



BBC COVERAGE OF GAZA

DOES IT MEET ITS EDITORIAL
POLICY ON ACCURACY AND
IMPARTIALITY?

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Introduction

Since the Hamas attack on 7 October that killed 1,200 Israelis and took around 250 people hostage, the war on the ground has resonated in the online and broadcast media, as all sides look to dominate the narrative.

Due to its proclaimed impartiality, the BBC is an outlet to which millions across the world turn. It has interviewed Israeli and Palestinian officials, conducted reports on settlement expansion in the West Bank, and provided coverage after coverage on the onslaught in Gaza.

Yet, the BBC has been accused of falling short on the quality of its overall coverage of Israel-Palestine, such as not providing a full picture of the context, rarely independently verifying claims made by Israeli officials, and treating Palestinian spokespeople in a less preferential manner than they would other speakers.

This dehumanises Palestinians and normalises the unlawful situation that they are subject to by the government of Israel. In turn, this contributes to creating consent for the Israeli government to continue its bombardments and its illegal treatment towards Palestinians.

Therefore, it is vital to look at how the BBC has covered Gaza, and especially where it has not sufficiently fulfilled its duty as the main public broadcaster.

Why the BBC Matters

The BBC is instrumental as a news source, with [68% of people saying that they turn to it for the news, while BBC News reaches 75% of the UK population on an average week.](#) Additionally, the BBC is one of the largest news websites in the world, with its website getting [1.2 billion visits, compared to the CNN website, for example, which gets 710 million visits.](#)

The BBC is an essential institution and one on which millions, not just in Britain, but across the globe, rely on fact-based and impartial news. When missing key pieces of context, prioritising one voice over another, and allowing unverified claims to go unchecked, certain lines become blurred. Journalism then falls short of its role, and by extension democracy is put at risk.

What the report will look at

In a democracy, professional media is one of the vital pillars of accountability, where attempts to censor the media on their reporting on Israel puts this matter of accountability at risk. Therefore, Caabu sees it as vital to conduct this research to look at whether the above accusations have any grounds through evidence-based research, to provide recommendations and support for the BBC – as a valued institution.

The [genocide](#) which has unfolded in Gaza is arguably unprecedented in modern times. For a western ally to be credibly accused of war crimes, including using [starvation as a weapon of war](#), and to be currently engaged in [litigation at the International Court of Justice](#) for the most severe crime of genocide, is anomalous. The latest number of deaths by bombings as a result of Israeli bombardment of Gaza is over [57,000 according to the Gaza health ministry](#), while [the Lancet](#), a reputable medical journal, estimates that [186,000](#) could have already been killed, when counting deaths by curable diseases that have developed due to the destruction of healthcare in Gaza, as well as death by starvation.

Given the severity of the situation on the ground in Gaza, the unprecedented nature of this war, the context in which this latest round of fighting came about, and public interest in this story, it is vital to look into how the BBC has fared in reporting this story, how it may have fallen short in some instances, and whether it has adhered to its guidelines on impartiality and balance.

In doing so however, there is the argument that it then ignores important issues regarding its reporting on the war in Gaza, and portraying a story where the asymmetry might not always be entirely clear to the average reader or viewer. It is important to also look at how the BBC has also fared with respect to upholding its own editorial guidelines, particularly on accuracy and impartiality.

[Editorial Guidelines](#)

As regards the BBC guidelines, there is a commitment towards achieving due accuracy within all of the BBC's output. On impartiality, the BBC cites its commitment stating that it "must be inclusive, considering the broad perspective and ensuring that the existence of a range of views is appropriately reflected" and that the BBC "must always scrutinise arguments, question consensus and hold power to account with consistency and due impartiality".

This report will therefore look at how the BBC reports both historical context of the war, as well as international legal context, and how unverified claims from Israeli ministers

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are addressed and whether there is sufficient pushback on that and whether this upholds what their editorial guidelines say on accuracy and impartiality. This report will also rely on the [data published by the Centre for Media Monitoring on how the BBC has covered Gaza](#).

Context

Historical Context

It is important to remember that the wider conflict did not start on 7 October 2023. There is a longer history over the last 100 years of violence in the region, starting from the [1917 Balfour Declaration](#), the British Mandate of Palestine, and ultimately the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, which is known by Palestinians as the “[Nakba](#)” or the “[catastrophe](#)”, when 700,000 people were forcibly displaced from their homes. The Israeli occupation of Palestinian land, as well as other Arab land, including Sinai in Egypt and the Golan Heights in Syria – the latter of which is still under Israeli occupation, began in 1967 following the Arab Israeli war, referred to by Arabs as the “[Naksa](#)” - the setback.

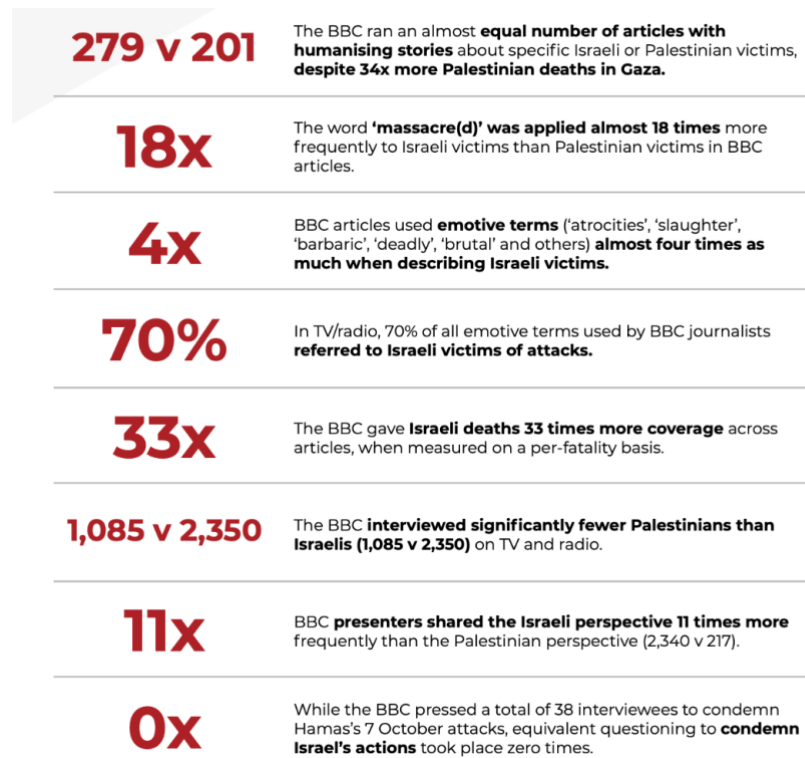
[70% of Gaza’s population are refugees](#) as a result of 1947-49. Since then, there has been incessant expansion of illegal settlements, the [entrenchment of a two-tier system for Jewish Israelis and Palestinians](#) – increasingly referred to as [apartheid](#), and a [2007 siege on Gaza that never ended](#). Albeit the most destructive, in Gaza, this is not the first Israeli aggression on the enclave. Palestinians in Gaza have faced aggression by Israel in 2009, 2012, 2014, 2021, and now the ongoing violence since 7 October 2023. 7 October therefore did not come about in a vacuum, but as a result of years of oppression reaching a boiling point. It does not justify the Hamas atrocities, but it is essential context, to explain the situation.

It is vital to look at the extent to which the BBC invokes historical context of the war when reporting on the Occupied Palestinian Territory. [While the BBC often cites the 1967 occupation when reporting on settlements in the West Bank, with them tending to say that the settlements are illegal under international law or considered illegal under international law](#), it does not necessarily do the same for Gaza.

BBC reports rarely mention the siege on Gaza since 2007. The focus is typically on the fact that it was Hamas who won the elections in 2006 and that it is Hamas who had been running Gaza. While the occupation is referred to in regard to the West Bank, the fact that Gaza is also occupied – as confirmed by the [ICJ in 2004](#) as well as the [2024 ICJ Advisory Opinion](#) - is barely referred to. [An online explainer for BBC Newsround going through what was happening on the ground, stated that “Israel left Gaza in 2005”](#), but

did not go on to talk about the siege or occupation. It did not mention the fact that since 2006, the Israeli military under [COGAT](#) controlled the movement of food, medicine, electricity and even people going in or out of Gaza.

Data from Centre for Media Monitoring



An analysis conducted by [Centre for Media Monitoring](#), supported by Caabu, found that on Gaza reporting, the 1948 displacement of Palestinians was mentioned in just one article out of 3873 articles and 27 broadcast clips out of 21,913, while the occupation was mentioned in 14 online articles out of 3873 and 33 broadcast clips out of 21,612.

While there is no doubt that the latest round of war did indeed begin on 7 October 2023, as a public broadcaster whose editorial guidelines are dedicated to impartiality, balance, and information provision, it is vital that the BBC also needs to contextualise the conflict and for those contextualisation pieces to not be isolated from reporting on the current war on Gaza.

International Legal Context

There is also a deep legal history with regards to Israel and Palestine. There have been UN Security Council resolutions condemning the illegal policies of occupation such as [UN Security Council Resolution 242 \(1967\)](#) and [UN Resolution Number 2334](#), The latter “*condemns all measures aimed at altering the demographic composition character and status of the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, including inter alia, the construction and expansion of settlements, transfer of Israeli settlers, confiscation of land, demolition of homes and displacement of Palestinian civilians, in violation of international humanitarian law and relevant resolutions and reaffirms that the establishment by Israel of settlements in the Palestinian territory*

occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem has no legal validity and constitutes a flagrant violation under international law and a major obstacle to the achievement of a two-State solution and a just, lasting and comprehensive peace.”

In 2004, there was the landmark ICJ Advisory Opinion entitled [Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory](#), which outlined that the principle of self-determination of peoples has been enshrined in the United Nations Charter and reaffirmed by the General Assembly in resolution 2625... pursuant to which “Every State has the duty to refrain from any forcible action which deprives peoples referred to of their right to self-determination (para 88).

According to [UN Security Council Resolution 2720 \(2023\)](#) *the Gaza Strip constitutes an integral part of the territory occupied in 1967.* The fact that Gaza is under Israeli occupation was reiterated in the [2024 ICJ Advisory Opinion](#). Legal experts have argued that [“Israel does not have the right to use force on territory which the Palestinian people is entitled to exercise its right of self-determination, unless Israel can show a specific legal basis to do so.”](#) These Advisory Opinions and resolutions also reaffirm the prohibition of forcible transfer of civilian populations in occupied territories as stipulated in the [Fourth Geneva Convention](#). These stipulations have all been violated by Israel on a consistent basis *before* the Hamas 7 October attacks.

According to the research conducted by CMM, references to international law violations by Israel prior to 7 October appeared in only 0.03% of articles between October 2023 – October 2024, and that in the broadcast coverage of 23,618 segments, previous violations of international law were not referenced as context. It is not routinely mentioned throughout reporting of the current conflict. Conversely, 40% of coverage by the BBC reminds the reader that the current round of violence began as a result of the 7 October attacks.

A clear failure in the BBC’s coverage of these international legal issues can be seen in an interview given in February 2025 in the process it was also a failure to uphold its guidelines on accuracy and fact. Here, [the anchor stated to interviewee Dr H A Hellyer that “Israel, as you know, withdrew from Gaza in the early 2000s”.](#)

Under international law, Israel did not relinquish its effective control of Gaza, even if it did physically remove its troops and settlers from inside the strip. Even the UK government acknowledges that the UN determined that Israel was still occupying Gaza. When looking into BBC editorial guidelines on provision of accuracy and rounded facts, this lack of accuracy and reporting of what is said by the law is a major shortcoming that needs to be reviewed by the public broadcaster.

New International Law Judgements

The BBC's coverage of the legal judgements from top international institutions is similarly poor. Two major examples are the [International Criminal Court arrest warrants against Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and then Defence Minister Yoav Gallant on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity](#) issued in November 2024, and the ongoing [International Court of Justice South Africa v Israel case on the Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip](#).

When the ICC first issued its arrest warrants against Netanyahu and Gallant, as well as three Hamas leaders, this was reported. However, Caabu had issues with the way that this was presented by the BBC compared to other news outlets. For example, the focus with the BBC was on the outcry from across the Israeli political spectrum as opposed to the focus being on the issue of justice and accountability for the victims. Whilst it was unprecedented for leaders of a Western democracy to face such charges, including the charge of the use of starvation as a weapon of war, this should not have been how the story was framed.

It should be framed around what the charges are, why the arrest warrants were issued and what the implications of them are for victims. The gravity of the situation did not seem to be sufficiently reflected by the BBC here.

Comparison

In this BBC [report](#) on the ICC warrants, the central focus of the piece was on the outrage of the former US President Biden and concern amongst allies, as opposed to focusing on the main issue which should be of justice and accountability for victims – of both 7 October attacks and the subsequent destruction of Gaza by Israel, which has killed over 53,000 and injured many more. This article originally stated (although has since been amended) that “*the announcement of arrest warrants by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former defence minister Yoav Gallant has triggered a furious response from across Israel's political spectrum. By contrast, it has been welcomed by Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad and ordinary citizens in Gaza*”.

This is problematic framing, where there is a disparity between the equivalences. While this ruling was also welcomed by international legal scholars, civil society, and those committed to the rule of law, the emphasis is placed on proscribed terrorist groups along with Gaza civilians. There is arguably the implication here that ordinary citizens in Gaza are painted under the same brush as those proscribed groups, and not with the mainstream human rights community. This is also notwithstanding that senior Hamas

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leader [Mohammed Diab Ibrahim al-Masri](#) (Deif) also had an ICC arrest warrant issued against him for crimes committed on 7 October 2023.

When the arrest warrants were issued, the flagship BBC show Newsnight, did not cover them that week, [while the leading story on BBC News at Ten on 21 November 2024](#) was that Moscow had fired hypersonic missiles into Ukraine. They interviewed Ukrainian civilians, saying that *“people on this train are exhausted and bewildered, they have been through hell, loss, despair and trauma”*, as well as carrying interviews with injured Ukrainian soldiers.

In contrast, the ICC warrants were the second leading story, where the report started with *“fury in Israel after ICC issue arrest warrants”*. Again, the focus was on the outrage of the perpetrator, as opposed to on justice and accountability for victims. There is repetition of lines from Netanyahu such as *‘rejects actions of ICC with disgust’, ‘a black day for justice’, ‘an antisemitic measure that has one goal... to deter us from our natural right to defeat themselves’*, as well as a reemphasis on the fact that Netanyahu is a democratically elected Prime Minister.

The BBC news report went on to interview an Israeli human rights lawyer and put forward the court’s case that *“there was no clear military justification for withholding aid and medicine, or for children undergoing amputations without anaesthetic”*. It also interviewed a Palestinian mother holding a child in Gaza, and a 54-year-old Palestinian man. They both expressed despondencies saying, *“the genocide will continue, and we have no voice”* and *“this is all talk and will change nothing... they never judge the Israeli military”*.

The next day on BBC Breakfast, and BBC Today, the ICC arrest warrants were not mentioned. It was again not covered on BBC Newsnight.

In comparison, [on Channel 4 News on 21 November 2024, the lead headline was on the ICC arrest warrants](#). The report started with *“Netanyahu, Gallant, Deif now all have something in common... Israeli Prime Minister has made the kind of history that will come as some vindication to Palestinians and cause outrage in Israel”*.

From the get-go, you can almost immediately see the difference with the BBC coverage. The unprecedented nature of these charges are immediately clear, saying that *“Netanyahu has been plunged into international isolation”*, and shows footage and images from Gaza of starving children, those undergoing amputations without anaesthetic, and also shows Israel deliberately blocking aid. This report explicitly said that this is what led to the arrest warrants for the Israeli Prime Minister, instead of saying phrases such as the “court claims”, “Israel denies”, “Palestinians claim”, which is what the BBC report did in contrast. The interviews with Palestinians on the streets in

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Gaza were also interesting to compare, where people conveyed more hope, such as one man saying, “we hope the decisions will not go unnoticed, like other decisions.” They were overall more hopeful and calmer, compared to those shown on BBC News.

Channel 4 News also interviewed ordinary Israelis, and those who are against Netanyahu and against the ICC judgement, as well as an Israeli analyst to shed light on what this will mean for internal politics in Israel.

The report also showed the funerals of three children in Khan Younis and then interviewed Geoffrey Robertson KC who explains the stages of ICC prosecution, taking a much more informative approach.

Overall, this gave a fairer and more balanced approach than the BBC coverage of the same topic.

However, while it cannot be denied that the arrest warrants were covered by the BBC, it should also be noted that there were some key points missing, given the seriousness of the situation and the unprecedented nature of them.

Routine use of international law as context

Coverage of ICC Arrest Warrant

When it comes to context, these arrest warrants are not routinely mentioned throughout coverage. For instance, when Trump won the presidency, the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was the first leader invited by the White House. In normal circumstances, it might not be seen as a surprise for the US’ closest ally in the Middle East to be the first invited. However, Israel is facing multiple charges of war crimes in Gaza, and there is no precedent that anyone facing an arrest warrant by the ICC would be invited to meet the President of the most powerful country in the world. When covering the Trump – Netanyahu meeting at the White House, [the BBC did not mention the fact that](#) Netanyahu is a leader wanted for war crimes and crimes against humanity. Again, on 26 June when the BBC reported on Trump’s call for an end to Netanyahu’s corruption trial in Israel, [the BBC did not mention that Trump also condemned the ICC arrest warrant for Netanyahu](#). As has been regularly pointed out, when referring to Gaza and in particular the death toll number from the health ministry, the BBC will almost always use “ Hamas run health ministry ” as a prefix. This is an example of the BBC providing context when it comes to who runs Gaza, but not giving the full context on the Israeli leaders and their war crimes charges as regularly.

It should be noted that, amongst other complaints issued to the BBC by Caabu, Caabu did complain about this and received the following response:

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“We are grateful for your further comments about “Israel's Netanyahu invited to meet Trump at White House next week” and are very sorry not to have provided a response at the time.

While we can't always fit every detail in every article, we would like to highlight that we have reported extensively on the international arrest warrant for Netanyahu, for example:

Arrest warrants issued for Netanyahu, Gallant and Hamas commander over alleged war crimes - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cly2exvx944o>

ICC chief prosecutor defends Netanyahu arrest warrant in BBC interview -

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c303y5m1p19o>

ICC chief prosecutor defends Netanyahu arrest warrant in BBC interview -

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c303y5m1p19o>

No 10 indicates Netanyahu faces arrest if he enters UK -

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cjr4gydxeno>

However, we take on board that you would have liked to have found fuller details included in this piece, and value knowing that you found this article lacking. We appreciate learning from feedback and have shared this with editorial staff to make them aware of your concerns.”

There have since been more frequent references to the ICC arrest warrant against Netanyahu, such as [here](#).

Additionally, with the blockade that has been in place since March 2025, the BBC is often covering the starvation taking place across Gaza. However, within those reports and accounts, the ICC arrest warrants are not used as context here. This is surprising, given that the use of starvation as a weapon of war was [directly cited by the ICC](#) as reasons as to why they issued arrest warrants against Netanyahu and Gallant. [The ICJ ordered Israel in their provisional measures to permit the free entry of humanitarian aid](#) as part of Israel's legal duty to prevent a genocide from being enacted in Gaza.

Coverage of ICJ Genocide Case

The same trends in BBC reporting can be seen with the ongoing litigation at the ICJ between South Africa and Israel. While this was first reported on when the litigation began, with South Africa starting the proceedings against Israel, the focus was not on the victims but on the shock and outrage. When televising the court proceedings in January 2024, the BBC did not show South Africa's prosecution but did show Israel's defence. In February 2024, [25 BBC journalists – including senior correspondents, presenters and producers – wrote to management expressing their concern that the ICJ's ruling in January was not being given due prominence in the BBC's output](#). The letter claimed that the BBC did not sufficiently cover the ICJ proceedings, which could

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constitute “public disservice or, at worst, aiding and abetting genocide through story suppression”.

The letter also mentioned that the ICJ proceedings were not regularly invoked as context during reporting, including in directly relevant cases, such as the blockade on aid. As with the ICC which referred to the use of starvation as a weapon of war, the ICJ issued the provisional measures ordering Israel to allow aid and food into Gaza. Even with the full blockade of Gaza imposed in March 2025, which the BBC did report on, including the widespread malnutrition and lack of proper healthcare as a result of the blockade, the ICJ provisional measures and wider genocide case was not regularly referenced. It is vital that this is included as key context regularly the way that the atrocities committed by Hamas on 7 October is routinely mentioned with respect to how the conflict in Gaza unfolded.

Veteran BBC journalist Jeremy Bowen did publish a seminal piece on 8 June 2025 entitled [“Israel is accused of the gravest war crimes – how governments respond could haunt them for years to come”](#). In this BBC In Depth article, Bowen raises many of the issues mentioned above, such as the legal implications of war crime accusations, the charges of the ICC arrest warrants, proportionality stipulations in the rules of war, as well as the question of genocide. This piece is a great example of due impartiality, given that Bowen goes through both accusations of war crimes committed by both Israel and Hamas, outlining what international law says against what the main actors in this conflict actually did or are still doing.

A concern is that this article should have been written and published much earlier in this conflict. It would have been relevant and pressing even a year ago.

Coverage of US Vetoes at the UN

The US and Israel have an extremely close relationship, with Israel historically being the US most important ally within the Middle East. This is reflected in the way that the US has traditionally voted at the UN Security Council, with it being one of the five permanent members with a right to veto. [Between 1945 and December 2023, the US has vetoed 33 UN Security Council Resolutions relating to the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory and the treatment of the Palestinian people. In only 8 years, between 1982 – 1990, the US used its veto in support of Israel 21 times, which is more than half of the US’s total vetoes in support of Israel.](#) And in the duration of the current conflict – [specifically between October 2023 – November 2024 – the US has vetoed four draft UN Security Council Resolutions.](#) The first time the US [abstained on a vote in relation to the Israeli aggression in Gaza was in March 2024.](#)

Despite the long history of the US use of the veto, this context seems to be missing from regular BBC coverage. For example, when the US did [abstain](#), this [article](#) does not go through the US tradition of using its veto right when it comes to Israel, although it does say that this is the first time that the US has called for a ceasefire in the duration of this war and does mention that the US has regularly used its veto to block SC resolutions on a ceasefire. This was also seen to be the case when the US [once again](#) reverted to its default position of veto, where there was little mention of the long historical and legal context of the US veto regarding Israel.

Unverified Claims versus calling out War Crimes

CMM also found many examples in which unverified claims made by Israeli spokespeople were not sufficiently challenged by the BBC. For example, the Israeli claim that 40 babies had been beheaded during the 7 October attacks has not been independently verified. Yet, according to CMM reporting, out of 361 broadcast clips analysed referring to “beheaded” and “babies”, only 52 were challenged or questioned.

In contrast, when Palestinian spokespeople refer to “genocide” or “war crimes”, BBC presenters have actively shut down the ‘genocide’ claims of guests in over 100 documented instances. This highlights the concerns that the BBC does not rigorously fact check their Israeli guests the way that they would their Palestinian guests.

The provision of Israeli perspectives is almost always a certainty at the BBC where Israel’s denial of war crimes being committed in Gaza is regularly used as a rebuttal to Palestinian guests. With reference to the BBC editorial guidelines, it is not up to presenters to parrot Israeli talking points without due diligence and a more rigorous analysis. Another example was on 19 June 2025 on the Today Programme when a guest referred to Israeli actions in Gaza as war crimes and the presenter replied “*there is a lot of people listening who obviously take very strong issue with your characterisation of what Israel is doing in Gaza*”. It is not the role of the BBC to represent those views, which are increasingly becoming fringe, due to the mounting evidence that Israel has broken international humanitarian law in Gaza, but to be impartial, accurate, and to focus on the facts.

This [article](#), for example, does not mention Palestinians, does not quote victims, and context is not provided. Instead, it reads like a press release stating that “Israel regrets” deadly strike on a church in Gaza. It also does not mention the fact that Israel has previously targeted churches, as well as mosques. It does not analyse the fact that targeting places of worship where civilians are sheltering is a war crime.

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This becomes prevalent when considering the issue of war crimes, which do not appear to be sufficiently presented as such by the BBC. According to the CMM research, only 3% of BBC articles between October 2023 and October 2024 mentioned the term 'war crimes' in relation to Israeli violence against Palestinians. Meanwhile, the same research shows that the BBC discussed 'war crimes' in Ukraine almost 2.6 times as much as in Gaza, and mentioning Russia as the perpetrator 2.7 times more than it mentioned Israel as the perpetrator.

This can be seen in this [article](#), where the BBC reports on an Israeli strike on a hospital, which killed a senior Hamas leader. This article does not however mention that strikes on operating hospitals are *illegal* ipso facto under international law, and [that the Geneva Conventions expressly forbids the killing of an enemy soldier even if they are being treated in hospital](#), which according to reports, [this official was](#).

There has also been a consistent lack of analysis of war crimes with respect to the countless strikes on schools sheltering displaced people in Gaza. They usually cite the justification that is used by the Israeli government that these schools are used as centres for Hamas operations, as well as a focus on the humanitarian crisis that has unfolded as a result. It is undoubtable that there is a humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza that journalists have a duty to report. However, it needs to be reiterated that this did not come about due to some sort of accident but is a man-made catastrophe as a direct result of the Israeli government and army's publicly stated policies and actions. This needs to be more intently focused on by the BBC.

The BBC coverage did sharpen after the Israeli extrajudicial killings of paramedics in Gaza came to light in April 2025. A [BBC Verify report](#) analyzed footage published by the Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS). The [BBC did also interview the paramedic who survived the killings of his colleagues, showing that the Israeli official narrative was false](#).

And as aforementioned, the BBC did publish Jeremy Bowen's long read looking at whether war crimes had been committed or not, albeit nearly two years into the aggression on Gaza and nearly half a year after the ICC arrest warrants affirming that war crimes *had* been committed in Gaza.

Conclusion

Overall, the BBC has fallen short in its duty to uphold the highest standards of journalistic integrity as well as its duty to uphold its own editorial guidelines on impartiality and accuracy.

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Key elements of historical context of Israel-Palestine are often missing, meaning that the audience cannot get a full accurate picture of the ongoing atrocities. While it would be unfair to expect the BBC to invoke every piece of historical context in every article or broadcast, they have a bare minimum duty to at least include the historical context when it is relevant to the story they are telling. For example, when reporting that “Israel left Gaza in 2005”, the BBC did not mention the ensuing siege nor the fact that since 2006, the movement of food, medicine, electricity and people, was subsequently controlled by the Israeli military under COGAT. This is a major obfuscation of fact that undermines accuracy and does not allow the reader to get a true representation of the current situation on the ground in Gaza.

This is also the case with respect to the international legal context, where there are also key elements missing even in instances where it is arguably paramount. Former ICJ cases regarding Gaza are not regularly invoked by BBC reports, while countless prior UN Security Council Resolutions on Israel-Palestine are not regularly used as context in reports, even where they may be relevant. It should be noted that on the issue of context, in every report and every article, the BBC will always remind the reader that the current aggression on Gaza started on 7 October 2023 with the Hamas atrocities which killed 1,200 Israeli civilians. Again, as with the issue of historical context, the missing elements of facts around the international legal context also means that a full accurate picture is not necessarily provided within the reports and thereby not fully adhering to its editorial guidelines.

This is important to note given that this is not only the case with regards to historical context or historical legal decisions, but also with respect to new and even unprecedented international law judgements. While the BBC does report when a new judgement comes to light, such as with the ICC arrest warrants and ICJ South Africa v Israel case, these are not routinely used as context within other relevant reports, as the 7 October attacks are. For instance, when reporting on starvation and the blockade, there was no mention of the fact by the BBC that the use of starvation as a weapon of war was a prime reason cited by the ICC prosecutor for the issuing of arrest warrants and for the ICJ’s provisional measures. The arrest warrant against Benjamin Netanyahu was also not mentioned when he was the first leader to visit the US following Donald Trump’s ascendancy to presidency.

There is a pattern here of obfuscating key details at the expense of accuracy and the provision of facts, as stipulated in the BBC editorial guidelines.

Likewise, this is arguably also the case when it comes to adhering to the editorial guidelines on impartiality. As the data analysis by Centre for Media Monitoring shows,

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there is an imbalance as to how unverified claims are challenged when they are made by Israeli spokespeople compared to when they are made by Palestinian spokespeople. Often when Palestinian spokespeople use the terms “war crimes” or “genocide”, they are often rebutted with “Israel will deny those claims”. Interestingly, despite the consensus among the international legal community, human rights experts, and wider civil society, that war crimes *are* being enacted in Gaza and the growing consensus that there is a risk of genocide, if it is not already being carried out, between October 2023 and October 2024, only 3% of BBC articles mentioned the term war crimes, where war crimes in Ukraine were discussed 2.6 times as much as in Gaza, where Russia was mentioned as the perpetrator 2.7 times more than Israel as the perpetrator. The conclusion can therefore be drawn that Palestinian lives are not seen in equal measure to Western or European lives, and where the BBC guidelines are concerned, the commitment to impartiality is undermined.

There are very legitimate concerns about how the BBC covers Gaza and that by not fully reflecting facts – such as with not providing full context or not pushing back at certain unverified claims – it is failing in its journalistic duty, as well as its own editorial guidelines.

The BBC once again made headlines when [over 400 media figures signed a joint letter including 111 BBC journalists which stated that the BBC is “crippled by the fear of being perceived as critical of the Israeli government” and that it is not “reporting without fear or favour when it comes to Israel”](#). This came following the [BBC decision and statement that they will not be broadcasting the documentary that they had initially commissioned titled “Gaza Medics Under Fire”](#). This was instead broadcast by Channel 4 on 2 July 2025 and can be seen [here](#). And given the [continued pressure exerted by the UK government](#) on the BBC over the “How to Survive a Warzone” documentary which it pulled – which [Caabu complained about](#) - as well as the Glastonbury Festival coverage, it is vital for the BBC to ensure its independence, while adhering to its editorial guidelines.