

Media Disinformation: Journalists “Disengaged” From Real Gaza Story

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There are an estimated four thousand journalists in Gaza now, of whom only fifty are allowed access to the colonies. We are inundated with what to the average American are no doubt heart wrenching pictures of a Jewish soldier painfully opposing a kinsman whom he must reluctantly evict from his beloved home. “We are brothers,” colonists with American accents implore the soldiers, a sound-bite that western journalists eagerly convey. What is not mentioned is that the illegal colonists occupy a land inhabited by refugees, the majority of whom originally came from inside Israel’s green line, and who, contrary to international law (a phrase rarely voiced on CNN or the BBC), are not permitted to return to their lands and homes. What will also remain largely unreported is that Gaza has served as a veritable killing field of the occupied territories, victim of a disproportionate amount of Israel’s targeted assassinations and child deaths.

Journalist Michael Bronner told Amy Goodman on [Democracy Now](#): “There are thousands of journalists, there are, some say, about 4,000 journalists. And the image of settlers being dragged from their homes or pulled from their homes is an image that they really want to have, and there’s almost a sense that, you know, they’re being taken to some place far worse than down the beach where they’re going, where the new settlement is being built for them, the new community.”

What journalists are not telling viewers of BBC and CNN is that the The Fourth Geneva Convention, the primary document governing the OPT, stipulates in [Article 49](#) that the transfer of the population of the occupying power into the occupied territory is in breach of international law. Hence, the colonists are war criminals albeit war criminals who are being compensated handsomely for their crimes with some families receiving upwards of four hundred thousand dollars to relocate. Add to the pot the World Bank’s last minute buyout for fourteen million dollars of the colonies’ greenhouses built on confiscated lands. Some of the kicking and screaming colonists will relocate on illegal colonies in the occupied West Bank.

What journalists are also not telling viewers is that “under the ‘disengagement’ plan, the Israeli military will continue to control air and land borders (they will continue to be deployed along the Philadelphi Road border between Gaza and Egypt), and sea access to the Gaza Strip. Disengagement is . . . only a redeployment of Israeli military to the border areas.”

Journalists, most pointedly, western journalists, are not telling viewers that the colonists have led privileged lives on confiscated land in Gaza. According to Hanan Ashrawi’s [MIFTAH](#)

(which means 'key' in Arabic): "In the Israeli occupied Gaza, one of the most densely populated areas in the world, a settler population of approximately 6,500 controls more than 20% of Gaza's territory and has full freedom of movement." Today, afforded a few minutes on CNN, Ms. Ashrawi provided more recent figures: The colonists controlled sixty percent of the water and forty percent of the land.

Western journalists are also depriving viewers by not informing them that Neve Dekalim, a favored settlement for coverage by the BBC, is one of fourteen illegal colonies that surrounds the village of Al-Mawasi. [Mawasi's](#) cleanest water is controlled by the colonists, with much of it pumped inside the Green line to the Negev.

What western journalists probably won't tell you is that [Mawasi's](#) villagers have been denied access to their own beach for four years. And before one sheds any tears for the Israeli colonists, consider pregnant women, who have often had to wait up to one week for permits to get out of Mawasi, whose inhabitants' movements have been totally controlled by the IDF for the past four years.

Al-Mawasi's hardships continue throughout the "disengagement." According to Palestine Center For Human Rights, Gaza: "At approximately 0330 on Saturday, the 13th of August 2005, IOF moved into al-Lahham quarter in al-Mawasi area in the west of Khan Yunis, raiding and searching a number of houses. They checked the identity cards of Palestinian civilians. They then took 8 civilians to a nearby military post, where they interrogated them for two hours. Seven of these civilians were released, while 18-year-old Ahmed Yousef al-Lahham has remained in custody."

Al-Mawasi is not the only Palestinian village affected. [Al-Sayafa](#) is a "Palestinian area located in between the Dogit and Elli Sinai settlements in the Northern Gaza Strip and is home to approximately 180 Palestinians. Its inhabitants have been subjected to severe restriction of movement including requiring prior coordination to enter and exit the area and restrictions on the movement of goods and services."

But, here's hoping that some intrepid journalist will speak to Raja Sourani, head of Palestine's Center for Human Rights in Gaza. Here's what Raja said to [Democracy Now's](#) Amy Goodman:

RAJI SOURANI: [inaudible] There is nothing special. There is nothing special, nothing unique. [inaudible] It seems there is total misunderstanding for the disengagement [inaudible]. The Israeli occupation will continue in its legal and [inaudible] form. What's happening, this is unilateral disengagement [inaudible] decided by Sharon, and the occupation will remain, they will continue, they will keep controlling the borders, they will keep controlling the land. They will keep controlling the sea and the air. Gaza will be closed off. We will have no connection whatsoever with our people, relatives [inaudible] Jerusalem. The Gazans will be disconnected from the West Bank and Jerusalem, and their only contact with outside world, their only connection with the outside world [inaudible] will be under full Israeli control. And there will be no ports, no airport. It's already in Gaza there is 60% unemployment.

And with a little divine intervention a journalist just might point out the following: Ariel Sharon and George Bush have made very clear in public statements that Israel will remain entrenched in the West Bank because of "facts on the ground," according to Bush. Arab East Jerusalem is being encircled by expansion of existing illegal Jewish colonies. Palestinian homes continue to be demolished. Palestinians in East Jerusalem will be effectively cut off

from neighbors, families, schools, hospitals, and land, before the citizens of Israel are satiated. The Apartheid Wall continues to be built further ghettoizing the Palestinians. Just like Oslo was a ruse for Israel's most intensive period of colonisation, the Gaza disengagement has effectively diverted the mainstream media's attention from Israel's continuing war crimes.

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