

Report reveals all CNN Gaza coverage checked by Jerusalem bureau and censored by Israeli armed forces

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New York, January 6 (RHC)-- CNN has for years maintained a policy of running all of its coverage on Israel and Palestine, including its recent Gaza coverage, past its bureau in Jerusalem, where it is subject to the censorship policies set by Israel's military, damning new reporting by The Intercept has revealed.

The Jerusalem CNN staff who review the reporting do so under the watchful eye of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), which, as The Intercept has previously reported, is maintaining strict media bans around the genocide in Gaza, including censorship of topics and stories that may be embarrassing to the IDF. All reporters in Israel must sign an agreement to abide by such rules set by the IDF, and Israel has reportedly censored thousands of news stories since the beginning of the current massacre in Gaza.

In practice, this means that coverage of Israel and Palestine have a strong pro-Israel bias, as one anonymous staff member explained to The Intercept.

“‘War-crime’ and ‘genocide’ are taboo words,” the worker said. “Israeli bombings in Gaza will be reported as ‘blasts’ attributed to nobody, until the Israeli military weighs in to either accept or deny responsibility. Quotes and information provided by Israeli army and government officials tend to be approved quickly, while those from Palestinians tend to be heavily scrutinized and slowly processed.”

CNN maintains that the reason for the policy is to ensure its reporting on Israel and Palestine is “as precise and accurate as possible,” as one spokesperson said, claiming that the IDF’s censor has a “minimal” impact on the coverage. But CNN seems to be unique in maintaining this policy, unlike other major outlets, The Intercept wrote.

Further, the investigation found that CNN leaders have explicitly prescribed policies that favor Israel. In an email sent October 26, CNN’s News Standards and Practices sent staff an email directing them to refer to the ministry of health in Gaza as “ Hamas-controlled” every time they reference the Palestinian death count — a widespread practice among major outlets, despite numerous human rights groups and war experts maintaining that the Gaza health ministry’s death tolls have historically been accurate and that public health experts have independently found no evidence that the ministry has inflated death counts.

“If the underlying statistics have been derived from the ministry of Health in Gaza, we should note that fact and that this part of the Ministry is ‘ Hamas-controlled’ even if the statistics are released by the West Bank part of the ministry or elsewhere,” the memo said.

Then, on November 2, CNN’s Senior Director of News Standards and Practices, David Lindsey, sent another note to staff explicitly saying that statements from Hamas leaders should not be given a platform unless highly contextualized, and that as a rule, Hamas “representatives are engaging in inflammatory rhetoric and propaganda.”

In reality, war-time statements from any parties involved in any conflict should be scrutinized in accordance with journalistic practices. But CNN has not appeared to give similar scrutiny to Israeli officials’ statements, with many stories prominently featuring inflammatory statements from Israeli sources with very little context or clarification, even on claims that other major outlets have been skeptical of.

“When you have a protocol that routes all stories through one checkpoint, you’re interested in control, and the question is who is controlling the story?” Jim Naureckas, editor of media watchdog Fairness and Accuracy In Reporting, told The Intercept. “In a situation where a government has been credibly accused of singling out journalists for violent attacks in order to suppress information, to give that government a heightened role in deciding what is news and what isn’t news is really disturbing.”

The report lends evidence to what advocates for Palestinian rights have long maintained: that major U.S. and many other western outlets have a strong anti-Palestinian bias. This has become especially potent amid the current genocide, as CNN and other major outlets have come under scrutiny for embedding themselves with the IDF to report on Gaza, meaning that they are escorted and observed by Israeli military forces and must submit coverage to the IDF before publication, all while supposedly reporting with an “objective” lens.

<https://www.radiohc.cu/index.php/en/noticias/internacionales/343833-report-reveals-all-cnn-gaza-coverage-checked-by-jerusalem-bureau-and-censored-by-israeli-armed-forces>



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