



Arab Media Watch
for objective British coverage of Arab issues

Monitoring Study:

Palestinian & Israeli Viewpoints in the Media

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This three-month study focuses on the extent to which Palestinian and Israeli viewpoints are provided in news articles - in general and per media organisation - regarding their conflict, in terms of the number of sources used from each side, and the amount of space they are given according to word count.

During the period of study (1 June - 31 August 2007), a total of 170 news articles on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict appeared in the print or online editions of Britain's national broadsheets and tabloids (though the Daily Express did not report on the topic at all), as well as the websites of Al Jazeera English and the BBC.

Weekend coverage, and articles on domestic Israeli or Palestinian affairs - such as Hamas-Fatah fighting - were excluded, as were editorials, commentaries and letters.

Analysis of Results

Of a total of 20,716 words that were quoted and paraphrased as opinions from sources, 9,518 (46%) were from Palestinian sources, and 11,198 (54%) from Israeli sources. Of the 649 sources used, 328 (50.5%) were Palestinian, and 321 (49.5%) were Israeli.

So overall, although slightly more Palestinian sources were used, Israeli sources - and hence the Israeli viewpoint in general - were given greater coverage. Furthermore, the Israeli viewpoint, and the number of Israeli sources used, were predominant in six of the 10 news outlets monitored.

The Daily Telegraph and the Times, which are editorially sympathetic to Israel, actually gave greater space in their news coverage to Palestinian opinions than Israeli (64-36% and 56-44% respectively). In fact, the Telegraph contained the most coverage of Palestinian opinions and used the most Palestinian sources (64-36%), compared with the Israeli side, than any other news organisation.

The Guardian, the Independent and the BBC, often targets of the pro-Israel lobby, are notable for the opposite reason: in terms of words devoted to sources, these organisations had 66-34%, 58-42% and 57-43% balances in favour of the Israeli side, respectively. The Guardian and the BBC also used more Israeli sources than Palestinian (54-46% and 56.5-43.5%, respectively).

Al Jazeera English, another news organisation often vilified for its Middle East coverage, was almost even in the amount of space it gave both viewpoints (52% for Palestinians, 48% for Israelis).

While the Palestinian viewpoint was almost twice as prevalent in news articles in the Telegraph, the Israeli viewpoint was almost twice as prevalent in the Guardian and the Mirror (65-35%), though almost all the Mirror articles were taken from Reuters. The Sun contained no Palestinian sources or opinions.

At a glance:

- News outlets giving more space to Palestinian opinions than Israeli, in descending order:
Daily Telegraph, Financial Times, Times, Al Jazeera English
- News outlets giving more space to Israeli opinions than Palestinian, in descending order:
Sun, Guardian, Daily Mirror, Daily Mail, Independent, BBC
- News outlets using more Palestinian sources than Israeli, in descending order:
Daily Telegraph, Al Jazeera English, Financial Times, Independent
- News outlets using more Israeli sources than Palestinian, in descending order:
Sun, Daily Mirror, BBC, Guardian, Daily Mail, Times (last two tied)

Table showing share of total sources and total word count expressed as a percentage

	No. of articles	% of total words given to Pal sources	% of total words given to Israeli sources	% of total sources used: Palestinian	% of total sources used: Israeli
Al Jazeera	39	52	48	57	43
BBC	26	43	57	43.5	56.5
FT	15	61.5	38.5	56	44
Guardian	24	34	66	46	54
Independent	13	42	58	53	47
Mail	10	40	60	49	51
Mirror	21	35	65	42	58
Sun	1	0	100	0	100
Telegraph	4	64	36	64	36
Times	17	56	44	49	51
Total	170	46	54	50.5	49.5

Tabulated Individual and Total Findings of Each Organisation

	No. of articles	No. of words from Pal sources	No. of words from Israeli sources	No. of Palestinian sources	No. of Israeli sources
Al Jazeera	39	3,320	3,050	116	87
BBC	26	1,055	1,377	37	48
FT	15	910	570	23	18
Guardian	24	994	1,897	38	45
Independent	13	747	1,013	28	25
Mail	10	495	735	22	23
Mirror	21	929	1,759	32	45
Sun	1	0	12	0	1
Telegraph	4	231	132	9	5
Times	17	837	653	23	24
Total	170	9,518	11,198	328	321