

UK media chiefs defend coverage of Gaza war as study exposes pro-Israel bias



London, March 8 (RHC)-- UK news chiefs have defended their biased coverage of Israel's brutalities in Gaza even as a new report has exposed significant distortions in the Western coverage of the war. The

report, Media Bias Gaza 2023-24, by Center for Media Monitoring (CFMM) was launched on Wednesday and analyzed data from 28 UK online media websites for a period of one month starting from October 7, 2023.

The study that examined more than 200,000 articles and TV reports said the British media had failed to represent the conflict in Gaza in a fair manner.

Speaking at the event hosted by CFMM in the House of Parliament, Richard Burgess, director of news content at the BBC, said it was unlikely that there would be no mistakes made by a 24-hour news channel. "It's impossible not to make mistakes, we will make mistakes," Burgess said while justifying their coverage.

The CFMM report, however, found that "many prominent media personalities, senior editors and journalists regurgitated Islamophobic tropes about Muslim belief and identity, with the aim of undermining the Palestinian cause and/or Palestinian advocates."

The study also found "how some media outlets and commentators have framed the conflict as being between Muslims and Jews." "Muslim opposition to Israel has been framed as anti-Semitic by some publications and commentators," the study said.

Defending the distortion of facts while reporting the war, Jonathan Levy, managing director and executive editor at Sky News, disputed criticism of a number of points made in the report, including reducing the conflict to "Israel-Hamas" war.

The study showed Israelis were 11 times more likely to be referred to as "victims of attacks" compared to the Palestinians, while 76 percent of online articles framed the conflict as an "Israel-Hamas war." Only 24 percent mentioned "Palestine/Palestinian," which they said indicated a lack of context.

Marwan Yaghi, a Palestinian diplomat in the UK, described the media coverage as "appallingly biased."

Right wing news channels and right-wing British publications were at the forefront of misrepresenting pro-Palestinian protesters as anti-Semitic, the report said. It also mentioned that pro-Palestinian voices faced misrepresentation and vilification by media outlets, with allegations of anti-Semitism and terrorism weaponized to discredit legitimate advocacy efforts.

The new report highlighted the lack of scrutiny around a number of stories perpetuated in the press, noting 361 mentions of the false "beheaded babies" story.

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