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## Neutral News?

A study of the neutrality in BBC's and Al Jazeera's reporting on the  
Israeli military operation "Pillar of defense"

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study is to question the neutrality in the reports from Al Jazeera and BBC about the Israeli military operation “Pillar of Defense” that took place in November 2012. The study is conducted through different linguistic and structural analyses that aim to find ideological patterns in the way the agencies report about the events. Since both agencies claim to be neutral and not politically biased, the study also examines the truth in these statements. Thus, a part of the study will be to question the trustworthiness of the news media.

The results of the analyses show that none of the agencies are honest in their claims of neutrality. There are various examples that show that BBC is favoring the Israeli view of the operation while Al Jazeera clearly promotes the Palestinian. This is probably not surprising for those versed in the subject. For a majority of people, however, what is said in the news is considered to be true, hence opinions about different events are built upon the information presented by the news media.

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## 1. Introduction

News as a concept is probably as old as civilization itself. The quest for knowledge has inspired people to travel to neighboring villages and countries or making risky journeys to distant places. News messengers were used in ancient Greece and later in the Roman Empire to inform the elite of the latest regional developments. Curiosity of what is happening in the world surrounding us has developed throughout the centuries and lead to the mass media of today.

The first newspaper, the *Daily Courant*, was published in 1702 in England. Throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century any reporting on political issues was forbidden and the main subject of the news was gossip. Even if regulations were lifted during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and more serious news were given some space, amusement and scandals continued to dominate the newspapers. The art of journalism has developed with time and the focus of the overwhelming number of newspapers today differs in many ways. Even so, the patterns of what is published are very similar today to what they were one hundred years ago. We still have a great mixture of serious political news and entertainment, aiming to amuse and shock the reader.<sup>1</sup>

The news of today are supposed to be objective, fair and unbiased facts, collected, and later delivered to the reader through an agency that has no other purpose than to do its job as a news provider. This professional ethos is something that all the news media have in common.<sup>2</sup> The neutrality of the news has, however, for a long time been questioned by different media and text analyzers who, instead, argue that a text can never be delivered without containing structures of, among other things, social and ideological values that are expressed by the writer in the way he or she is reporting. This is something of great importance as many of the international news agencies promote themselves as neutral and say they have no interest in reporting biased news. The truth in what the news are saying is also something that many take for granted and the phrase “I read it in the news” is a common answer when people are asked from where they got the information about a specific event or happening.

## 2. Purpose

In this thesis I will study the writings of two news agencies: British Broadcasting Company (BBC) and Al- Jazeera through one article each in Arabic about the Israeli military operation: “Pillar of Defense”, which took place in Gaza, November 2012. My hypothesis is that the agencies have different ideological and social grounds, and that this can be seen through how they report. With this as a basis, I will compare the articles in a way that aims to find underlying patterns and differences in how the newspapers are reporting about the events. These patterns are, according to linguists such as Roger Fowler and Tony Trew, codes that the newspapers use to communicate specific values or ideas to the readers.<sup>3</sup>

As will be seen in coming pages, both Al-Jazeera and BBC promote themselves as independent, unbiased and fair; ideals that, according to semiotic research, are impossible to reach.<sup>4</sup>

By doing this comparison I will try my hypothesis, and thus, question the truth of neutrality in the reports, that both Al Jazeera and BBC claim to have. No matter what the result will show, I will find it interesting to see to what extent we can rely on the credibility of news. This, I believe, is very important in our globalized society where many opinions are

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<sup>1</sup> Jean Aitchison, 2010, pp13-17

<sup>2</sup> Fowler, Roger, 1991, p1

<sup>3</sup> Fowler, Roger, 1991, p2

<sup>4</sup> Fowler, Roger, 1991, p2

built on what has been read in the papers.<sup>5</sup>

The specific purpose of this study will be to try the hypothesis that the agencies do not report neutrally. To verify or falsify the hypothesis, I have two questions that I aim to answer through the thesis. The questions are as follows:

- **Are there ideological and social differences to be found in the way Al Jazeera and BBC report about the Israeli military operation “Pillar of Defense”?**
- **If there are differences, are they of such significance that they can tell if the reports are biased?**

### 3. Theory

The theories that this study is based on are of different kinds but are all in one way or another questioning the idea that news are delivered to us neutrally. On one hand, there will be journalists and news agencies, including the two in focus in this study, who claim that news are raw facts presented by them with no other purpose than to deliver neutral reports of different events. On the other hand, there are sociologists and linguists who argue that news service is a much more complex practice that is "far from neutrally reflecting social reality and empirical facts"<sup>6</sup>. This conclusion is based on the idea that there exists a system of signs between all human beings and the world around us, signs that are a product of society. These signs are further structured into codes, and the main code for the signs is language. The study of this system of signs and the way they are coded is gathered under what is known as semiotics. The codes, where language is the most important one, are according to semioticians “providing an organized mental representation for our experience”<sup>7</sup>. These representations can be seen as structured associations that we pick up through our lives and that help us interpret the world around us.<sup>8</sup>

According to semioticians, anyone who communicates uses these codes.<sup>9</sup> As news is a way of communication, semioticians state that the writer will use references to his or her experiences, creating a report of a happening that is transformed according to the ideas or beliefs of the writer. No matter if this transformation is done consciously or not, the idea is that the report can never represent raw facts, but is instead delivered to us by language, a code that, among other things, imposes structures of social and economic values on the message being transmitted.

The views of the semioticians mentioned above will work as a broad basis for my study. To try my hypothesis and answer the questions formulated under “Purpose” I will use more specific theories or tools that aim to find ideological and social patterns in texts. The main theory will be the idea of the “theoretical or ideological process”<sup>10</sup> which is presented by Tony Trew in “Theory and Ideology at work” (1979). Trew assumes that describing a specific event includes theory in the way that it is an interpretation of what happened. He takes the view of the semioticians mentioned above that a journalist who reports about an event will use his or her perception of the happening; hence, the report will not be neutral information, but one way of seeing the event, or a theory of what happened. The theoretical process is then

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<sup>5</sup> Barkho, Leon, 2010, p1

<sup>6</sup> Fowler, Roger, 1991, p2

<sup>7</sup> Fowler, Roger, 1991, p3

<sup>8</sup> Fowler, Roger, 1991, pp1-3

<sup>9</sup> Berger, Asa, Arthur, 1991, p9

<sup>10</sup> The process which Trew is presenting can either be called ideological or theoretical and he makes no direct reference to when to use either of them. Which term to use has according to Trew no significance but each are used when they are suitable for the particular context, or the process is sometimes called “theoretical or ideological process”. As the phrase “theoretical or ideological” is a bit clumsy, I will use “theoretical process” as it is slightly broader and will in this case include ideology.

how a theory is applied on a specific area of study, with other words, when trying to explain something in accordance to a specific theory.<sup>11</sup>

Since we often face anomalies when we apply theories on different subjects, the existence of the theoretical process is most easily seen when these anomalies must be handled. When the theory applied has to do with specific political and social ideologies it is particularly problematic to deal with anomalies since anomalies in an ideology are hard to confess for the one promoting these views.

The theoretical process is often continuous for a couple of days after an event. During this period, the focus of the report will be changed from the actual happening, which was the main subject in the beginning, to something different in the last report. This transformation is done by the writer as he or she emphasizes details that are in his or her interest, and suppresses or denies the ones that do not fit in with his or her ideology. This emphasizing and suppression of details is what Trew calls dealing with “awkward facts”.<sup>12</sup>

The journalistic ethos is, as mentioned above, to deliver news as raw facts. If the newspapers are working in accordance to their ethos, no dealing with “awkward facts” will be necessary in their reporting, since a neutral agency will find no facts awkward. Hence, the theoretical process should be difficult to find. If, on the other hand, the emphasizing and suppression of details appears constantly, they will clearly indicate that the writer has an ideological basis in his or her reporting.

Since the aim of this study is to try my hypothesis of neutrality in the news, and find out to what extent there are ideological grounds in the reports from Al Jazeera and BBC, I find the analytic techniques presented by Trew to find ways that journalists use to deal with “awkward facts” suitable for my purpose. The techniques are mostly linguistic, but I have also included structural and terminological analysis techniques that I think complement the linguistic material. The different techniques presented by Trew will be explained when they are used under the analysis part as they are easier to explain and understand with concrete examples.

The structural and terminological analyses I have added are, however, a little bit more complex and need a more detailed presentation to be clarified.

Within the structural analysis I will explore the concept of the “ideal victim”. This concept is based on the hypothesis that media has a hierarchy of the worthiness of a victim. Victims are, according to this hypothesis, categorized in different divisions including class, race, ethnicity, gender, age and sexuality. The ideal victims are the persons on the top of the hierarchy and are by that the ones who gain most attention in the media. These individuals are perceived as vulnerable, defenseless and innocent. Included in this category are women and children while men, and especially younger men, are considered less news worthy.<sup>13</sup>

The news values, which include victimization, are, as Chris Geers states, “culturally specific in that they reflect the historical and social moment in which they are situated”<sup>14</sup>, and by that they become interesting in my study. If the victims are described differently, or seem to have different news values, this would be one indicator of different social grounds of the agencies as it would mean that they differ in their judgment of who is vulnerable and innocent.

If, however, the descriptions are similar, are they then neutrally reported in such a way that all the divisions of class, race, ethnicity, gender, age and sexuality are handled equally, or do the newspapers have a victim hierarchy? If so, the agencies have an un-equal view of society where some individuals are considered more innocent than others, meaning that the

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<sup>11</sup> Trew, Tony, 1979a, p96

<sup>12</sup> Trew, Tony, 1979a, p97

<sup>13</sup> Geer, Chris, 2007, pp21-22

<sup>14</sup> Geer, Chris, 2007, p28

report will not be neutral.

Secondly, I will consider the concept of “lexical structure”. The lexical structure is a subgroup of the vocabulary of a language used in a specific context or culture, or by a specific user. It is described by Roger Fowler as “a map of the objects, concepts, processes and relationships about which a culture needs to communicate”<sup>15</sup>. Fowler argues that vocabulary, as a map, is a representation of the world for a specific culture or user.<sup>16</sup> This effectively means that anyone who communicates and has an ideological basis for his or her communication will use a set of vocabulary (a “map”) that is segmented and specified in accordance to this ideology. Hence, the writer provides the reader with suitable figures/words to see the world in the same way as the writer wants to describe it. This leads to two results: First, it means that the writer explains events or subjects with words that fit his or her ideology. For example, a journalist who is sympathizing with a guerilla group calls them freedom fighters, while a journalist who is against them calls them terrorists. A reader who does not know about this guerilla group will, thus, get to know them as either freedom fighters or terrorists, depending on the vocabulary of the newspaper he or she reads.

The second result is that a reader with an ideological basis will choose to read a paper that uses a lexical structure that fits his or her ideas, making the journalist aim to write for a group of people with similar ideological grounds.

Considering the fact that I will work with a limited amount of material, I will not be able to find the total lexical structure of the two agencies. What I can do is to point out terms or words that are indicating a lexical structure, and by that, also an ideological basis of the newspaper. By choosing emotive words or expressions, the writer will, as mentioned above, try to depict events in a way that fits his or her ideas. Thus, these words or expressions will be helpful in answering my questions of ideological grounds in the reports.

#### **4. Methods**

I will use the concept of “the theoretical process” as a main theory for my analysis. I will start by analyzing the headlines of each article followed by the first paragraph and then look at how the papers quote different participants. I will also look at how the two reports are depicting the victims and finally see if there are any emotive words to be found.

With the help of the different analytic tools mentioned above, I will try to point out ideological and linguistic patterns in the news, and by that show that the reports are not raw facts, but a processed language that aims to bias the picture of the world in accordance to the ideas and beliefs of the writer or the agency he or she writes for. If I succeed in this, my hypothesis will be verified in at least these two articles. If, on the other hand, I cannot find these patterns, my hypothesis will instead be falsified, which, however, will be an interesting result as well.

The examples will be presented first in Arabic and then translated into English, followed by an analysis according to the principles above. The translations will be done in a way that makes the text readable and not word-by-word translations. This will not have an impact on the sentences in a way that it affects the analyses. I have chosen to present the examples from the articles with the ones from Al Jazeera first followed by BBC. This has no other reason than a striving to be consistent in my presentation.

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<sup>15</sup> Fowler, Roger, 1991, p80

<sup>16</sup> Fowler, Roger, 1991, p82. Maps are specified to fit the area of interest of the user. For example, a map for car driving does not necessarily include buildings or nature reserves, but is focusing on showing the network of roads to make it easy for the driver to navigate through it.

## 5. Delimitations

This thesis is, as mentioned above under “Purpose”, a study of the neutrality in the news. I will, however, only use two articles reporting about a specific event, and by doing so, I will not be able to present a result that is representative for the whole press, or even to a full extent the two broadcasters I have chosen to study. I do, despite these facts, argue that the study is of importance since it questions the idea that news is delivered to us as neutral raw facts. I also find it important to carry out the analysis on this specific type of event since I, in discussions with friends and people around me, have noticed that opinions about conflict areas in particular are commonly developed through what has been heard or read in the news. This puts the media in a position of great power, a fact that is also confirmed by critical discourse analysts.<sup>17</sup>

Moreover, I have chosen articles that report from the same event: the latest happenings in Gaza during the Israeli military operation "Pillar of Defense". Choosing the same kind of articles or reports makes the study more specific since they handle the same facts and, thus, they should report in similar ways. I have also studied both articles in Arabic to reduce the risk of linguistic problems that might occur when analyzing different languages.

Trew presents the way to find the theoretical process by looking at in what way an event is reported, and then how the focus of the event is changed during the days that follow the first article. Since I only will study one article from one day I will not be able to use Trew's techniques to a full extent, but the first steps of the process can be done and will hopefully give enough information to answer my questions.

## 6. Background

An introduction of the two broadcasters that are in focus in this study will follow below. This will work as a short presentation and will clarify how they promote themselves and what they hope to achieve as news providers.

### 6.1. *Al Jazeera*

Al Jazeera, “The Island” in Arabic, is a privately owned broadcaster based in Doha, Qatar. It was founded in 1996 and has become famous in the Arab world through its talk shows and programs about religion and politics where numerous controversial subjects have been discussed.<sup>18</sup>

Al-Jazeera gained worldwide attention in the time around 9/11 when they repeatedly aired tapes with Usama Bin Laden and other Al-Qaeda members who urged a revolt against the West and, more specifically, the United States of America.<sup>19</sup>

Furthermore, Al Jazeera was the only international news agency reporting from the Taliban controlled Afghanistan during the US-led invasion, giving a different picture of the war than the strictly limited Western media. The subsequent invasion of Iraq was also closely monitored by the channel. Al Jazeera's powerful footage from a war torn country resulted in anti-American feelings and demonstrations all over the Middle East.<sup>20</sup>

Throughout their reporting about the invasions, harsh criticism of Al Jazeera from Western politicians and media persons has been common, as well as accusations of terrorist

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<sup>17</sup> Barkho, Leon, 2010, p1

<sup>18</sup> Miles, Hugh, 2005, pp37-40

<sup>19</sup> Miles, Hugh, 2005, p109

<sup>20</sup> Miles, Hugh, 2005, pp139-142, pp242-243



connections.<sup>21</sup> This antagonism between Al Jazeera and the West is a suspected reason to why the Al- Jazeera headquarters in Kabul, Basra and Baghdad have been attacked by the coalition forces including the killing of one journalist in Iraq. These attacks have been called mistakes by the coalition officials even though the truth of this has been questioned.<sup>22</sup>

The reputation of having terrorist connections has faded and today Al-Jazeera is considered one of the most influential news agencies<sup>23</sup> and is broadcasting to more than 220 million households in more than 100 countries.<sup>24</sup>

On their website they have put up a list of ethical principles that they are obliged to follow to live up to the visions and missions they have set up for themselves. The first point on their list is:

"Adhere to the journalistic values of honesty, courage, fairness, balance, independence, credibility and diversity, giving no priority to commercial or political over professional consideration."<sup>25</sup>

According to this, it should be against their values and visions to report in any way falsely, or biased, meaning that they will take nobody's interests in consideration when they publish their articles.

## **6.2. BBC**

The British Broadcasting Company is a London based public service cooperation founded in 1922.<sup>26</sup> It is the largest broadcaster in the world with 10,000 journalists broadcasting in 33 languages<sup>27</sup> and was the first news agency in Britain to work under the label "public service". BBC is a semi-autonomous broadcaster operating under a "Royal Charter". A Royal Charter means that a collection of individuals are considered as a single legal entity, meaning that, among other things, it can sue others and be sued itself. Working under a Royal charter also means that a significant part of the control of the internal affairs is given to the Privy Council. This effectively means a significant degree of government regulation of the affairs of the company.<sup>28</sup>

Like Al Jazeera, BBC also has a list of ethical values on their homepage where they promote themselves as a company built on trust, independence, impartiality and honesty.<sup>29</sup> They are also the most trusted and objective international news provider according to themselves.<sup>30</sup> Hence, it should be against their values and visions to in any way report falsely or biased. In other words, they should take nobody's interests in consideration when they publish their articles.

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<sup>21</sup> Miles, Hugh, 2005, p50, also see [http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/rumsfeld-criticizes-al-jazeera/2011/09/29/gIQAIIQ8K\\_video.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/rumsfeld-criticizes-al-jazeera/2011/09/29/gIQAIIQ8K_video.html)

<sup>22</sup> Miles, Hugh, 2005, p165, 247, 266

<sup>23</sup> Barkho, Leon, 2010, p1

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.com/aboutus/2010/11/20101110131438787482.html> Downloaded 28/4 2013

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.com/aboutus/2006/11/2008525185733692771.html> Downloaded 28/4 2013

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/historyofthebbc/radio90/index.shtml#1> Downloaded 10/2-13

<sup>27</sup> Barkho, Leon, 2010, p1

<sup>28</sup> <http://privycouncil.independent.gov.uk/royal-charters/chartered-bodies/> Downloaded 10/2-13

<sup>29</sup> [http://www.bbc.co.uk/aboutthebbc/insidethebbc/whoweare/mission\\_and\\_values/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/aboutthebbc/insidethebbc/whoweare/mission_and_values/) Downloaded 10/2-13

<sup>30</sup> (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/aboutthebbc/insidethebbc/whoweare/publicpurposes/world.html>) Downloaded 10/2-13

## 7. Analysis

### 7.1. *The theoretical process*

The analysis, as mentioned under “Theory” and “Methodology” above, will be done according to the idea of the theoretical process presented by Tony Trew. The first thing that will be focused on is the headline which is the beginning of the article as well as the starting point in Trew’s process.

The examples below are taken from the headlines of the articles reporting on the latest happenings in Gaza.

#### *Example 1*

Al Jazeera headline

إسرائيل تواصل قصف غزة لليوم الخامس

Translation

Israel continues the bombing of Gaza for the fifth day

#### *Example 2*

BBC headline

غزة: أكثر من مئة قتيل وسط تصاعد الغارات الإسرائيلية

Translation

Gaza: More than a hundred people dead amid escalating Israeli raids

#### *Analysis*

These two headlines look very similar at the first glance: both are talking about raids or bombings in Gaza and both are indicating that Israel is the one carrying out the attacks. When looking deeper into the two headlines there are, even so, some linguistic differences to be read out. One difference that is of importance is that the Al Jazeera headline is in active form with a clear reference to the agent, while the BBC headline actually lacks an agent. By not clearly referring to who is carrying out the bombings, BBC takes the focus away from the agent. The headline reads: *More than one hundred dead* and the agent is identified only weakly by implicating that the reason for these deaths are Israeli attacks. Hence, there is no direct reference to whoever did the action.

The Al Jazeera report, instead, is in active form putting more focus on the agent. The sentence, moreover, is not only in active form but it also starts with the subject. In Arabic the most common way to build a sentence or a phrase is by putting the verb first followed by the subject, a so called verb-subject-order. By changing the order and instead starting the sentence with the subject, the writer tends to emphasize this subject.<sup>31</sup>

In the examples above there are some distinct differences in how the writers focus on the agent. While BBC is lacking a clear reference to the agent, Al Jazeera instead, both by writing the sentence in active form and by putting the subject first, strongly emphasizes the agent. This is of course of great importance since the headlines are the first thing the reader will see and might be the reason to why an article is read.

The next part of the analysis will be to look at the first paragraphs of the article. The first paragraphs are a development of the information in the headlines and point out the direction of the rest of the article. The following examples are the first paragraphs of the articles, and can be seen as the first step in the theoretical process.

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<sup>31</sup> Dahlgren, 2005, p203

### Example 3

Al Jazeera, first paragraph

استمرت الحملة العسكرية الإسرائيلية على قطاع غزة لليوم الخامس على التوالي بقصف استهدف فجر اليوم منازل في شمال القطاع وجنوبه بالإضافة إلى مجمع السرايا الحكومي ومقر إعلامي في المدينة وسط استمرار الاستعداد لغزو بري محتمل.

Translation

The Israeli military operation continued for the fifth consecutive day today with bombings at dawn targeting homes in the north and the south of the strip. There were also bombings targeting a governmental building complex as well as media headquarters in the city as an ongoing preparation for a possible ground invasion.

### Example 4

BBC, first paragraph

ارتفع عدد القتلى في قطاع غزة الى 102 قتيلا خلال ستة ايام من الغارات الاسرائيلية، حسب مسؤولين في حركة حماس، في الوقت الذي واصلت فيه القوات الاسرائيلية ضرباتها الجوية التي تقول انها تهدف الى ايقاف اطلاق الصواريخ ضد اسرائيل.

Translation

The death toll in the Gaza strip has risen to 102 dead during six days of Israeli raids according to officials from the Hamas movement. This came in a time while the Israeli forces continued air raids which they say aim to stop the rockets fired against Israel.

### Analysis

In these paragraphs the information and descriptions of the latest happenings are quite different. The Al Jazeera paragraph first of all has a much richer and more specific description of the bombings in Gaza. The bombings are according to the article targeting homes, a media headquarter and a governmental building complex, and this is something Israel is doing in the midst of a preparation for a potential ground invasion. These claims are also taken for granted without any source or reference.

The BBC, on the other hand, is much more careful in its claims, and is referring to someone in the statements. The death toll has risen to 102 according to officials in the Hamas movement. Israel says the air raids aim to stop the rockets fired against them.

Taking these facts in consideration and comparing them to the headline, the first step in the theoretical process can be analyzed. In the first paragraph Al Jazeera continues to focus on the agent and depicts Israel as an aggressor that is bombing houses and other non-military targets as a preparation for a possible coming ground invasion.

The first paragraph in the BBC article on one hand describes that the Israeli raids have caused 102 deaths, but on the other hand also explains that the bombings aim to stop the rockets fired against Israel. This puts the agent in a much more understandable situation as it is describing Israel as a victim acting in self-defense.

Even if this is just one step on the way in a process, it gives a hint in what direction the two newspapers are heading. While Al Jazeera puts much effort in describing Israel as aggressive and a threat to innocent civilians, the BBC instead gives a picture of the Israeli bombings as tragic but understandable.

The continuation of the process can also be seen further down in the articles where direct quotations from different fighting parties are presented. One thing worth mentioning before the examples are given is that Al Jazeera dedicates a whole part of their article to an interview with a spokesman from the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades (further on Qassam Brigades), the military wing of Hamas, while BBC only mentions them once.

The way to refer to sources and what expressions to choose for publication, is, according to Trew, characterizing the ideological position of a newspaper.<sup>32</sup> Trew states that this happens through a process of selection. First there is a selection of individuals that the agency considers to be valuable sources. The second step is to choose what statements from these sources to publish. This gives the agency a great opportunity to publish a selection of words from a selection of individuals that the agency thinks is suitable for its report.<sup>33</sup> The following examples are taken from interviews with spokespersons from the Israeli Military and the Qassam Brigades:

#### *Example 5*

Al Jazeera, Israeli military quoting

وعندما سأل الصحفيون قائد القوات الإسرائيلية على حدود غزة اللواء تال روسو إن كانت هناك عملية برية محتملة رد بالإيجاب قائلا "بالتأكيد". وأضاف أن لديه "خطة ستستغرق وقتاً" وأضاف "نحتاج إلى التحلي بالصبر، لن تكون لمدة يوم أو يومين".

Translation

When journalists asked the commander of the Israeli forces on the Gaza border, Major General Tal Russo, if there is a potential ground operation, he replied in the affirmative, saying: "Absolutely." He added that he has "a plan that will take time", and added that "we need to be patient; it will not be for a day or two."

#### *Example 6*

BBC, Israeli military quoting

وقال الجيش الإسرائيلي إنه قصف 80 هدفاً خلال الليل بينها بنايات يملكها مسلحون ومخازن أسلحة ومراكز شرطة، ليصبح مجموع الأهداف التي قصفت 1350 هدفاً.

Translation

The Israeli army said it bombed 80 targets during the night, including buildings owned by gunmen, weapons depots and police stations, bringing the total number of bombed targets to 1350.

#### *Example 7*

Al Jazeera, Qassam Brigades quoting

في الوقت ذاته حذر أبو عبيدة إسرائيلي من الإقدام على هجوم بري على قطاع غزة، مهدداً إياها بأن هذا القرار "سيكون الأكثر غباءً وحمقاً"، مؤكداً أن القسام "لا تزال تحتفظ بقوتها ولا يزال لديها الكثير من الأوراق والمفاجآت".

Translation

At the same time, Abu Obeida [the spokesperson of the Qassam Brigades], warned Israel from embarking a ground offensive on the Gaza Strip, threatening them that this decision "will be the most stupid and foolish," assuring that the Qassam "still retains its strength and still has a lot of secret cards to play."

#### *Example 8*

BBC, Qassam Brigades quoting

وقال مسؤولون إسرائيليون إن صاروخاً واحداً فقط أطلق خلال الليل من القطاع، إلا أن إطلاق الصواريخ استؤنف صباح الإثنين، وأعلنت كتائب عز الدين القسام أنها أطلقت 73 صاروخاً خلال اليوم.

Translation

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<sup>32</sup> Trew, Tony, 1979b, p140

<sup>33</sup> Trew, Tony, 1979b, p140-141

Israeli officials said that only one rocket was launched from the strip during the night, but that rocket fire resumed on Monday morning, while Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades said they fired 73 rockets during the day.

In the examples above, officials from the Israeli military and the Qassam Brigades are quoted. What the different papers choose to publish from the interviews indicates that the theoretical process continues in the direction that was outlined in the examples from the first paragraphs. Al Jazeera continues to describe Israel as an aggressor indicating that they are planning a ground invasion that probably will last for a long time, while BBC quotes the Israeli military when they explain that the bombings were targeting legitimate goals such as hideouts for fighters and weapon depots. Furthermore, the information from the BBC about the Qassam Brigades is very limited, and does not give an explanation to why there are rockets fired from Gaza. This can be compared to the first paragraph where BBC quotes Israeli officials explaining that they are bombing Gaza to stop the rocket fire.

The Al Jazeera report, on the other hand, gives plenty of information about the brigades. In example 7 above, the Qassam Brigades are threatening Israel concerning the ground invasion, saying that they have a lot of “secret cards to play” and that an Israeli decision to embark on a ground offensive would be foolish.

In another paragraph, the Al Jazeera report also makes it clear that the Qassam Brigades are considered as resistance forces. This can be seen in the following example:

#### *Example 9*

Al Jazeera:

جاء ذلك في وقت واصلت فيه المقاومة إطلاق الصواريخ عبر الحدود

Translation:

This came in a time when the resistance continued to fire rockets across the border

The detailed quotations and information about the Palestinian fighters in the Al Jazeera report depicts the brigades as strong and resolute in their “resistance” and indicates that they are far from beaten and continue to be a threat for Israel. The following example is taken from the same interview:

#### *Example 10*

Al Jazeera, Qassam Brigades quotation.

إن الكتائب نفذت منذ بدء التوتر مع إسرائيل قبل أربعة أيام أكثر من 900 هجمة صاروخية. وعرض أثناء الكلمة شريط فيديو قال أبو عبيدة إنه لعملية إسقاط طائرة حربية إسرائيلية بينما كانت تحلق في أجواء قطاع غزة مساء الجمعة.

Translation

The brigades have since the beginning of the tensions with Israel four days ago carried out more than 900 rocket attacks. During the speech a video clip was displayed, that Abu Obeida said showed an attack in which an Israeli warplane was shot down while it was flying in the sky over Gaza on Friday afternoon.

In this example Al Jazeera also clarifies the capacities of the brigades by writing about an attack where the Qassam claims to have shot down an Israeli warplane. Further down in the article the spokesperson also explains that this was the first time in the history of the conflict that the Qassam Brigades succeeded in such an attack.

## *Summary of the theoretical process*

In the analyses above there have been plenty of examples that show that both Al Jazeera and BBC are applying a theoretical process in their reports. They begin with different starting points in the headline where the degree of focus on the agent differs. As a first step in the process, the first paragraph is a continuation of the different grounds that were seen in the headlines. Al Jazeera clarifies its view of Israel as an aggressor that targets media persons and other civilians, while BBC on the other hand describes the death toll of the victims as a result of an act in self-defense, as they quote Israeli officials explaining that Israel is under attack and that they are only responding to this violence.

Further down in the articles, the selection of reference persons and what expressions of these sources the agencies choose to publish constitute yet a further step in the process where the information is transformed to fit the ideas of the agencies. BBC continues to quote Israelis explaining the legitimacy of their actions at the same time as they deny similar rights of explanations for the Palestinians.

Al Jazeera, on the other hand, quotes the Israeli army in a way that depicts them as a threat with plans of a coming long-lasting ground invasion. Simultaneously, they describe the Qassam Brigades as resistance forces, and quote them explaining their fighting capacities.

### **7.2. Structural analysis**

The second part of the analysis will deal with the way in which the victims of the attacks are focused upon. Since there were no Israeli casualties on the days of the reports,<sup>34</sup> the subject for the victim analysis will be Palestinians.

Reading through the articles it is obvious that both papers describe the victims of the attacks in a similar way. Both Al Jazeera and BBC are emphasizing the fact that women and children are among the victims. The following examples are taken from reports describing Israeli bombings in Gaza:

#### *Example 11*

Al Jazeera

وأعلن مسؤولون طبيون أن هجوماً آخرين قبيل الفجر استهدفاً منازل في مخيم جبالياً أسفرا عن استشهاد طفلين وإصابة عشرة أشخاص آخرين، بينما استشهدت سيدة وأصيب أحد أقاربها في غارة إسرائيلية

Translation

Medical officials announced that two other attacks shortly before dawn targeted buildings in the Jabalya refugee camp which resulted in two children being martyred and ten other persons being wounded, while a woman was martyred and one of her relatives was injured in an Israeli raid

#### *Example 12*

BBC

وقال أشرف القدرة المتحدث باسم وزارة الصحة المقالة لبي بي سي أن من بين الضحايا 24 طفلاً و10 نساء و12 من المسنين

Translation

Ashraf al-Qidra, the spokesman for the Health Ministry said to BBC that among the victims were 24 children, 10 women and 12 elderly persons.

#### *Analysis*

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<sup>34</sup> <http://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/live-blog-day-6-of-israel-gaza-conflict-2012-1.478922>

As seen in the given examples, both papers' focal point is children, women, and in the BBC article also elderly people. This indicates that both papers have a victim hierarchy in accordance to the concept of the "ideal victim" that was described in "Theory" above. By doing so, both Al Jazeera and BBC are depicting the social demography in a way where children and women, and in the BBC report elderly people as well, are more newsworthy than men.

There are, nevertheless, sections where male losses are reported. When describing casualties that include men<sup>35</sup>, both newspapers use more vague descriptions like "Palestinians" or "persons". The following examples describe casualties of Israeli attacks.

#### *Example 13*

Al Jazeera

وبلغ عدد الغارات الجوية الإسرائيلية على مختلف مناطق القطاع -حسب التلفزيون الإسرائيلي- ليل السبت نحو 180 غارة استشهد جراءها خمسة فلسطينيين وأصيب أربعة آخرون،

Translation

The number of Israeli air raids in different areas of the strip reached about 180 at Saturday night according to Israeli television, which resulted in five Palestinians being killed and four others being wounded.

#### *Example 14*

BBC

وجاء هذا العدد بعد سقوط قتلى مساء الاثنين في قطاع غزة اجملت حصيلتهم بسبعة فلسطينيين بينهم معاق في غارة إسرائيلية شرق المغازي وسط القطاع

Translation

This number came after an increase of fatalities in the Gaza strip on Monday night, where seven Palestinians were killed, including a disabled man in an Israeli raid east of Maghazi in the middle of the strip.

The BBC however twice mentions that men died in attacks. In example 14 the word معاق shows that a disabled man died as the word is written in masculine form. To write that seven Palestinians died and specifically denote that one of them was disabled indicates that the handicap makes this person more innocent than the other 6, and thereby, he is included in the ideal victims. The other example where a male victim is described is seen below:

#### *Example 15*

BBC

ووفاة احد الاشخاص متأثراً بجراحه في غارة على برج الصحفيين، فضلا عن ناشطين في قصف شرق مخيم البريج ليرتفع بذلك عدد ضحايا اليوم فقط إلى 33 قتيلا.

Translation:

And one of the casualties was a person who died from his injuries after a raid on a media tower, and also activists died in a raid east of the Bureij refugee camp, raising the number of victims only today to 33 dead.

BBC, as seen in the example above, mentioned that there was a person who died, and denotes indirectly that it was a man by saying that this person died from his injuries. Even so, in comparison to how they depict women and children, there is a clear distinction in the BBC

<sup>35</sup> Since the plural verb in Arabic always takes the masculine form when it includes one or more men, no matter how many women there are, it makes it very hard or impossible to know if the group consists of only men or a mix of women and men.

report in the way they focus on different victims. In addition, there is also the statistical numbers that show that out of 102 victims that were mentioned in the headline, there are 34 women and children described according to age and gender while the death of only two men is mentioned specifically.

Likewise in the Al Jazeera article the male victims are clearly not in focus. When describing the way that two children and one woman were "martyred", the article is similarly describing the suffering of the "innocent", in accordance to the victim hierarchy. In the same way as the BBC did, Al Jazeera is also clarifying in other parts of the report that the total death toll of the day was "16 martyrs", meaning that a majority of victims are not represented according to age or gender.

### *Summary of the structural analysis*

As seen above there are similarities in the reports regarding the way in which the two agencies handle the victims. There is no difference in the social grounds to be seen in the selection of individuals that are considered newsworthy. Both are using a victim hierarchy in accordance to the "ideal victim" where women and children are considered more innocent than men. This indicates that the agencies have an un-equal demography of society and by that, none of the agencies can be considered to report in a balanced way.

### **7.3. Terminological analysis**

The terminological analysis will have the theory of the lexical structure as a basis. As was described in "Theory", the vocabulary of a text may point to an ideological basis of an agency that is expressed by the choice of terminology that fits with the thoughts and interests of the writer, and of the community he or she aims to write for.

As seen in the examples above, there are obvious similarities in the way the victims are described in the articles. One difference is, however, the terms martyr/martyred and dead/died, that are commonly used throughout the reports, see example 4 and 11, relevant parts of which are here repeated as 16 and 17:

#### *Example 16*

Al Jazeera

لترتفع حصيلة أمس السبت إلى 16 شهيدا

Translation

Raising the death toll yesterday, Saturday, to 16 martyrs

#### *Example 17*

BBC

ليرتفع بذلك عدد ضحايا اليوم فقط إلى 33 قتيلا

Translation

By that, raising the number of victims only today to 33 dead

#### *Analysis*

شهيد *shahîd*, translated as martyr, is a word derived from the verbal root شهد *shahada*, meaning 'to see' or 'to witness'. شهيد *shahîd* is the person who sees or witnesses. The definition of martyrdom in the Islamic tradition has been widely debated among Muslims since a clear definition does not seem to be found in the Quran. There are, however, Sûras (verses in the Quran) that, even if they lack a clear definition, promise an eternal life in



paradise in the presence of Allah (God) to the ones who become martyrs.<sup>36</sup>

The use of the term *shahīd* is common in contemporary Palestinian society where the idea is that Palestine is fighting a war for cultural existence against Zionism and Colonialism.<sup>37</sup> The term is not only an Islamic concept anymore, but has developed to a pan-Arab or Nationalistic concept that includes adherents of other religions as well secularists.<sup>38</sup> The idea has developed to a level where every Palestinian who dies as a result of the Palestinian struggle becomes a martyr, no matter in what way he or she may die.

By using the emotive words “martyr/martyred” Al Jazeera is using a part of a lexical structure that fits the idea of martyrdom as a concept in general, and specifically the idea described above of the “Palestinian martyr”.

BBC, on the other hand is using the term “killed”. This is a less emotive expression and suggests a more neutral terminology than the one from Al Jazeera. When seen in the context of the previous analyses, it is, however, in line with the theoretical process as well as a part of their lexical structure to describe the acts of Israel as legitimate. BBC never provides a clear reference to who is the killer. Instead the “killed” are a result of attacks that are described as acts of self-defense.

## 8. Discussion

As seen in the analyses above there are parts where the two broadcaster’s reports are similar but in the majority of the examples a distinction between them is much more tangible.

The focus on the innocence of the victims is something that both papers emphasize. This is similar in the way that there is no difference in the social grounds when it comes to the hierarchy of victims: they both have the same preferences to who is the “ideal victim”. Both Al Jazeera and BBC do also have a hierarchy, and are depicting children and women as more vulnerable and innocent than men. By doing so they are both promoting a social division where individuals are handled differently depending on age and gender.

Al Jazeera is moreover using a terminology that is sympathizing with the concept of martyrdom, and specifically the martyrdom in the Palestinian context. This is an obvious case where the agency contradicts itself in its claims of reporting without political considerations. Since there is only one term that suggests a biased vocabulary, I can, however, not say that Al Jazeera does have an obvious lexical structure in its report, only that the term “martyr” indicates that there is one.

Further the most distinctive differences concern how the two agencies handle Israel. Al Jazeera is very clearly putting all the blame of the casualties on Israel. Throughout the article it is obvious that Al Jazeera is changing the focus of the events in accordance to a theoretical process outlined in the headline, from a point where Israel was bombing, and one instance after the other to a situation where Israel is described as an aggressor that is capable of bombing civilian targets to make a coming long-lasting ground invasion easier.

The BBC on the other hand, is very careful in always quoting someone and by that, they could be considered more neutral as they step away from the position of making statements. Nevertheless, they consciously try to take the focus away from the actor. This is seen in how they avoid referring to Israel as the agent in their report, and instead they quote official Israelis explaining their acts as a self-defense against the rockets fired from Gaza, and that they only target legitimate goals. The civilian casualties that are in focus in the beginning of the article are in this way situated in a position where they are described as tragic results of

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<sup>36</sup> Cook, David, 2007, p31

<sup>37</sup> Najjar, Aref, Orayb, 1996, p503

<sup>38</sup> Cook, David, 2007, pp136-137

a justified war.

BBC also lacks a similar reference to the Palestinian fighters, and this is probably where the partiality is most obvious. By choosing to publish the Israeli view of the reason for their bombings but not the Palestinian reason for the rocket fire, they are clearly promoting the view of the Israelis and suppressing the view of the Palestinians.

## **9. Conclusion**

As a summary, neither BBC nor Al Jazeera can live up to their visions of reporting in a way that is neutral and non-dependent, and my hypothesis is by that verified in this case. There have been plenty of examples that show that both Al Jazeera and BBC apply a theoretical process in their articles, seen in the constant emphasizing of some details and suppression of others as well as a selection of who they quote and what to publish from their statements. The differences in their way of reporting also indicate that the agencies have different ideological grounds, obviously in their views of the military operation “Pillar of Defense”, but probably also in their views on Palestine/Israel over all.

The findings in this thesis quite clearly indicate that all news are not delivered to us neutrally. It would be interesting to see to what extent this partiality in the news affects the readers, and to what extent the news agencies are contributing to political opinions.

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## 11. Appendix

### 11.1. Al Jazeera article

إسرائيل تواصل قصف غزة لليوم الخامس

استمرت الحملة العسكرية الإسرائيلية على قطاع غزة لليوم الخامس على التوالي بقصف استهدف فجر اليوم منازل في شمال القطاع وجنوبه بالإضافة إلى مجمع السرايا الحكومي ومقر إعلامي في المدينة وسط استمرار الاستعداد لغزو بري محتمل.

واستمرت الغارات حتى بعد منتصف الليلة الماضية مع قيام سفن حربية بقصف أهداف من البحر بينما استهدف هجوم آخر مبنى في مدينة غزة يضم مكاتب وسائل إعلام عربية ومحلية، مما أدى إلى إصابة ثلاثة صحفيين من قناة القدس.

وقالت حركة المقاومة الإسلامية (حماس) إن صواريخ إسرائيلية دمرت المبنى الإداري لرئيس الحكومة إسماعيل هنية الذي التقى فيه أول أمس مع رئيس الوزراء المصري هشام قنديل وضربت مقرا للشرطة.

وأعلن مسؤولون طبيون أن هجوماً آخرين قبيل الفجر استهدفاً منازل في مخيم جباليا أسفرا عن استشهاد طفلين وإصابة عشرة أشخاص آخرين، بينما استشهدت سيدة وأصيب أحد أقاربها في غارة إسرائيلية استهدفت منزلاً في بلدة خزاعة القريبة من خان يونس جنوبي القطاع.

وبلغ عدد الغارات الجوية الإسرائيلية على مختلف مناطق القطاع -حسب التلفزيون الإسرائيلي- ليل السبت نحو 180 غارة استشهد جراءها خمسة فلسطينيين وأصيب أربعة آخرون، لترتفع حصيلة أمس السبت إلى 16 شهيدا، ويبلغ الإجمالي منذ الأربعة الماضي 45 شهيداً ونحو 398 جريحاً.

وخلال ساعات النهار قصفت الطائرات الإسرائيلية مدرسة تونس شرقي غزة بالتزامن مع زيارة وفد تونسي يترأسه وزير الخارجية رفيق عبد السلام، كما أصيب أربعة فلسطينيين في غارة على رفح، واثنان في غارة على خان يونس، وأصيب شابان بجراح بين متوسطة وخطيرة في غارة إسرائيلية على شارع النفق بغزة.

وأدت الهجمات الإسرائيلية إلى تدمير خمسة محولات كبيرة مما أدى إلى انقطاع الكهرباء عن نحو 400 ألف فلسطيني جنوبي القطاع حسب شركة كهرباء غزة.

### بمرمى النار

بموازاة ذلك قالت كتائب القسام الجناح العسكري لحركة حماس إنها لا تزال تحتفظ بقدراتها رغم الغارات الإسرائيلية المكثفة، وإن خمسة ملايين إسرائيلي "باتوا في مرمى النار" بعد استهدافها مدينة تل أبيب بقذائف صاروخية.

وقال المتحدث باسم الكتائب أبو عبيدة في كلمة تلفزيونية بثتها أمس السبت قناة (الأقصى) التابعة لحركة حماس في غزة وهو ملثم، إن الكتائب نفذت منذ بدء التوتر مع إسرائيل قبل أربعة أيام أكثر من 900 هجمة صاروخية. وعرض أثناء الكلمة شريط فيديو قال أبو عبيدة إنه لعملية إسقاط طائرة حربية إسرائيلية بينما كانت تحلق في أجواء قطاع غزة مساء الجمعة.

وذكر المتحدث أن حطام الطائرة التي أسقطت بصاروخ أرض جو لأول مرة في تاريخ الصراع مع إسرائيل سقط في بحر غزة. ولم تتعد مدة الفيديو ثلاث ثوان وظهر فيه إطلاق صاروخ أرض جو موجه إلى هدف في الأجواء ويعقب ذلك انفجار وغبار كثيف دون أن تكون صورة الطائرة واضحة للرؤية.

يشار إلى أن المتحدث باسم الجيش الإسرائيلي أفيخاي أدرعي كان قد نفى إسقاط طائرة حربية في غزة، وقال إنها "أكاذيب تروجها حماس".

في الوقت ذاته حذر أبو عبيدة إسرائيل من الإقدام على هجوم بري على قطاع غزة، مهددا إياها بأن هذا القرار "سيكون الأكثر غباء وحمقا"، مؤكدا أن القسام "لا تزال تحتفظ بقوتها ولا يزال لديها الكثير من الأوراق والمفاجآت".

جاء ذلك في وقت واصلت فيه المقاومة إطلاق الصواريخ عبر الحدود، حيث سقط صاروخ على منزل في مدينة عسقلان صباح اليوم، دون أن يسفر عن إصابات.

وأمس سقط صاروخ على مبنى سكني في مدينة أسدود المطلة على البحر المتوسط ودمر عدة شرفات، وقالت الشرطة إن خمسة أشخاص أصيبوا.

وأعلنت كتائب القسام مساء السبت قصف تل أبيب بصاروخ من طراز "فجر 5". كما سمع دوي انفجار في الضاحية الجنوبية من تل أبيب بعد إطلاق صفارات إنذار.

وجاء إعلان الكتائب في أعقاب تصريح المتحدث باسم الجيش الإسرائيلي أفيخاي أدرعي بأن منظومة القبة الحديدية لا اعتراض الصواريخ القصيرة المدى اعترضت بعد ظهر السبت صاروخا أطلق من قطاع غزة باتجاه تل أبيب.

وقبيل اعتراض الصاروخ دوت صفارات الإنذار في تل أبيب، وسط حالة من الذعر. وكانت إسرائيل قد قررت نشر بطارية خامسة مضادة للصواريخ ضمن منظومة القبة الحديدية لم يكن مقررا أن تدخل الخدمة قبل 2013.

### على الحدود

في هذه الأثناء واصل الجيش الإسرائيلي نشر دباباته على امتداد الحدود مع قطاع غزة بعد يوم من قرار للحكومة باستدعاء 75 ألفا من جنود الاحتياط.

وعندما سأل الصحفيون قائد القوات الإسرائيلية على حدود غزة اللواء تال روسو إن كانت هناك عملية برية محتملة رد بالإيجاب قائلا "بالتأكيد". وأضاف أن لديه "خطة ستستغرق وقتا" وأضاف "نحتاج إلى التحلي بالصبر، لن تكون لمدة يوم أو يومين".

## 11.2. BBC Article

غزة: أكثر من مئة قتيل وسط تصاعد الغارات الإسرائيلية

ارتفع عدد القتلى في قطاع غزة إلى 102 قتيلاً خلال ستة أيام من الغارات الإسرائيلية، حسب مسؤولين في حركة حماس، في الوقت الذي واصلت فيه القوات الإسرائيلية ضرباتها الجوية التي تقول إنها تهدف إلى إيقاف إطلاق الصواريخ ضد إسرائيل.

وقال أشرف القدرة المتحدث باسم وزارة الصحة المقالة لبي بي سي أن من بين الضحايا 24 طفلاً و10 نساء و12 من المسنين.

وإضافة إلى عدد الجرحى وصل إلى 855 بينهم 260 طفلاً و140 من النساء و55 مسناً.

وجاء هذا العدد بعد سقوط قتلى مساء الاثنين في قطاع غزة أجملت حصيلتهم بسبعة فلسطينيين بينهم معاق في غارة إسرائيلية شرق المغازي وسط القطاع. ووفاة أحد الأشخاص متأثراً بجراحه في غارة على برج الصحفيين، فضلاً عن ناشطين في قصف شرق مخيم البريج ليرتفع بذلك عدد ضحايا اليوم فقط إلى 33 قتيلاً.

وقال مسؤولون إسرائيليون إن صاروخاً واحداً فقط أطلق خلال الليل من القطاع، إلا أن إطلاق الصواريخ استؤنف صباح الإثنين، وأعلنت كتائب عز الدين القسام أنها أطلقت 73 صاروخاً خلال اليوم.

وطالب الأمين العام للأمم المتحدة بان كي مون بالوقف الفوري لإطلاق النار، بينما يعد للسفر إلى المنطقة للمشاركة في المباحثات التي تدور في العاصمة المصرية القاهرة حول إمكانية التوصل إلى هدنة.

وكان رئيس الوزراء الإسرائيلي بنيامين نتنياهو قد صرح الأحد أنه مستعد لتوسيع رقعة العملية العسكرية، بعد أن أقرت الحكومة الإسرائيلية تجنيد 75 ألفاً من قوات الاحتياط.

وصرح الرئيس المصري محمد مرسي أن شن عملية برية على غزة سيكون له نتائج خطيرة وإن مصر والعالم الحر لا يمكن أن يقبلوا بها.

وسترسل الجامعة العربية الثلاثاء وفداً من وزراء الخارجية إلى غزة وقد وصل اليوم الإثنين نبيل شعث عضو اللجنة المركزية لحركة فتح على رأس وفد فتحاوي إلى قطاع غزة نيابة عن الرئيس الفلسطيني محمود عباس لإستقبال وفد الجامعة العربية برئاسة نبيل العربي.

حوار مع شعث

وأكد شعث في حديثه لبي بي سي أن إسرائيل خلقت الأجواء المواتية لتحقيق المصالحة الوطنية الفلسطينية التي طال انتظارها.

جاء ذلك خلال حوار خاص أجرته بي بي سي مع شعث قبيل دقائق من عبوره معبر رفح الحدودي إلى قطاع غزة حيث قال "إن الدول العربية لديها الكثير من أوراق الضغط على المجتمع الدولي لإجبار إسرائيل على وقف عدوانها على الفلسطينيين في غزة".

وأثنى شعث على قرارات الاجتماع الوزاري الطاريء الأخير بمقر جامعة الدول العربية بالقاهرة مشيراً إلى أنها تصب في الاتجاه الصحيح في مصلحة الشعب الفلسطيني ومؤكداً في الوقت نفسه على أن القيادة الفلسطينية لن تتراجع عن قرارها بالتوجه إلى الأمم المتحدة لطلب عضوية غير كاملة في المنظمة الدولية.

### وفد مصري

في هذه الأثناء وصل إلى قطاع غزة وفد يمثل أحزاباً سياسية مصرية عدة برئاسة محمد سعد الكتاتني رئيس حزب الحرية والعدالة عبر معبر رفح البري في زيارة تضامنية مع القطاع الذي يتعرض لموجة من الغارات الجوية الإسرائيلية.

وكان في استقبال الوفد عدد من قيادات حركة حماس ونواب في المجلس التشريعي الفلسطيني ومن المقرر أن يقوم الوفد بجولة تفقدية في قطاع غزة تشمل زيارة لمستشفى الشفاء ولعائلة الدلو التي قتل 11 فرداً منها في قصف إسرائيلي الليلة الماضية، ويتوقع لقاؤه رئيس حكومة حماس إسماعيل هنية.

### "أخطأت الهدف"

وقال الجيش الإسرائيلي إنه قصف 80 هدفاً خلال الليل بينها بنايات يملكها مسلحون ومخازن أسلحة ومراكز شرطة، ليصبح مجموع الأهداف التي قصفت 1350 هدفاً.

وبالإضافة للغارات الجوية تقوم بحرية إسرائيلية بقصف القطاع، كما يقول مراسلنا جون دونيسون.

وقد أصاب صاروخ أطلق من قطاع غزة صباح الإثنين مدرسة في مدينة عسقلان حسب الجيش الإسرائيلي، وقد علقت الدراسة في المدينة.

وعرضت محطات تلفزيونية مناظر مريعة لأجساد مخرجة بالدماء للأطفال الذين قتلوا في غزة، مما أثار غضب الشارع الفلسطيني، حسب مراسلنا.

ونسبت صحيفة هآرتس الإسرائيلية إلى الجيش الإسرائيلي القول إن الصاروخ أصاب منزل الجيران بالخطأ، وعقب الجيش على ذلك بالقول إنه لا يعلم مصدر هآرتس ولكن التحقيق جارٍ بالموضوع.

وقال المتحدث باسم الجيش الإسرائيلي يواف موردخاي للقناة الثانية الإسرائيلية إن الهجوم كان يستهدف يحيى ربيع قائد وحدة إطلاق الصواريخ التابعة لحماس ولكن "سقط ضحايا مدنيون".

وعبر بان كي مون عن حزنه العميق بسبب مقتل أفراد عائلة دلول وفلسطينيين آخرين، كما عبر عن قلقه من إطلاق صواريخ من قطاع غزة.

وقال بان في بيان صادر عنه "هذا يجب أن يتوقف، أحض الأطراف بشدة على التعاون مع الجهود التي تبذلها مصر للتوصل إلى وقف إطلاق فوري".

وصرحت حماس أن "مجزرة عائلة دلول لن تمر دون عقاب".

وقالت منظمة "أنقذوا الأطفال" إن مخزون الماء والغذاء لدى العائلات في غزة بدأ ينفد، وأن معظم السكان محاصرون في منازلهم حيث يعانون انقطاع التيار الكهربائي 18 ساعة يومياً.

## الحرب أم السلام؟

تقوم مصر بتنسيق الجهود الرامية إلى التوصل إلى هدنة، حيث يزور القاهرة مسؤولون من حماس وإسرائيل في الوقت نفسه.

ويقول محرر شؤون الشرق الأوسط في بي بي سي جيريمي بوين إن هناك مخاوف من اتساع رقعة النزاع قبل التوصل إلى اتفاق.

ويقول الجيش الإسرائيلي إن الفصائل الفلسطينية أطلقت 848 صاروخا على إسرائيل منذ بدء النزاع وصل 546 هدفه منها واعترضت منظومة القبة الحديدية 302 .