

# MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE SITUATION OF PALESTINE

Conclusions of the "Media coverage study about the Palestine-Israel conflict" launched by SCI Catalunya and edited by Grup Barnils in the period between 1th of april 2015 and 30th of september 2016

## 1. Israel and Palestine conflict continues making news.

The media continues to cover the conflict between Israel and Palestine, which has not ceased to be in the media spotlight. During the eighteen months of the study, a total of 261 articles were published in the press (newspapers Ara, El País and La Vanguardia) and 121 on television (TV3 and RTVE). In the press 54% of the news prioritized conflict as the main issue, and on television, it was 78%.

## 2. Most of the news releases are done locally.

The three newspapers selected for the analysis have correspondents on the ground. It shows a commitment to have high quality news, since the information they provide is from journalists specialized in the conflict. The rest of the news is signed by journalists from the newsroom agencies or the journalists working in the head office in Spain.

## 3. Palestine and Israel headlines do not promote peace, the body of the text does.

Only one headline in five contributes to reducing the tension in order to work towards conflict resolution. However, although this looks bad in over half of the cases, they are examples of good peace journalism. In the case of information that appears on television, news is complete, regardless of the time dedicated to the item.

## 4. The State of Israel vs. Occupied Territories

The media uses in a different manner the concept of Israel (State of Israel, Government of Israel) and Palestine, which is often called Occupied Territories. In the majority of the information that includes the term Palestine, it is mentioned that the territorial conflict involves both states. From this fact, it emerges that Israel is considered, by its category as a state, as a first-rate actor, while the name of Palestine is related to a security problem.

## 5. The Normalization of Israel

In the information where Israel appears as a keyword, there is a diversity of information that not only refers to the conflict, but also to other aspects of the political, economic and social life of the state. The same diversity does not occur when they speak of Palestine or Occupied Territories, where the reality of the conflict predetermines the news agenda. In fact, in some cases the information related to the violent conflict is presented as an internal Israeli problem, of national security.

## 6. A lot of conflict but sparsely contextualized

The vast majority of information recognizes the existence of a conflict between Israel and Palestine. However, they merely report the events as a reaction, without describing human rights violations. There is a profusion of news about strikes, attacks, revenges, fires or police and army confrontations, but the origin of the conflict is often lost, which directly affects the right of land ownership and human rights are systematically violated.

## 7. Media does not talk about peace or solutions Media focus on the direct violence that is exercised on the conflicting parties. There is not enough attention to report the invisible effects of the conflict, which then are motivating factors for violent episodes.

## 8. Invisible mediators

If the effects of the constant violations of human rights are invisible, even less visible are the mediators. This situation needs an expansion of actors that could be present in all categories to be able to start talking about peace. A state convening a summit may appear as a mediator, while none of the involved parties are mentioned. Another example is that of Israeli NGOs of ex-soldiers which denounce occupation practices. Even if they appear in the media, their presence is residual and invisible, but when it comes to the mediators present in this conflict, they are not visible, nor are they expected.

## 9. The sources used to talk about the conflict: the official Israeli voice

The main information source that journalists use to explain the conflict is an official Israeli source. It may be the government, its politicians or the opposition government. Regarding the television coverage, most of the information does not reference the source. If the source is mentioned it's mostly an official Israeli source. For that matter, the absence of a variety of voices and testimonies is observed. This limits and restricts the knowledge about the complexity of the conflict and the consequences of the occupation.

## 10. Residual presence of the third sector as an information source

NGOs that promote the respect of human rights and specialists in the topic, often based in the area, are invisible sources of information. Journalists, and the media in general, do not consult or use third sector entities or their resources to produce the news.