

BBC BIAS SCANDAL: THE CASE OF GAZA AND ISRAEL

BBC director-general Tim Davie and CEO Deborah Turness both stepped down in recent days as a result of the controversy, but the latter made it clear she stands by the organization, saying "I stepped down over the weekend because the buck stops with me. But I'd like to make one thing very clear, BBC News is not institutionally biased." The sheer hubris of this is remarkable, flying in the face of multiple evidences. The issues flow directly from the BBC's abandonment of its foundational principles. The dedicatory plaque on Broadcasting House was recently refurbished. The meaning of the Latin text is now inscrutable to the vast majority of the population – translated, it declares "This temple of the arts and muses is dedicated to Almighty God by the first Governors in the year of our Lord 1931, John Reith being Director-General, and they pray that good seed sown may bring forth good harvest, that all things foul or hostile to peace may be banished hence and that people inclining their ear to whatsoever things are lovely and honest, whatsoever things are of good report, may tread the path of virtue and wisdom." One thing the BBC excels in is burnishing its image!

BBC bias has been particularly notable in its treatment of Gaza and Israel – not just in the post-2023 conflict, but over the longer term. Whilst first-hand experience is important, news reportage of complex war situations should always be contextualised, not simply based on the experiences and impressions of reporters. So far as the BBC is concerned, its editorial guidelines declare: "Audiences rightly expect the highest standards from the BBC – truth, accuracy, impartiality and diversity of opinion – and that the information they receive is independent, authoritative and trustworthy."¹ The regulatory body, Ofcom, requires that news, "in whatever form, is reported with due accuracy and presented with due impartiality. ... 'Due' is an important qualification to the concept of impartiality. Impartiality itself means not favouring one side over another."²

So, here's BBC's top Middle East correspondent, Jeremy Bowen in 2014, regarding Hamas' use of human shields in Gaza: "I saw no evidence during my week in Gaza of Israel's accusation that Hamas uses Palestinians as human shields."³

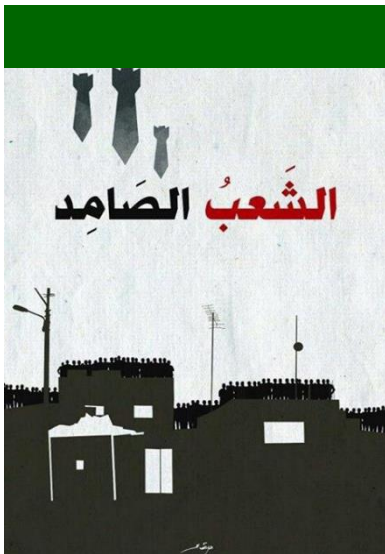


BBC promotional photo ⁴

In the very same year The Washington Post reported that al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza City, "has become a de facto headquarters for Hamas leaders, who can be seen in the hallways and offices."⁵ CBN News' Senior International correspondent, George Thomas, recalled, "I was in Gaza City during Israel's 2014 war with Hamas. Almost every night, I could see Hamas fighters assembling then firing off their rockets into Israel from the basement of my hotel. Hamas knew Israel wouldn't hit the hotel because it was filled with foreign journalists."⁶ Writing in 2023, Bowen stated "Al-Shifa is the main hospital in Gaza City - I've been there many times. It has big grounds, so people in Gaza went there to seek shelter and camp out as they saw it as a safe area."⁷ How likely is it that Bowen have missed such abuse during a whole week in 2014?

Furthermore, there is the issue of due diligence. For a BBC Senior Correspondent, one would imagine that contextualisation of a major conflict would require far more than personal visits. Especially since the

internet explosion, access to other sources has become exponentially easier. Other sources for that same 2014 period include the poster shown below:



Captured online 2014, source not recorded (DL)

Further evidence comes from translations of Arabic media, such as the following statement by Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri, when interviewed about Gazans on the rooftops: "This attests to the character of our noble, Jihad-fighting people, who defend their rights and their homes with their bare chests and their blood. ... Hamas calls upon our people to adopt this policy, in order to protect the Palestinian homes."⁸



Rooftop human shields, including children ⁹

Furthermore, a report from the same period by FRANCE 24 TV stated, "....about 100 metres behind me - a blue UN flag is floating above this building. This is another accusation that has been made by the Israeli government and Israeli forces - this rocket launching site is right next to a UN facility" (full source not recorded).

Commenting after the cessation of that war, retired British Army Colonel Richard Kemp stated ""Storing and firing weapons within densely populated areas, compelling civilians to stay put when warned to leave, luring Israeli forces to attack and kill their own people, the Palestinian body count is vital to Hamas's propaganda war that aims to bring international pressure on Israel and incite anti-Israeli and anti-Semitic hatred around the world."¹⁰

More recently, here's just example of the rot at the top is a 2022 meeting between BBC's then chairman, Richard Sharp, and Husam Zomlot, the Palestinian Authority envoy to the UK, to "discuss the BBC's reporting of developments in Palestine." The meeting was commemorated with a photograph of the two men in front of a map of "Palestine" that encompasses the entire State of Israel.¹¹

Despite its official designation by the UK, its taxpayer-funded broadcaster refuses to refer to Hamas and its members as "terrorists," preferring the more neutral and legitimizing term, "militant." In an attempt to justify this policy, the BBC's World Affairs editor John Simpson explained that it doesn't refer to Hamas as "terrorists" in order to maintain an objective tone and does not tell people "who to support and who to condemn."¹²

Fundamentally, Israel's recent wars, whether then or now, are not about Gaza nor its citizens. The Hamas charter includes the following:

- Article 8 of the Hamas Charter reiterates the Muslim Brotherhood's slogan of "Allah is its goal, the Prophet is the model, the Qur'an its constitution, *jihad* its path, and death for the sake of Allah its most sublime belief.
- Article 11 states that Palestine is sacred territory (*waqf*) for all Muslims for all time, and it cannot be relinquished by anyone.
- Article 13 claims that there is no negotiated settlement possible. Jihad is the only answer
- Article 15 includes the claim that "The day that enemies usurp part of Muslim land, Jihad becomes the individual duty of every Muslim"

Statements from its officials make this absolutely clear:

- "Palestine means Palestine in its entirety, and Israel cannot exist in our midst." (Mahmoud Al-Zahar)¹³
- "Palestine – from the [*Jordan*] River to the [*Mediterranean*] Sea, from its north to its south – is our land, our right, and our homeland. There will be no relinquishing or forsaking even an inch or small part of it." (Khaled Mashaal)¹⁴
- "I want to swear on the Quran that not a single Jew will remain on this land. Not a single settler will remain on this land. Absolutely not. We and you are on the same land, but we have our complete faith in Allah and in the strength of the mujahideen, and we will not leave a single one of you, alive or dead, on this land. By Allah, we will dig up your bones from the graves and get them out of this country. We will not leave any trace of you on this land." (Al-Aqsa TV Host Sheikh Abu Funun, during the 'Knife Intifada').¹⁵

Mahmoud Al-Zahar is a co-founder of Hamas and a current leader in Gaza. Khaled Mashaal is the former chairman of Hamas Political Bureau and, since October 2024, de facto leader.¹⁶

Tragically, in recent days, 'From the River to the Sea' has been chanted on the streets of our cities, along with the map being displayed, and broadcast into our homes. At the same time the BBC has failed to point out the claim's Islamist ambition and its outright Antisemitism. The blood-curdling motivation of Hajj Amin al-Husseini, the Muslim leader in British Mandate Palestine, a Nazi-collaborator, now stalks the streets of Britain with impunity - and our national broadcaster colludes in the travesty.

Furthermore, the BBC refuses to refer to Hamas and its members as "terrorists," preferring the more neutral and legitimizing term, "militant." According to the BBC's World Affairs editor John Simpson, it doesn't refer to Hamas as "terrorists" in order to maintain an "objective" tone, and does not tell

people “who to support and who to condemn.” However, as ‘Honest Reporting’ stated, the BBC has no qualms about using that term when referring to Al-Qaeda, ISIS, or other international terror organizations.¹⁷

In regard to Israel’s actions, the BBC continues to be blind to reality, clearly preferring the Palestinian perspective. The time for change is massively overdue.

FOOTNOTES

1. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/aboutthebbc/documents/bbc-draft-editorial-guidelines-consultation-document.pdf>
2. <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/tv-radio-and-on-demand/broadcast-standards/section-five-due-impartiality-accuracy#>
3. <https://www.newstatesman.com/world/2014/07/jeremy-bowens-gaza-notebook-i-saw-no-evidence-hamas-using-palestinians-human>
4. <https://feeds.bbc.co.uk/newsround/67077987> 12 Oct 2023
5. https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/while-israel-held-its-fire-the-militant-group-hamas-did-not/2014/07/15/
6. <https://cbn.com/news/israel/hamas-using-women-and-children-human-shields-and-its-hq-beneath-gazas-largest-hospital> 30 Oct 2023
7. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-67426546> 15 Nov 2023
8. <https://www.memri.org/tv/hamas-spokesman-encourages-gazans-serve-human-shields-its-been-proven-effective> 08 July 2014
9. <https://www.gov.il/en/pages/hamas-use-of-civilians-as-human-shields> 20 Jul 2014
10. Gatestone Institute 03 Aug 2014
11. <https://honestreporting.com/untenable-a-top-10-of-anti-israel-controversies-under-the-bbc-director-generals-leadership/> 03 July 2025
12. op.cit
13. Mahmoud Al-Zahar Dream 1 TV 21 July 2011
14. Khaled Mashaal Al-Aqsa TV 7 December 2012
15. Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI), 12 Oct 2015
16. Living in luxury as a multi-millionaire in Qatar, he is now an unconfirmed casualty of an Israeli airstrike: https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/reports-say-hamas-top-leaders-were-in-doha-building-hit-by-strike-including-khalil-al-hayya-khaled-mashaal/ 09 Sept 2025
17. Op.cit. footnote 11