a conscious or subconscious bias within the BBC editorial and journalistic process. Over time, the cumulative effect of this ambiguous language is very material, and this bias may impact wider sentiment towards Israel, building dangerous misconceptions.

## Schedule 12 – CAMERA corrections list

82 corrections were made to content published within the timeframe, in response to CAMERA complaints.

NB – date listed is date of correction.

Terminology issues:

- 29: misuse of the term “settlements” to refer to Israeli towns.
- 1: incorrect use of “settler”
- 8: Tel Aviv to refer to the capital of Israel
- 2: “al-Aqsa mosque” (inc. Oct 31, when Ariel Sharon was initially reported as having “intruded al-Aqsa” rather than visiting the Jerusalem sanctuary).
- 2: “Palestine” instead of “Palestinian territories”, quotation marks put on Palestine
- 1: “al-Buraq Wall” instead of “Western wall”

Some noteworthy incidents worth highlighting:

### Atrocity denial

Oct 13	Video questioning the Kfar Aza massacre removed	<a href="#">BBC Arabic video</a>	<a href="#">BBC Arabic video</a>	<a href="#">Covered in this Telegraph article</a>
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### Omission/downplaying of Israeli suffering

Oct 29	Omission of kidnapped civilians, i.e. not only “soldiers and settlers”	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>
Oct 30	Omission of kidnapped civilians, i.e. not only soldiers	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>
Oct 30	Omission of kidnapped civilians, i.e. not only soldiers	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>
Jan 21	Hostage soldiers were not “arrested”, they were seized	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>

	(Although the website was corrected before January, only then did the BBC remove the errors from its Facebook and X/Twitter posts.)		
Feb 5	1931 attack was against unarmed Jewish civilians, not “Jewish gunmen”	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>
Feb 27	Omission of Hamas violence from Yocheved Lifshitz’s testimony	<a href="#">BBC Arabic video</a>	<a href="#">BBC Arabic video</a>

**Omission of Palestinian violence, mischaracterisation of Palestinians as innocent:**

Oct 31	Omission of suicide bombers from Hamas’s military capabilities item	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>
Feb 1	Muhammad Deif was not imprisoned “without trial” in 1989	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>
Feb 26	Murderer Samir Kuntar was a prisoner, not a “captive”	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>
Feb 26	Murderer Samir Kuntar was a prisoner, not a “captive”	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>
Feb 26	Sara Swissa was an arrestee, not a “captive” (Although the website was corrected before February, only then did the BBC remove the errors from its YouTube and X/Twitter posts.)	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>
Mar 25	BBC’s own comments added to a story about Refaat Alareer	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>
Mar 25	Refaat Alareer’s flattering video removed	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>
May 12	Murderer’s history added to an interview with him ( <a href="#">Covered in this Telegraph article</a> )	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>

May 29	Marah Bakeer was not an “arrestee” but a sentenced and tried prisoner	<a href="#">BBC Arabic video</a>	<a href="#">BBC Arabic video</a>
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Unfounded antisemitic speculation:

Oct 17	Video platforming the speculation that child murderer was Jewish removed	<a href="#">BBC Arabic video</a>	<a href="#">BBC Arabic page</a>
Feb 5	Note added to a video speculating that child murderer was Jewish	<a href="#">BBC Arabic video</a>	<a href="#">BBC Arabic video</a>

Glossing over antisemitism

Feb 26	Video subtitles read “Israelis” when the speaker said “Jews” (Although the website was corrected before February, only then did the BBC remove the errors from its YouTube and X/Twitter posts)	<a href="#">BBC Arabic video</a>	<a href="#">BBC Arabic video</a>
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Glorification of terror:

Dec 11	Death of al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades’ members is not “martyrdom”	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>
Feb 1	Attacks which killed civilians are not “resistance operations”	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>
Feb 1	Palestinians tried and sentenced by Israel are prisoners, not “captives”	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>
Feb 16	“Resistance” in reference to UK-proscribed terrorist group Hamas	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>
Feb 16	“Resistance” in reference to UK-proscribed terrorist groups	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>

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Feb 16	Attacks which killed civilians are not “resistance operations”	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>
Feb 16	Quotation marks added to “resistance” in reference to Hezbollah – NB, CAMERA escalated after this correction was made - BBC still stopped short of calling Hezbollah by its name	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>

Immature:

Dec 10	BBC Arabic’s “Fake News” image which attributes “Fake” to the Israeli flag and “News” to the Palestinian one, still appears as a small icon in a few locations on the website	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>
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Suspected plagiarism from terrorist-sympathising sources

Feb 5	1931 attack was against unarmed Jewish civilians, not “Jewish gunmen”	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>	These errors were probably plagiarised from pro-Hezbollah Lebanese newspaper al-Akhbar (they appear in the same order there)
Feb 5	1932 attack happened in December, not January	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>	
Feb 5	1932 attack involved grenade being thrown into a house, not gun fire	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>	

Developing an inaccurate historical narrative:

Feb 26	Omission of Jewish agreement to the 1947 partition plan	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>
Feb 26	1948 description of “armed Jewish groups attacking Palestinian villages”	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>

Other inaccuracies:

Oct 31	First Hamas rocket was launched towards Israel in 2001, not 2006	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>
Dec 8	Between Nov 19 and Dec 3, it was Hamas's Government Media Office, not its Ministry of Health, which released death toll numbers		<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>
Jan 30	Omission of the UK from list of countries which suspended UNRWA support	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>
Feb 5	1932 attack happened in December, not January	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>
Feb 5	1932 attack involved grenade being thrown into a house, not gun fire	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>
Feb 20	Name of pre-1948 Arab village misspelt in Arabic	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>
Apr 3	Alaa Taher Hassanat's death was not confirmed	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>
May 31	Gadi Eisenkot does not belong to Israel's "Ministry of War"	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>

**CAMERA complaints (resolved and unresolved)**

Unresolved complaints submitted by CAMERA in response to content published within reporting timeframe: 18

Resolved complaints submitted by CAMERA in response to content published within reporting timeframe: 37

NB - date listed is publication date.

**Types of issue:**

Omission/downplaying of Israeli suffering

UNR	BBC Arabic presenters Nour Eddine Zorgui and Akram Shaban spread misinformation (including denying rape) when “challenging” pro-Israel speakers	Official response was due seven weeks ago	<a href="#">YouTube</a>
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Omission of Palestinian violence, mischaracterisation as innocent:

20 Nov 2023 - 2 Dec 2023	UNR	Death toll numbers in Gaza are repeatedly misattributed to the Ministry of Health between November 20th and December 2nd. In fact, the Hamas-run office which issued the data at that time was the Government Media Office – whose methodology is “unknown” according to the UN’s OCHA. Once the Ministry of Health conveniently picked up the count from where the Government Media Office had left off in early December, BBC omitted this important detail from same-time reports on the matter (e.g. in an interview with the Ministry of Health spokesperson here).	Partially corrected, official 1B stage response was due eighteen weeks ago <a href="https://www.bbc.com/arabic/live/67539587/page/5">https://www.bbc.com/arabic/live/67539587/page/5</a>	<a href="#">Methodology "unknown"</a>
	UNR	BBC omits parts of Aaron Bushnell’s biography and worldview in both English and Arabic	Official response was due seven weeks ago	<a href="#">BBC Arabic</a> <a href="#">BBC English</a>
26 April 2024	UNR	BBC Arabic <a href="#">errs</a> on an Intifada backgrounder: false depiction of the call to “Globalize the Intifada,” false depiction of Israeli victims of the first Intifada (not only “forces” but also civilians), “al-Aqsa” in reference to the entire compound	Official response was due earlier this week	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>

**THE ISRAEL-HAMAS WAR AND THE BBC**

	UNR	BBC Arabic still did not add due disclosure to 4 videos featuring a guest with a <a href="#">murderous past</a> (despite having done so in 2 other webpages)	Official response is due next week	<a href="#">Telegraph story</a>
16 May 2024	UNR	BBC Arabic <a href="#">omits</a> the Hamas affiliation of West Bank casualties in a flattering interview with their mother	Official response is due in less than two weeks	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>
	RES	Hamas’s charter and antisemitism omitted from a series of backgrounders about the movement, its objectives and why it attacked	Rejected, belatedly answered (rejection triggered the submission of 11 (of the unresolved)	<a href="#">BBC Arabic Article</a> <a href="#">BBC Arabic Article</a>
	RES	A “journalist’s” praises for the “Jihad fighters” omitted from a report about his death	Rejected, belatedly answered	

Unfounded antisemitic speculation:

	UNR	BBC Arabic guest Tarek Fahmy alleges that at least six members of Israel’s war cabinet are “wanted in world airports as terrorists”, interviewer fails to challenge him	Partially corrected, official response was due three weeks ago	<a href="#">BBC Arabic video</a>
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Glossing over/ignoring/promoting antisemitism:

22 Dec 2023	UNR	BBC Arabic fails to provide due disclosure on “Talking Point” social media commentators whose accounts engaged in hate speech	Official response was due seven weeks ago	<a href="#">BBC Arabic video</a>
Jan-Feb 2024	RES	Of the 8 Israel-related items broadcast as part of BBC Arabic's talk show “Egypt MeanTime” ever since Mahmoud Sheleib was reinstated as its executive producer late November, 4 hosted rabid antisemites, terrorism supporters and	Rejected (CAMERA is still debating whether to appeal as this happened Thursday night, so this might go back to the “UNRESOLVED” column), belatedly answered	



		conspiracy theorists as guests giving their so-called 'expert takes' on Israel. In a 5th one, a guest's apology was sought for expressing empathy over the Oct. 7 massacres in an interview with Israeli press; in response to the Telegraph's inquiry on the matter, the BBC replied: "our journalists routinely challenge the views of contributors."	
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Glorification of terror:

<b>UNR</b>	BBC Arabic refers to Hezbollah as "the Islamic resistance" quoting "local media"	Partially corrected, official 1B stage response was due nine weeks ago	<a href="#">BBC Arabic Article</a>
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Suspected plagiarism from terrorist-sympathising sources

	<b>UNR</b>	BBC Arabic parroted Hamas's 2014 propaganda about its drone capabilities in the reporter's voice	Fully corrected, official response was due earlier this week	<a href="#">BBC Arabic Article</a>
18 Nov 2023	<b>RES</b>	BBC Arabic claims that the (original) 'Izz ad-Deen Al-Qassam's victims in 1931-1932 were "gunmen", rather than civilians - entire passage seems to be plagiarized from Hezbollah-affiliated Lebanese newspaper al-Akhbar (errors appeared in the same order, including misreported dates)	Fully corrected, belatedly answered	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>

Developing an inaccurate historical or political narrative:

26 Oct 2023 (last	<b>UNR</b>	BBC Arabic errs on the 1948 war in a Jabaliyya backgrounder, completely omitting the	Partially corrected, official 1B	<a href="#">The Jabaliya Refugee</a>
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updated 12 May 2024)		positions and actions of Mandatory Palestine's Arabs	stage response was due seven weeks ago	<a href="#">Camp: What do we know about it and about the other refugee camps in Gaza?</a>
8 April 2024 (last updated 26 April 2024)	<b>UNR</b>	BBC Arabic omits key facts about hunger in Gaza – Egypt's participation in the siege that began in 2007, Gallant referring to the fight against "human animals" in his famous quote, UK among the countries that cut UNRWA funding and Hamas seizing aid for its own military purposes	Official response was due earlier this week	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>
15 May 2024	<b>UNR</b>	BBC Arabic errs in Nakba anniversary item: "most" Palestinians were not "expelled" in 1948; 1920s and 1930s riots were between Jews and Arabs, not "Jews and Palestinians"	Partially corrected, official response is due in less than two weeks	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>
18 Nov 2023	<b>RES</b>	BBC Arabic claims that the (original) 'Izz ad-Deen Al-Qassam's victims in 1931-1932 were "gunmen", rather than civilians – entire passage seems to be plagiarized from Hezbollah-affiliated Lebanese newspaper al-Akhbar (errors appeared in the same order, including misreported dates)	Fully corrected, belatedly answered	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>
31 October 2023	<b>RES</b>	BBC Arabic's video about "Palestinians inside the Green Line" during wartime misuses the terms "settlers" and "Israelis" in reference to Israel's Jews, fails to mention Arab citizens of Israel who supported 7/10	Rejected, belatedly answered	<a href="#">BBC Arabic video</a>
	<b>RES</b>	Jewish name for "Palestine" omitted from a backgrounder citing the Land's significance to Jews	Rejected, belatedly answered	

Other inaccuracies:

3 March 2024	<b>UNR</b>	BBC Arabic publishes a misleading photo caption of two children	Partially corrected, official response was due seven weeks ago	<a href="#">BBC Arabic article</a>
	<b>RES</b>	The private I-24 news channel does not “belong to Israel’s Foreign Ministry”	Fully corrected, answered on time	Fully corrected, answered on time

## Schedule 13 - Casualty Description Analysis Methodology

These are the steps we used in this analysis:

1. Extracted all articles from the BBC in the relevant time frame (7 Oct 2023 – 7 February 2024).
  
2. Using ChatGPT and human experts – we tagged each article to note if it mentions any Israeli and/or Palestinian casualties, and if so – how many, how is their identity described (by name/woman/people etc.) and what words were used to describe the death (killed/died etc.)
  
3. We grouped the words describing the identity of the casualties into categories:

Category	Examples
Age Related	Young people, elderly, 10-years old, toddler, boy, girl
Family Member	Mother, father, grandmother, son, daughter
Generic	People, men, bodies, casualties
Civilian / Professional	Hostage, displaced people, innocent, patients, partygoers, citizens, civilians, driver, medics, farm worker, journalist, student
Militant / Official	Soldiers, commander, officer, terrorists, attackers, gunmen, Palestinian officials, police officers, Hamas leader
Name	Any specific name – Deborah, Mohammad
Nationality	Israeli, Palestinian, Gazan

4. We counted how many words are in each category, and how their use is divided between Israeli and Palestinian.

5. We also counted the words that describe the death, considering a word and all its conjugations (for example – dies, die, died – were all counted under ‘die’) – for Israelis and for Palestinians.
6. Lastly, we looked at the number of casualties that was reported and checked if it has any descriptors – for example: “at least 1200 were killed”, “around 3000 died” etc.

We grouped these words into 3 categories:

<b>Descriptive Category</b>	<b>Descriptive Words</b>
<b>Upper Boundary (i.e., failed to reach)</b>	almost, nearly, nears, up to
<b>Roughly</b>	about, around, some, estimated, has reached, close to, many
<b>Lower Boundary (i.e., surpassed)</b>	more than, at least, over, passed, exceeds, exceeded

7. We counted how many words in each category were used to describe Israeli deaths, and how many for Palestinian deaths.

## Schedule 14 – Letter from Trevor Asserson to Mr Tim Davie

### **Tim Davie CBE**

Director-General, BBC

London Broadcasting House

5th Floor Zone E

Portland Place

London, W1A 1AA

### **By email**

tim.davie@bbc.co.uk

12 August 2024

Dear Mr Davie,

### **BBC and Impartiality**

Our office is in the process of conducting a detailed review of the BBC's compliance with its obligation of due impartiality pursuant to the Ofcom Broadcasting Code.

In the course of our research, we have had regard to the BBC Group Annual Report and Accounts 2023/4 (“the **Report**”).

We note the reference in the Director-general’s review section of the Report to the BBC’s focus on transparency and the “fearless pursuit of truth, anchored by the facts, with no political agenda.”[1]

In particular, you acknowledge “We know that the more we let audiences in behind the scenes of our reporting and show our workings, the better we can earn their trust every day.”[2]

It is with this in mind that we set out below our request for documents and information which will assist us in conducting our review.

### **Request for documents and information**

#### **1) Ipsos Survey Data**

The Report asserts that the BBC has “met its obligation to provide impartial news and information over the last year.”[3]

To support this, the Report refers to survey data obtained by Ipsos UK in February 2024. It also refers to “Ipsos UK 16+” as the source for its performance data relevant to the fulfilment of its Public Purpose 1[4] (collectively, the “**Ipsos Survey Data**”).

The Ipsos Survey Data appears to be relied upon by the BBC to support its claim that it has met its impartiality obligations. Accordingly, we kindly request a copy of the full Ipsos Survey Data including any report of which it forms a part.

#### **2) Mandatory training data**

The Report states that “Building audience trust continues to be a priority with 97.3% of staff having completed mandatory impartiality training.”[5]

There are no details in the Report as to:

- a. the curriculum or contents of the said mandatory impartiality training;
- b. what is required to be undertaken by staff in order to complete it; and/or
- c. how frequently staff are required to complete the training or undergo refresher courses.

We kindly request the provision of these details (including the relevant sections of any manual or staff handbook in which they appear) in order to better understand the Report.

### **3) BBC Internal Audit**

The Report confirms that the implementation of the commitments made in the Serota Review and Impartiality Plan “remains a vital priority for the BBC”. [6]

In support, the Report refers to a “rigorous review of implementation confirming that all the commitments had been actioned and advising on the form of continuing monitoring” conducted by BBC Internal Audit. [7]

The said BBC Internal Audit report again appears to be relied upon by the BBC for compliance with its obligation of impartiality. It would therefore seem highly relevant to the public’s understanding of the steps being taken by the BBC to ensure implementation of its aforementioned commitments. We kindly request a full copy of it.

### **4) Editorial Standards**

Other than audience surveys, the Report does not mention any systems or tools used to track and/or measure BBC output for compliance with its impartiality obligations.



This is consistent with information provided to us by past and present senior BBC personnel to the effect that the BBC does not set KPIs in respect of its impartiality obligations, nor does it have internal systems to record or assess its compliance by reference to a systematic analysis of its actual output.

As a matter of fairness to the BBC, for the purposes of our review we kindly request confirmation as to whether it is the case that the BBC relies on:

- a. Audience research; and
- b. Editorial complaints data;

in order to evaluate its compliance with its impartiality obligations. In the event that our information is inaccurate or incorrect, please provide details, including in particular details of any systems available to BBC management to enable it to set measurable performance indicators and to test compliance against those performance indicators.

## **5) Concluding remarks**

In conducting our review of the BBC's compliance with its obligation of due impartiality, we seek to give the BBC an opportunity to respond to (and comment on) the requests and other matters set out above.

Each of the requests and queries raised above arises from documents and information referred to in the Report. We do not seek to obtain internal BBC documents other than those relied on to support the claims made in the Report. It seems to us that if the BBC is entitled to rely on a document to demonstrate its public accountability, then it ought to be prepared to submit that document to public scrutiny.

To quote Mr Peter Johnston, Director of Complaints and Editorial Reviews at the BBC, "Audiences expect impartiality and strong editorial standards from the BBC, and it is our absolute priority to do all we can to maintain their trust, and tackle perceptions of bias..."[8]

We look forward to your response to this letter.

Yours sincerely

Trevor Asserson  
Founding Partner

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[1] Page 7.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Page 17.

[4] To provide impartial news and information to help people to understand and engage with the world around them.

[5] Page 60.

[6] Page 123.

[7] Ibid.

[8] <https://www.bbc.com/mediacentre/2022/bbc-delivers-progress-on-impartiality-plan>  
accessed on 11 August 2024.

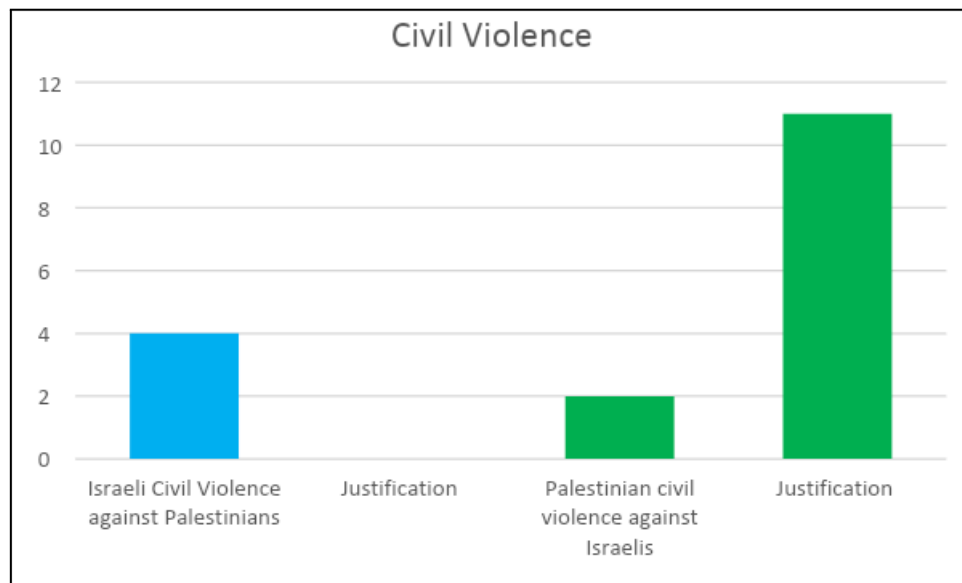
## Schedule 15 - The Making of the Modern Middle East: An Analysis

### Theme 1 - Civil Violence

Bowen frequently refers to violence of Israeli civilians against Palestinians and vice versa. We refer to these as references to 'Civil Violence'. The following trends are noted:

- a) There is a higher number of accounts of Israeli Civil Violence against Palestinians. Some accounts of Palestinian Civil Violence have been categorised under 'acts of terrorism'.
- b) There are many instances where Palestinian Civil Violence is justified. Bowen does not seek to justify Israeli Civil Violence.

The following graph enumerates all the examples we identified in the book both of mentioning Civil Violence by each side, and of justification for it.



Examples of justification of Palestinian violence include:

*"Arafat found plenty of new recruits among Palestinian refugees: young people who had grown up angry in camps that became miserable dumping grounds after 1948.*

*Even fifty years later, young refugees in the camps' UN schools knew the names of their families' lost villages.” (p. 254-255)*

*“But in Jerusalem, quiet does not mean acceptance. Anger and frustration built up among Palestinians as they saw land being taken.” (p. 298)*

*“Eyad recalled the previous generations of traumatized children he had treated: ‘I don’t want to be presumptuous, but from experience with have seen children growing up from stone throwers into suicide bombers.’ (p. 95)*

*“When Yasser Arafat and other leaders of armed Palestinian factions told them that the only way they would win back their land was to fight for it, they were ready to listen.” (p. 255)*

### **Concluding Remarks – Justifying Civil Violence**

Since the creation of the State of Israel there have been many campaigns of terrorism by Palestinians against Israelis which Bowen underplays in his account. Bowen’s underplaying of Civil Violence against Israelis and readiness to justify it suggests partiality in favour of Palestinians.

### **Theme 2 - Human Suffering**

Bowen frequently describes, often in graphic detail, the human suffering caused by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. We have noticed the following trends:

- a) Palestinian suffering is mentioned far more frequently than Israeli suffering. Of those we identified, 90% are Palestinian and only 10% Israeli.
- b) Palestinian suffering is frequently described with emotive language; Israeli suffering is not. There is no description of their lives; how they have been killed; or how their families suffered. These descriptions are reserved for Palestinians.

Examples of emotive descriptions of human suffering include:

i) Palestinian suffering – note emotive language

*“Ahmed and the other children who had suffered so badly [...] had lost the three most basic needs for a child: security, the care of a parent or a trusted adult, and pleasure. As a result, they faced ‘a very painful journey...They can cope with this over the years with the help they can get, but I don’t think anyone can assume that they will be fully recovered.” (p. 95)*

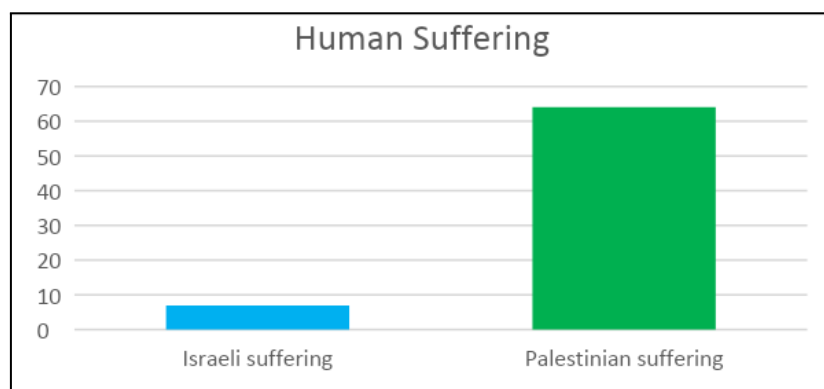
*“The boys who had been running around with coffee and dates were sent to get the debris left by the Israeli projectile. They laid it [...] while Youssef talked about the memory that played endlessly in his head of picking up his sons’ bodies: ‘Until now, I can’t get those images out of my head, when you see your kids torn apart and shredded in front of your eyes [...] this is the most heinous and criminal thing I have ever seen committed against our children.” (p. 302-303)*

*“Outside the ruined house his mother, Amena, was sitting in the garden, surrounded by women from her family. They would not leave her alone with her grief and the memories of the last time she saw her son alive.” (p. 305)*

*“‘What did they do wrong?’ he asked. ‘Were they launching missiles? Were they firing anything at all? Innocent children. They just want to pay and to eat. That’s all they do. I can’t study. My brother’s martyrdom was sudden and shocking. It’s just so strange and it has shattered by dreams.” (p. 305)*

ii) Israeli suffering – note lack of emotive language

*“During the eleven-day war in May 2021, a five-year-old Israeli boy called Ido Avigdal was killed in Sderot, a small border town, when a Hamas rocket hit his home.” (p. 306)*



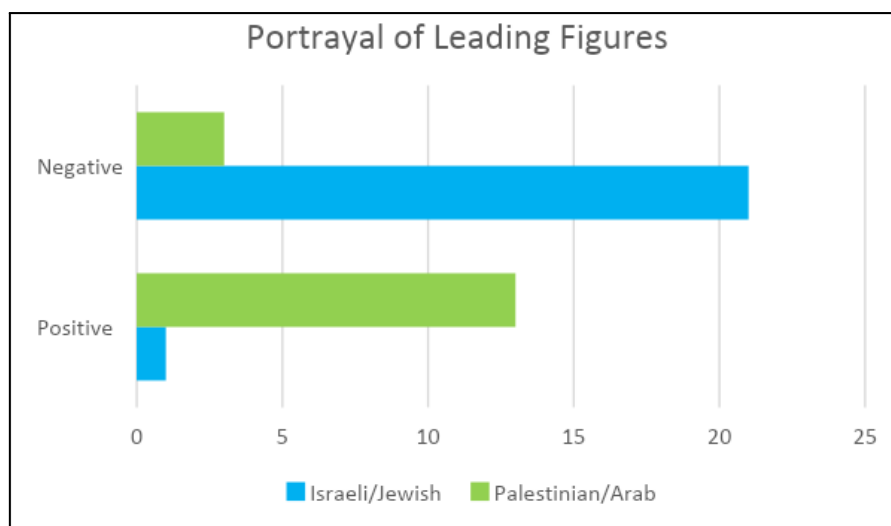
### Concluding remarks re emotive language

Bowen's failure to use emotive language when describing violence against Israelis and his liberal use of emotive language to describe violence against Palestinians suggest partiality in favour of Palestinians.

### Theme 3 – Portrayal of Leading Figures

Bowen frequently describes military, political and civilian leaders from both sides of the conflict. Trends we have noticed include:

- a) Palestinian/Arab leaders are almost invariably described in a positive manner.
- b) Israeli/Jewish leaders are almost always portrayed in a negative way. We identified only one occasion in the book where an Israeli leader was described in a mildly positive way.



Examples of the portrayal of leading figures we have identified include:

- a) Palestinian/Arab leaders – positive description;

*"[Arafat] speaks softly and turns aside all questions about himself: 'Please, no personality cult. I am only a soldier. Our leader is Palestine. Our road is the road of death and sacrifice to win back our homeland'." (p. 62)*

*"[Arafat] was a living, fighting antidote to the dull and defeated generation that he succeeded. Thousands of recruits signed up to join the armed Palestinian guerilla groups." (p. 62-63)*

*"At his most effective, Arafat [made] headlines around the world for the Palestinian cause while also sealing his position as the human embodiment of Palestinian hopes for independence." (p. 64)*

*"[Nasrallah] was polite and serious, and Israel was not referred to by name but as 'the Zionist entity'. He did not give much away, except his unshakeable determination to keep on fighting." (p. 263-264)*

- b) Israeli leaders – negative description, often rejectionist towards peace:

*"Israeli generals and politicians claimed they had no choice about using deadly force." (p. 256)*

*"Trump loyalists, the Israeli government and its friends applauded loudly. Most other observers saw a one-sided plan designed for the requirements of the Israeli government and responded with everything from scepticism to derision and out-right rejection." (p. 295)*

- c) We found one mildly positive description of an Israeli leader – note emphasis on Israeli militarism.

*"Dayan was a fierce fighter and Israeli nationalist, but he recognized that the other side existed, whether he liked it or not." (p. 51)*

### **Concluding remarks - Portrayal of Leading Figures**

Bowen's positive use of language when describing Palestinian leaders and his failure to do so with Israeli leaders suggests partiality in favour of Palestinians.

### Theme 4 – Attitudes to peace

Bowen comments on the readiness of both sides to make peace. The main trend we noticed was that Israelis are portrayed as being less accommodating in the quest for peace than Palestinians.

*“From that night [Rabin’s assassination], hopes of peace died a slow and steady death.” (p. 73)*

*“[T]he chances of a two-state solution have disappeared because Israel has taken so much of the land Palestinians wanted for a state. Perhaps if the will was there it could still be done, but it seems not to exist.” (p. 74-75)*

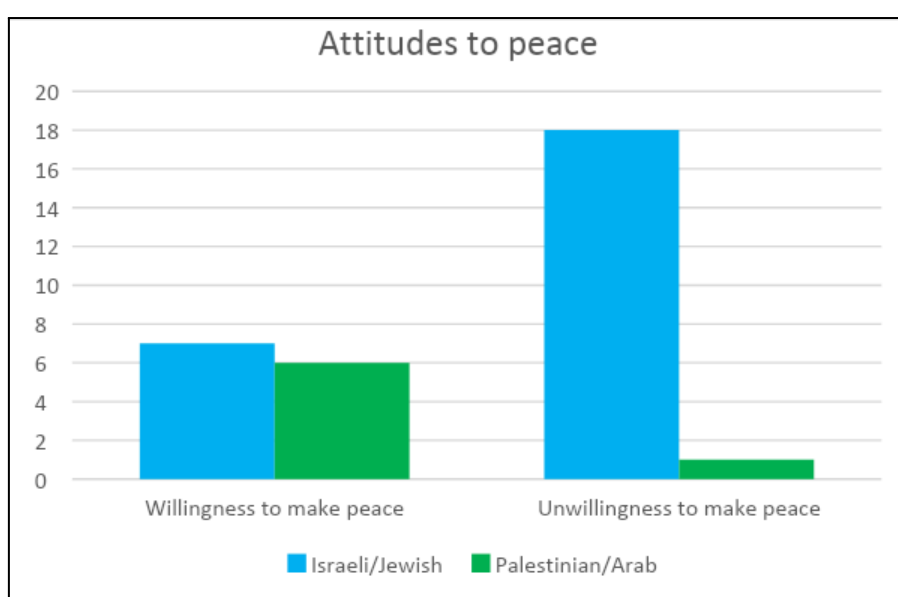
*“Like many of his countrymen, [Dr. Eyad el-Sarraj] believed that Israel wanted to sow hatred in new generations of Palestinians, in order that they would always have an excuse not to make peace.” (p. 95-96)*

*“For Israel [...] peace is the most dangerous thing, not war.” (p. 96) [quoting Dr. Eyad el-Sarraj]*

Vs.

*“[Arafat’s] big moment came in 1974[...]Arafat swaggered into the General Assembly [of the United Nations in New York] wearing a cream suit, keffiyeh and dark glasses to deliver his most famous lines: ‘I come to you bearing an olive branch in one hand and a freedom fighter’s gun in the other. Do not let the olive branch fall from my hand.’ He repeated it three times.” (p. 64)*

*“Arafat was offering Israel a choice of peace or war, and the General Assembly had given him a standing ovation [...] For Israelis, Arafat was a terrorist, and his olive branch was a joke.” (p. 64)*





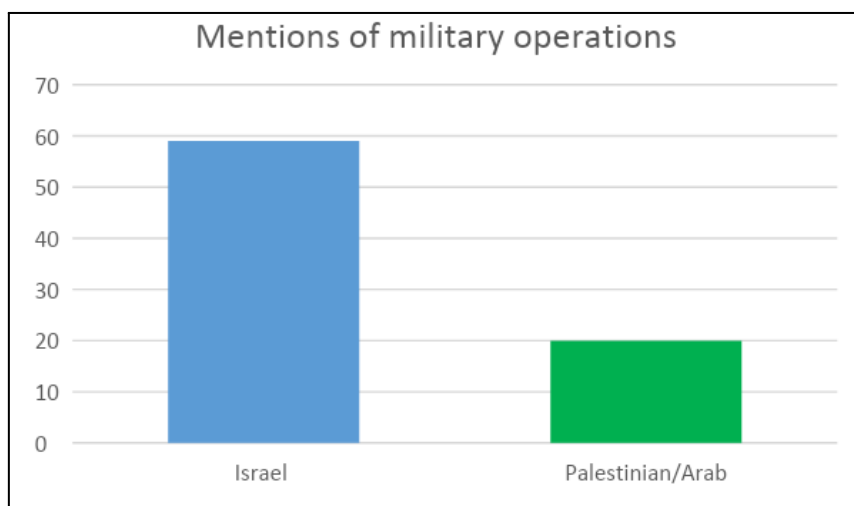
### Concluding remarks re Leaders' attitudes to Peace

Bowen's depiction of Israeli leaders as wanting war, quite apart from questions as to the historical accuracy of this view, suggests an antithetical attitude toward Israeli leaders generally. This is not mirrored in his treatment of Palestinian leaders which suggests partiality in favour of Palestinians.

### Theme 5 – Military strength and Cruelty

Bowen mentions Israeli military operations often. The trends we noticed were:

- a) Far more frequent mention of Israeli military operations than of Arab ones (including non-Palestinian Arab groups e.g. Hezbollah) – general obsession with the Israeli military and a belief in Israelis being gratuitously cruel.
- b) Bowen never refers to Hamas and Hezbollah members as terrorists, although both groups are widely recognised to be terrorist organisations. Instead he tends to refer to them with words such as 'fighters' or 'gunmen'.



### Examples of focus on Israeli militarism and cruelty:

*"[Israeli archives] include accounts of Arab prisoners who surrendered under white flags being shot out of hand, the massacres of civilians, and other brutality, including rape." (p.60)*

*"Israeli soldiers fire at anyone who gets too close to their positions – sometimes to warn, sometimes to kill." (p. 87)*

*"Once I saw [Israeli soldiers] shooting over the heads of boys scavenging for scrap metal in the rubble." (p. 87)*

*"When [a dying Palestinian boy] crept from the house to find water, soldiers shot at him." (p. 95)*

*"Israel inflicted terrible pain, loss and death on Lebanese civilians. Tens of thousands of impoverished Shia were forced out of their homes in the south and settled in Beirut's southern suburbs." (p. 256)*

*"I had not killed my friend. The Israelis did that. But I decided to stop, and if I hadn't, Abed Takkoush, a fifty-three-year-old man with a wife and three teenage boys. Might still be alive. Or perhaps they would have killed all of us." (p. 265)*

*"Palestinians, mostly young men, were getting close to the wire [...] Israeli soldiers were shooting at them [...] Women had brought picnics. Families, including many children, screamed and scattered when Israeli drones buzzed overhead bombings and crowds with tear gas." (p. 293)*

### **Concluding Remarks - Israeli Militarism and cruelty**

Bowen appears to consider Israelis as militaristic and gratuitously cruel. He does not depict even extremist Arab groups in a similar way, including those that are known to have committed mass murder of civilians. This suggests partiality in favour of Palestinians.

### **Theme 6 - Failing to refer to terrorist groups as terrorists**

Bowen never refers to Hamas and Hezbollah (two groups widely recognized to be terrorist organisations) members as terrorists, instead referring to them as 'fighters' or 'gunmen' frequently.

### **Examples of failing to refer to terrorist groups as terrorists:**

*"In 1972, Fatah gunmen calling themselves 'Black September' killed eleven Israeli athletes and a German policeman at the Munich Olympics." (p. 63)*

*"Palestinians in militant Islamist movements set about trying to wreck the Oslo Process by sending suicide bombers to kill Israeli civilians." (p. 70)*

*"[Barak's] military exploits included leading a special forces raid on the PLO headquarters in Beirut, as part of Israel's revenge for the murder of its athletes by Palestinian gunmen at the Munich Olympics." (p. 264)*

*"Fighters from Islamic Jihad lined up with their weapons, their faces covered in black balaclavas or wrapped in black and white checked keffiyehs. When the scarves slipped, I could see that they were little more than boys still trying hard to grow beards." (p. 301)*

### **Concluding Remarks – Not Calling Hamas Terrorists**

It is noteworthy that Bowen, even when writing as a historian, and not constrained by BBC qualms about using the word terrorist, chooses to avoid the description 'terrorist' to describe the acts of Palestinians. This includes the period of the Second Intifada when Palestinian terrorists were deliberately targeting young adults and children, including for instance blowing up buses taking children to school. This trend suggests partiality in favour of Palestinians.

### **Tendentious History**

Generally, as one might expect from an author who appears to reveal a strong personal bias, the historical account which Bowen produces is tendentious and thus unconvincing. For example the fact that Hamas has fired tens of thousands of rockets at Israeli civilians since Israel left Gaza in 2005, is barely mentioned. Many would say that omission or downplaying of such a central fact can turn history into polemic.

It is not the task of this report to seek to argue historical facts with Bowen, however, but merely to note indications of lack of impartiality.

### **Concluding Remarks – Making of the Modern Middle East**

The Making of the Modern Middle East is a book which provides a partial, biased and one-sided picture. It suggests that Bowen has certain settled and partial views about Israelis and Palestinians, namely:

1. Civil Violence by Palestinians is to be excused and explained, but Civil Violence by Israelis is not;
2. Human suffering by Palestinians is to be described emotively and often; that of Israelis is to be given little space, and described without emotion;
3. Palestinian leaders are to be treated as heroes; Israeli leaders as cruel;

4. Palestinians want to make peace; Israelis do not;
5. Examples of Israeli militarism and attacks deserve mention, those of Palestinians rarely deserve mention;
6. Palestinians should not be described as terrorists.

Whatever one's view as to the factual basis for such opinions, we believe it is clear that they do not reveal the workings of an impartial mind on the Israeli/Palestinian issue. The BBC assumes that its journalists leave their personal opinions by the door as they come in.