

Gaza: The media coverage

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One of the reasons for this is Israel's decision not to allow the Western media in to Gaza.

In addition to this outrageous censorship by a so-called democracy, we get the usual arguments that most of the images shown by the Arab media are too shocking to show the viewing public in the West.

Admittedly, the horrific clip sent to me of a child's head lying detached, among debris in Gaza did make me gasp.

But this is war and this is real and if the Western media did show these sort of images may be the general public would wake up to the full horrors of what happens when bombs are dropped on civilian populations.

There is no such reticence in the Arab media which is why more people with satellites are switching on to television from the Middle East to watch the unfolding genocide in Gaza.

And one rising media star is the fledgling Press TV, broadcast from Iran, and recently introduced to the Sky platform 515. It is fast becoming the first station of choice for the viewing public - especially the english-speaking across Europe - who simply want the truth, no matter how shocking or unpalatable it may be.

There are around half a dozen Palestinian journalists on the ground with Press TV crews revealing the full horrors of the war as it unfolds. I am amazed by their dedication and courage and I salute each and every one of them ... some are my personal friends.

Yes, I do present a show for the station, but I have also worked as a journalist for more than three decades covering conflicts and their aftermaths from The Falklands, first and second Gulf wars, the Irish Troubles, as well as Palestine, Afghanistan and Iraq for a variety of print and electronic media.

And one thing common in each conflict is the constant battle by journalists and war correspondents to get to the truth of the matter, but the battle to tell the truth is becoming more and more difficult despite the amazing technology now available.

People in powerful places who do terrible things do not want the truth to get out, which is why journalists are finding themselves banned or censored more and more.

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You see the truth is a very strong and influential weapon which can be used against those people.

Sadly when it is twisted and manipulated it can wreak even more havoc.

The Israeli war machine is masterful in its complete distortion of the truth which is why the state continues to go unpunished for its failure to adhere to the Geneva convention concerning the collective punishment of the citizens of Gaza.

Israeli tactics are cruel, malicious and demonstrate that its leaders are not interested in the peace process or a Palestinian State.

They are creating the ideal breeding ground for extremism, sabotaging peace efforts and squandering the good will they have been given.

Five years ago, the Bush administration lied about weapons of mass destruction ... it was a lie eagerly repeated by former British Prime Minister Tony Blair to fool the media into supporting an illegal, immoral invasion of Iraq.

And it worked.

To their eternal shame, most of the western media fell in line and swallowed the lie - with the exception of a few journalists most have kept quiet about this collective cock up. The New York Times did issue a front page apology later, but the damage had been done and public perception was difficult to change.

Sadly, many of the same news organisations and the same journalists have learned nothing from that shameful period. At the beginning of this war, Israel trotted out only the flimsy excuse of the Hamas rockets as justification for unleashing its brand of Shock and Awe in Gaza.

Hamas rockets have killed just over 20 Israelis since 2001 whereas Israel's war on Gaza has killed more than 700 including more than 200 children in the last 13 days. The seriously maimed and injured is running in to thousands as I write.

But the 'Hamas rocket' excuse went unchallenged in the West, although to its full credit the Israeli media revealed days later that Operation Cast Lead was a long-planned campaign six months in the making aimed at crushing democratically elected Hamas.

Yes, I admit the rockets do exist but they are nothing more than metal barrels of junk fuelled by fertiliser. As one colleague remarked they're mere slingshots compared to the shells, million dollar missiles and bunker-busting bombs used by Israel.

Some argue the Qassam rockets are used out of desperation, I personally think they're more of a two-fingered gesture from a people who have suffered a brutal, medieval siege at the hands of Israel for years.

Despite its amazing war machine, and its state-of-the-art-technology these little rockets rarely show up on any military radars. The Israelis don't know about them until they've landed and that's what hacks them off.

Yet Israeli leaders and their supporters continue to present absurd propaganda about Hamas rockets which are far less sophisticated than anything the IRA ever used in mainland Britain during the height of The Troubles. Mind you, the IRA was funded and backed by US dollars whereas the Hamas military wing has no such generous donors.

I don't recall the British Government ordering cruise missiles to be launched on Belfast in retaliation for the misery and suffering of IRA bombing campaigns in London, Manchester, Birmingham and other places. I can't ever recall Apache Attack Helicopters hovering outside the Sinn Fein offices in the Falls Road or targetted assassinations of IRA leaders.

Most journalists with an ounce of investigation skills would realise that the Hamas Rocket excuse is a sham.

But it continues to be used as an excuse for unleashing what has been described by various people, including Jewish peace activists, as a holocaust and genocide.

Millions across the world have demonstrated - anger and anarchy on the streets has been witness across all continents but the only ones who look away are the Western leaders and the servile media.

The gaggle of belly-dancing Middle E astern leaders are largely a disgrace and are about as much use as the increasingly toothless United Nations, but there is a backlash coming and it's coming from ordinary citizens across the world.

People power, the sort of power which inspired the Iranian and Cuban revolutions, the toppling of brutal dictators like Romania's Nicolae Ceausescu and the tearing down of the Berlin Wall, is emerging.

The Western media can either catch up with the agenda instead of trying to follow the Zionist agenda by continuing to peddle big lies. The viewing public have largely lost trust in the mainstream media, especially in the wake of Iraq.

Quite simply, the public has become cynical and jaded and can not be lied to any more. If the mainstream media is to regain any credibility journalists need to challenge Israeli and Western leaders.

The truth is a powerful weapon and it is true that...

ISRAEL targets civilians - more than two thirds of the dead are women and children. So why allow Tzipi Livni to say: 'Gaza Strip being controlled by Hamas, and the price is being paid by Israeli children and Palestinian children, but the blame is and the address is Hamas.' This is a clear lie. What Israeli children have been killed? The only dead children are in Gaza.

HAMAS is a political organisation which has a military wing and not the other way around. It was democratically elected by the people who were sick of the previous corrupt politicians who let them down.

ISRAEL broke the ceasefire on November 4 2008 - a fact finally acknowledged on CNN nearly two months later in a discussion show although the BBC, Fox and other western media have yet to mention this.

HAMAS does not use civilians as human shields - again, where is the evidence? Israel needs to put up or shut up, but the media never demands to see the evidence.

ISRAEL says it cares about civilians and warns them in advance of the bombing raids in their area - well so did the IRA but I don't remember anyone congratulating them on their humanitarian actions.

And beware of the latest lie about to hit the media about Hamas commander Mahmoud Zahar who, according to the Zionist propaganda said Jewish children across the world are targets. A guest columnist in The Guardian quoted Zahar as saying: "The Zionists have legitimised the killing of their children by killing our children. They have legitimised the killing of their people all over the world by killing our people."

This is not what he said. Unfortunately the Arabic translation was incorrect and those who should know better have failed to check the original speech against the transcript.

The damage has now been done and it remains to see if an apology or correction will follow.

As Sir Winston Churchill said: "A lie is halfway round the world before the truth has a chance to get its boots on."