**Headline:** How Corporate News Has Tried to Numb Americans to the Horrors in Gaza

By Norman Solomon

**Author Bio:** Distributed in partnership with [Economy for All](https://independentmediainstitute.org/economy-for-all/), this text is excerpted from Norman Solomon’s paperback release of [*War Made Invisible: How America Hides the Human Toll of Its Military Machine*](https://thenewpress.com/books/war-made-invisible) (The New Press, 2024). All rights reserved. Solomon is a co-founder of [RootsAction.org](https://rootsaction.org/) and executive director of the [Institute for Public Accuracy](https://accuracy.org/).

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**[Article Body:]**

As the Gaza war enters its 12th month with no end in sight, the ongoing horrors continue to be normalized in U.S. media and politics. The process has become so routine that we might not recognize how omission and distortion have constantly shaped views of events since the war began in October.

The Gaza war received a vast amount of U.S. media attention, but how much the media actually communicated about the human realities was a whole other matter. Easy assumptions held that the news enabled media consumers to see what was really going on. But the words and images reaching listeners, readers, and viewers were a far cry from experiences of being in the war zone. The belief or unconscious notion that news media were conveying of the war’s realities ended up obscuring those realities all the more. And journalism’s inherent limitations were compounded by media biases.

In-depth content analysis by the Intercept found that coverage of the war’s first six weeks by the New York Times, Washington Post, and Los Angeles Times “showed a consistent bias against Palestinians.” Those highly influential news outlets “disproportionately emphasized Israeli deaths in the conflict” and “used emotive language to describe the killings of Israelis, but not Palestinians.” For example: “The term ‘slaughter’ was used by editors and reporters to describe the killing of Israelis versus Palestinians 60 to 1, and ‘massacre’ was used to describe the killing of Israelis versus Palestinians 125 to 2. ‘Horrific’ was used to describe the killing of Israelis versus Palestinians 36 to 4.”

During the first five months of the war, the New York Times, Wall Street Journal, and Washington Post applied the word “brutal” or its variants far more often to actions by Palestinians (77 percent) than to Israelis (23 percent). The findings, in a study by Fairness and Accuracy In Reporting (FAIR), pointed to an imbalance that occurred “even though Israeli violence was responsible for more than 20 times as much loss of life.” News articles and opinion pieces were remarkably in the same groove; “the lopsided rate at which ‘brutal’ was used in op-eds to characterize Palestinians over Israelis was exactly the same as the supposedly straight news stories.”

Despite exceptional coverage at times, what was most profoundly important about the war in Gaza—what it was like to be terrorized, massacred, maimed, and traumatized—remained almost entirely out of view. Gradually, surface accounts reaching the American public came to seem repetitious and normal. As death numbers kept rising and months went by, the Gaza war diminished as a news topic, while most interview shows seldom discussed it.

Gaps widened between the standard reporting in media terms and the situation worsening in human terms. “Gazans now make up 80 percent of all people facing famine or catastrophic hunger worldwide, marking an unparalleled humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip amid Israel’s continued bombardment and siege,” the United Nations reported in mid-January 2024. The UN statement quoted experts who said: “Currently every single person in Gaza is hungry, a quarter of the population are starving and struggling to find food and drinkable water, and famine is imminent.”

President Biden dramatized the disconnect between the Gaza war zone and the U.S. political zone in late February when he spoke to reporters about prospects for a “ceasefire” (which did not take place) while holding a vanilla ice-cream cone in his right hand. “My national security adviser tells me that we’re close, we’re close, we’re not done yet,” Biden said, before sauntering off. On the same day as Biden’s photo op at an ice cream parlor near Rockefeller Center, where he had just taped an appearance on NBC’s “Late Night” show with comedian Seth Meyers, the UN lamented that “very little humanitarian aid has entered besieged Gaza this month, with a 50 percent reduction compared to January.” Israel was halting aid convoys ready to enter Gaza at border crossings. More than 10 policemen providing security for the aid trucks had been purposely killed by the Israeli military. Disastrous consequences were obvious.

“The volume of aid delivered to Gaza has collapsed in recent weeks as Israeli airstrikes have targeted police officers who guard the convoys, UN officials say, exposing them to looting by criminal gangs and desperate civilians,” the Washington Post reported. “On average, only 62 trucks have entered Gaza each day over the past two weeks, according to figures from the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs—well below the 200 trucks per day Israel has committed to facilitating. Just four trucks crossed on two separate days this week. Aid groups, which have warned of a looming famine, estimate that some 500 trucks are needed each day to meet people’s basic needs.”

While such numbers peppered news stories, countless real-life horrors were out of media sight that shower people in private agony and grief. Major media coverage did include some commendable human-interest reporting and investigative features about individual tragedies in Gaza. But even at its best, such journalism didn’t do much to convey the size, scope, and depth of the widening disaster. And the narratives of catastrophe were short on zeal for exploring causality—especially when the trail would lead to the U.S. “national security” establishment. American media frames around heartrending portrayals of Palestinian victims rarely also encompassed their victimizers in Washington. Top government officials readily voiced facile regret for the tragic loss of life, while they continued to put out enormous welcome mats for the Grim Reaper.