

Formal Complaint:

We would like to address a formal complaint about BBC's Newsround programme produced an introductory video to the "History of the Gaza conflict" broadcast on November 21 on the basis of both bias and factual inaccuracies ([The video may be viewed here](#)).

- 1) The report dates the history of this conflict from the Second World War. It says that "Jewish people were allowed to create their own country in the area" and strongly suggests that the Arab-Israeli conflict emerged as a result of the Holocaust. The conflict began before this. There was not sufficient context of the many decades before WWII in which tensions between Arabs and Jews increased for a myriad of reasons. There is no mention that Palestinians were living in the land that became Israel. There is no explanation anywhere in the report where Palestinians came from or why they rejected partition.
- 2) The piece refers to "Muslim Palestinians". This is factually inaccurate. It ignores the existence of many Christian and Jewish Palestinians who also inhabited the area of Palestine for many centuries.
- 3) The piece argues that in the 1948 war "Israel lost land to Egypt and Jordan." This is inaccurate. In fact, by the end of the 1948 war Israel had in fact expanded well beyond the borders set out in the United Nations partition plan of 1947. Under this plan, neither the West Bank or Gaza were ever in jurisdiction of the new Israeli state and so it is incorrect to say that Israel 'lost' this land.
- 4) There is no mention of how the Palestinian people were the majority in Palestine when it was divided, nor that Palestinians owned the vast majority of the land. This is extremely important to understanding why Palestinians and surrounding Arab states felt so strongly that the partition of Palestine (which gave most of the land to the smaller Jewish population) was unjust.
- 5) There is no mention of the Palestinian refugee crisis in which around 750,000 Palestinians were expelled from homes and villages by Israeli forces or fled the fighting to neighbouring Arab states and the West Bank and Gaza. This is extremely important to understanding the current Gaza crisis since 70% of the population of Gaza are refugees. This is the most traumatic event in Palestinian history, so to overlook this means that the Palestinian story is not covered.
- 6) The report speaks of the West Bank and Gaza being "filled with Palestinians who used to live in Israel."
 - a. This overlooks that Palestinians had been living in the areas which now make up the West Bank and Gaza for centuries.
 - b. This overlooks the fact that many refugees from the 1948 war came from towns and villages which were not supposed to be part of the new Israeli state under the 1947 partition plan.

- 7) The video says that in the war of 1967 Israel found itself “back in control” of the West Bank and Gaza. This is factually inaccurate, since Israel had never been in control of these areas.
- 8) Skipping to 1967 from 1948 also overlooks the fact that in the war of 1956 Israel occupied Gaza for 4 months, which was enormously traumatic era of the Palestinian life in Gaza.
- 9) The description of Israel being in “control of who goes in and out” of Gaza misrepresents the reality of the blockade. Controlling who goes in and out may imply ordinary border controls, whereas the reality is that Israel prevents nearly all access in and out for Palestinians. Egypt also has a role in denying access, not just Israel. The report does not state that Israel has instituted a blockade that restricts food, medical supplies and construction materials entering Gaza which cripple the economy and makes life in Gaza intolerable for most Palestinian families. There is no description of life in Gaza at all.
- 10) The piece makes no mention of Palestinian desire for Palestinian statehood, freedom from occupation, or indeed at any point uses the term “occupation”. This is a clear example of how the entire Palestinian narrative has been side-lined. The domination of the West Bank and Gaza, through Israel’s military occupation, settlement construction and the separation barrier is of absolute importance to understanding the strength of feeling in Palestinian society and why groups like Hamas engender such widespread support.
- 11) The report does not give an accurate summary of the current situation and it’s build up. The Israeli insistence that this round of fighting began as a result of ongoing rocket attacks was also missing. There is no reference to the Israeli attacks on Gaza either.
- 12) The report also refers to Hamas's belief that "Israel shouldn't exist." There is no reference to Israel's refusal to accept Palestinian statehood.

We understand that this is a short report. However, there are numerous factual inaccuracies. The issue of bias is based on the lack of reference to the most essential elements of Palestinian history in this conflict and why they are fighting Israel. We believe that it is doubly important to report this accurately and fairly given that it is aimed at children.

We would like:

- a) This report to be removed from the website
- b) An appropriate apology issued
- c) A new report commissioned