



# PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES Media Landscape Guide

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NETWORK

communicating with disaster-affected communities



## Preface

This guide is one of a series of Media Landscape Guides which map the media landscape in different countries. The guides have been produced by the CDAC Network in cooperation with DW Akademie and supported by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. This project is part of the global initiative “Transparency and media freedom - Crisis resilience in the pandemic”.

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Take a look at all of CDAC’s Media Landscape Guides, available in multiple languages, here: <https://www.cdacnetwork.org/media-landscape-guides>

*This Media Landscape Guide was written and edited between August 2021 and January 2022.*

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## SECTION I:

# Introduction

## 1.1 About the guide

This Media Landscape Guide provides a snapshot of the media in the Palestinian territories<sup>1</sup>. It includes information on audiences, content producers and languages associated with the media and examines the communications culture and preferences of different groups in the community. The guide gives an insight into the role of media in crisis preparedness, recent disasters, and the (at time of writing<sup>2</sup>) ongoing COVID-19 response. It also gives an overview of each media sector including, digital and social media, radio, television, print and other forms of mass communication.

The guide aims to help improve communications and inform the work of Palestinian media organisations, humanitarian actors and United Nations (UN) agencies and their community engagement working groups, especially in preparation for impending disasters and during the response phase. It can also assist in the planning and implementation of development work with media. This guide does not aim to be a comprehensive overview of all media outlets and platforms.

The guide has been written to help organisations and individuals engage with the media. It can be used by:

- » Community, development, and humanitarian organisations; Government and local authorities; Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and UN relief agencies working with the media on community engagement, communication, outreach, and messaging and mobilisation.
- » Development workers building societal resilience to disasters by working with the media on disaster preparedness. Relief workers who can use the media to engage communities to work together in early recovery from crisis.
- » Media outlets (including news outlets): to improve their communication and engagement with different groups, particularly during disasters.
- » Media Development Organisations: to inform advocacy and capacity-building work to improve access to quality information, and further development goals through better outreach.

<sup>1</sup> Also referred to as the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) <https://gho.unocha.org/occupied-palestinian-territory?msclkid=c6549804a7all1ec9a9e3cdddc99c18c>

<sup>2</sup> August 2021 to January 2022



## 1.2 What Does The Guide Cover And Why It Is Needed

Without an understanding of how people like to receive information and communicate, any communication strategy may struggle and potentially miss large numbers of those it is intended to engage with. This can cause difficulties when attempting to work with the community in a development project. In an emergency, there may not be time to carry out audience research before communicating vital information and without this contextualised understanding communications may use the wrong channels and miss those who need to be reached. However, by engaging existing media who have the skills, connections and knowledge needed for effective community engagement and communication, they can become crucial partners in aid and development.

This guide will act as a starting point for communicators, indicating the most effective media to use to communicate with different demographics to facilitate reliable, trusted, and timely communication of information. This guide covers only the media and audiences based in the Palestinian territories. Media that is sited outside of the oPt for other audiences is not covered in this guide.

## 1.3 Methodology

Research for the guide was carried out in-country and supported by a reference group. Information and data were collected through a detailed literature review and research. A quantitative methodology was designed which included primary data collection via survey questionnaires.

## 1.4 Potential Role Of The Guide In Disaster Preparedness And Crisis Response

Effective, consistent, and timely communication is vital in humanitarian responses and in building sustainable early recovery from crises. Communities, authorities, and responders must be kept informed of the situation during disasters and planned responses, and of any actions they need to take. Proactive communication to dispel rumours or misinformation is vital, as is the building of trust with audiences, which can be facilitated through developing mechanisms for two-way communication. The media can also play a proactive role in early warning which can influence population and emergency response behaviour and potentially mitigate the effects of a disaster.

In aid responses and disaster preparedness it is important to know which media is best placed to reach marginalised groups, with considerations made to literacy levels and language preferences. It is also important to be aware of, and to address, any enhanced needs, risks, and information gaps. Good communication requires creative thinking, adapting communications tools and message formats. Working with existing media professionals can help to achieve this. The goal is that this guide can be used to improve communications, messaging and information dissemination and contribute to effective disaster response.

## SECTION 2:

# Overview Of Communications Culture

THIS SECTION OUTLINES THE CURRENT MEDIA LANDSCAPE. IT SUMMARISES THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE MEDIA ACCESS, BROADCAST LANGUAGE AND THE BARRIERS PEOPLE FACE TO RECEIVING THE INFORMATION THEY NEED.

## 2.1 Media Background

There were an estimated 5.3 million Palestinians living in the Palestinian territories at the end of 2021, 3.2 million in the West Bank (59.6%) and 2.1 million (40.4%) in the Gaza Strip, according to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS).<sup>3</sup> Data from the Population, Housing and Establishments Census, 2017 shows that 42.2% of the total population in the Palestinian territories are refugees estimated 1.98 million: 741 thousand in the West Bank (26.3% of the total population of the West Bank) and 1.24 million in the Gaza Strip (66.1% of the total population of the Gaza Strip).<sup>4</sup>

The Palestinian territories have been recognised by 138 UN members and the governing of the territory has been complicated by the conflict between Fatah and Hamas. Parts of the West Bank are politically under the control of the Palestinian Authority (PA), whilst the Gaza strip is controlled by HAMAS.<sup>5</sup> East Jerusalem, part of the West Bank, is under full Israeli control with the PA maintaining an unofficial presence through various organisations and institutions.<sup>6</sup>

The Palestinian population is relatively homogenous, the official language is Arabic, the biggest religious group are Sunni Muslims (93% in 2014) with Christians constituting the biggest religious minority (6%). Most Palestinians follow Islamic rules and principles and Arabic cultural values. Oral history and traditional forms of communication are important parts of cultural life, these include dance, music, proverbs, jokes, poetry, festivals, legends, and folk tales and folklore.

According to Gretchen King,<sup>7</sup> media development in the Palestinian territories can be described in several phases:

- » By 1850, during the Ottoman period, multiple printing presses were in operation,
- » During the British Mandate period after World War I, newspaper publishing increased, and papers began to disseminate news from around the world.
- » By 1939, over 40 newspapers existed. The Palestine Broadcasting Services (PBS), the first radio station, was initiated by the British to compete with the politicised printed press and other small-scale broadcasting that had been developing.
- » The period after 1948 has been described as the 'communication vacuum'. All broadcasting was banned by the Israeli government in the occupied territories
- » After the occupation of Gaza and the West Bank in 1967, attempts to establish press continued to be censored by Israeli forces and multiple publications closed
- » In the 1960s Palestinians in exile began broadcasting on other neighbouring state media systems, including the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) broadcasting from Syria.
- » During the First Intifada<sup>8</sup> Between 1987-1993, international media organisations recruited local Palestinians which led to a growth in the media and in journalism
- » After the 1993 Oslo Accord people could tune into TV news programming produced by Palestinians within the Palestinian territories for the first time.

The 1993 Oslo accords granted the Palestinian territories the right to use a limited allocation of medium wave and FM frequencies – 10 were allocated to the PA, with the bulk of the spectrum remaining under Israeli government control. The Palestinian Authority Ministry of Information was established in 1993 to license radio and TV broadcasting for the first time. The publicly funded state-owned Palestinian Broadcasting Company (PBC) was launched in 1993, airing programmes which followed authority agendas. The 'Voice of Palestine,' the first daily newspaper published in the

3 Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2021. Palestinians at the End of 2021.

4 Data of the Population, Housing and Establishments Census, Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics 2017

5 HAMAs the Islamic Resistance Movement

6 BBC Media Action

7 Gretchen King, Palestine: <https://books.openbookpublishers.com/10.11647/obp.0238/ch3.xhtml>

8 The word is used for uprising and in Arabic means "shaking off"

Palestinian territories, was launched and in 1994 the Al-Hayat Al-Jadida began circulation. With the establishment of the PA in 1994, the Palestinian media was divided into private and public ownership and legislation to control media was imposed. By 1996, the PBC television station was broadcasting Palestinian-produced television from Gaza with the transmission facilities in Ramallah.

In 2006 after Hamas won the elections, all state media, along with the PBC, was placed under the authority of the president's office. Around this time satellite TV was being introduced, accessible to 78% of Palestinians by 2002. Little satellite broadcast content is produced within the Palestinian territories.

More recently privatised telecommunications have driven Internet usage. Palestinians report on local events to a global audience through internet news websites based in the Palestinian territories. Palestinians continue to use media as part of their tools for self-determination

## 2.2 Media Landscape At A Glance

Media in the West Bank and Gaza are not very diversified, with few private and community media services, TV and radio licenses are granted by Authority bodies in both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and the criteria for obtaining these is ambiguous. There is no independent system for regulating broadcasting in the Palestinian territories. A number of Palestinian media outlets are considered to have a political bias, with content designed around political leanings. It often reflects the rivalry between Fatah, which controls the West Bank, and Hamas, which controls the Gaza Strip. Palestinian media often serves to gain support abroad for its ambitions for self-determination or the “freedom struggle”. There are few publications or radio stations catering to marginalised groups and only limited radio and TV programming targeting women, young people or refugees. Women are often poorly portrayed. The advertising market is small, reflecting the weak economy. Television is the main source for news and information in the Palestinian areas.

A UNESCO assessment of media development in the Palestinian territories, reports that the PA in the West Bank and the de facto authorities in Gaza retain tight control over information disseminated by the media.<sup>9</sup> There have been cases of journalists being detained and persecuted for voicing political opinions and for reporting on human rights violations. Although the Palestinian Basic Law prohibits censorship, there are cases of media content being censored in both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, including broadcast outlets, newspapers and websites being banned or blocked. The Palestinian Press and Publications Law guarantees journalists' right to protect their sources, yet there have been reports of journalists being under pressure to reveal them. In 2008, the newly formed Palestinian News and Information Agency (Wafa),<sup>10</sup> began a comprehensive review process in order to better scrutinise, organise and communicate with its information base. Wafa's philosophy of information sharing and openness, aims to enhance access to information, verify its credibility and objectivity and encourage transparency. Its website, in English and Arabic contains an extensive library of information on a range of topics.

**PRESS FREEDOM** In May 2014, the Palestinian territories joined core international human rights treaties and as of July, it has been bound by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which acknowledges freedom of expression as a basic human right. The Palestinian Basic Law, (in lieu of a constitution), guarantees freedom of expression and opinion. However, this guarantee is weak and there are many laws in force in both the West Bank and Gaza Strip, that restrict freedom of expression and opinion. The Press and Publications Law, for example allows sanctions including imprisonment. There is currently no enforceable law on the right to information. A draft law was developed, but its adoption was put on hold due to disruption following the political division that occurred in 2007 between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

Palestinian journalists are continually subjected to threats, arrest, interrogation, persecution, and administrative detention without grounds. Continuing political tension increases the dangers of journalism in the Palestinian territories. This, combined with harassment by Israeli authorities, and bans on covering certain events has led some Palestinian journalists to self-censor their work.

<sup>9</sup> UNESCO's Media Development Indicators, 2014. “Assessment of Media Development in Palestine”. Assessment of Media Development in Palestine - UNESCO study - Question of Palestine.

<sup>10</sup> <https://info.wafa.ps/library.aspx>

According to Reporters without Borders (RSF),<sup>11</sup> multiple media outlets have been closed and websites regarded as opposition media blocked. Information on online platforms is sometimes censored. Platforms such as Facebook and Twitter have been pressured to delete content or suspended accounts of Palestinian journalists and media outlets accused of inciting violence. WhatsApp accounts of journalists have been blocked. In October 2019 access was blocked to a total of 51 online news sources that the Palestinian authorities regarded as a threat. Palestine is ranked 132 in the 2021 World Press Freedom Index.<sup>12</sup>

The RSF website says journalists' risk: gun and sniper attacks on Palestinian journalists, targeted violence against journalists by Palestinian security forces whilst covering protests, injury from live rounds used by the Israel Defence Forces to disperse protestors, arrests of journalists in Jerusalem, airstrikes on media outlets (over 20) in the Gaza Strip and several kidnappings. The report "Aggression on Palestinian digital rights"<sup>13</sup> documents violations over Palestinian digital rights which include removing content, deleting and restricting accounts, hiding tags, reducing access to specific content, deleting archived content, and restricting access to various types of social media channels.

**MEDIA ACCESS** Mobile internet access is provided by operators Jawwal and Wataniya. Services require Israeli approval. 3G was introduced in the West Bank in early 2018 but Israel has not allowed 3G equipment to enter the Gaza Strip, and 4G is yet to be rolled out. Palestine's limited mobile phone operators are Jawwal and Ooredoo. In February 2018, Israel approved the utilisation of a 3G Palestinian network in the West Bank. In Gaza the Palestinian carriers only offer 2G, which was initially introduced in the 1990s. This allows calls and limited data transmission.<sup>14</sup>

Approximately 24.3% of Palestinians use the internet on a daily basis. However, according to the Palestine-Israel Journal,<sup>15</sup> households headed by women have less access to digital technology than male-headed households.

DataReportal ranks the Palestinian territories 127th out of 178 countries, in terms of mobile phone subscriptions. In 2021 there were 4.35 million mobile connections (made by 84.2% of the population) - 22.8% of which were made via a broadband connection (3G-5G). In 2019, fixed-line registrations decreased by 0.543% to 0.467 million. In January 2021, there were 3.65 million internet users in Palestine and Internet penetration stood at 70.6%. The median download speed of cellular mobile internet connections is 5.68 MBPS – this has decreased by 5.0% since 2021. The median download speed of fixed internet connections is 14.63 MBPS – an increase of 55.1 MBPS since 2021. Analysis reveals that the share of web traffic by device is split as follows: mobile phones: 65.05%, laptops and desktop computers: 33.98%, tablet devices: 0.96% and other devices: 0.02%.<sup>16</sup>

The Household Survey on Information and Communications Technology (ICT), carried out by PCBS in 2019.<sup>17</sup> show the percentage of Palestinians who own and use ICT equipment. Findings are summarised below:

Figure 1: ICT ownership data Palestine, 2018- 2019 (PCBS 2019)

ICT data	2019	2018
Percentage of Households That Have Fixed Telephone Line	31.2	31.7
Percentage of Households That Have Mobile Phones	97.3	96.5
Percentage of Households That Have Smart Phones	86.2	82.3
Percentage of Households That Have computers (Desktop, laptop, tablet)	33.2	36.9
Percentage of Households That Have Internet Access at Home	79.6	64.5
Percentage of Individuals (18 years and Above) Who Use the Internet	72.3	64.4
Percentage of Individuals (18 years and Above) Who Own Mobile Phone	90.1	88.6
Percentage of Individuals (18 years and Above) Who Own Smart Phone	72.8	66.2

Further details are provided below and are split by location (the West Bank, Gaza) and for Palestine:

11 <https://rsf.org/en/palestine>

12 RSF's 2021 World Press Freedom Index (I is the freest), is published annually. The Index measures the level of freedom available to the media. It provides information about advances and declines in respect for media freedom in 180 countries, and is used by the World Bank to evaluate a country's respect for the rule of law.

13 Aggression on Palestinian digital rights" Hamleh, 2020: <https://7amleh.org/releases?page=2>

14 <https://www.reuters.com/article/israel-palestinians-telecom-idUSL8NIPJ3FW>

15 Palestine-Israel Journal

16 <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2022-palestine>

17 Household Survey on Information and Communications Technology, by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics 2019



Figure 2: ICT data by location (PCBS 2019)

ICT data by location	Palestine	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Percentage of Households That Have Radio in Palestine by location	55.6	50.3	64.8
Percentage of Households That Have Television in Palestine by location	90.7	96.5	80.5
Percentage of Individuals (10 Years and Above) Who Own Smart Phones in Palestine by location	61.7	71.8	45.7
Percentage of Households That Have Internet Service at Home in Palestine by location	79.6	83.5	72.7
Percentage of Individuals (10 Years and Above) Who Use the Internet via smart phone by location	95.9	98	92
Percentage of Individuals (10 Years and Above) Who Use the Internet via tablets by location	9.9	8.9	11.6
Percentage of Individuals (10 Years and Above) Who Use the Internet via Laptop or desktop by location	22.1	21.4	23.2
Percentage of Individuals (10 Years and Above) Who Use the Internet at least once a day by location	80.5	91.1	61.6
Table 35: Percentage of Individuals (10 Years and Above) Who Use the Social Media or Professional Networks by location	86.2	90	79.4

The main broadcasting outlets across Palestine are the Palestinian Authority's PBC in Ramallah and Hamas's Al-Aqsa Media Network. Both run TV and radio stations. In addition, dozens of private broadcasters operate. Pan-Arab satellite TV stations, including Qatar's Al-Jazeera, are popular. Newspapers include pro-Palestinian Authority titles and a pro-Hamas daily.

### 2.3 Language And Dialects In The Media

The formal language in the Palestinian territories is the Levantine dialect of Arabic. This dialect is deemed an independent language and, thus, is different from other Arabic dialects. It is spoken by Palestinians, Syrians, and Lebanese, as well as Israeli Arabs. Bedouins are a minority in Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Israel and the Palestinian territories.

Levantine Arabic not only varies from country to country and from region to region but also from village to village. Different dialects and languages reflect religious and social status and distinct social groups in Palestinian society; for example, nomadic or Bedouin communities speak distinct dialects from the local settled communities and the same applies to different religious communities (Muslims, Christians, Jews). Distinction should be made between urban varieties of Levantine Arabic, which remain largely homogenous, and the rural varieties that exhibit significant differences, especially in isolated areas.<sup>18</sup>

Standard Arabic is the formal language used for official purposes including public communication and in media content. Other unofficial languages such as Domari, Armenian, and Hebrew are used to a very limited extent.

**BROADCAST LANGUAGES** Different languages are used in Palestinian Broadcasting service programming, depending on the situation. When the Palestinian territories was under British rule in 1948 English was an important language, now under Israeli occupation, Hebrew has become important. Arabic, Hebrew and English are all used in broadcasting.

There are various marginalised groups in the Palestinian territories. While adolescents make up 23% of the population, adolescent girls are considered marginalised due to poor access to comprehensive education and health services, and they are often excluded from decision making. Bedouins and herder communities have poverty, food insecurity and limited freedom of movement.

There are few media that cater for marginalised groups apart from some brief programmes or news stories. The Forsan Al-Irada radio station, located in Der Al-Balah in the Gaza Strip<sup>19</sup> tries to amplify the voices of disabled people. It implements training with young female journalists and is a community-based rehabilitation centre, partnering with the UN. It provides training in podcasting and broadcasting, followed by the broadcasting of live radio episodes on youth and community issues, produced by the participants themselves.<sup>20</sup> Several media platforms that focus on marginalised groups are mentioned in section 4.

<sup>18</sup> <https://industryarabic.com/levantine-arabic-guide/>

<sup>19</sup> one of the community-based rehabilitation centres in Deir el-Balah, Middle Area, which partners with United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) Relief and Social Services Programme (RSSP) that aims to empower Palestine refugees, focusing on the most vulnerable groups, amongst other things is provides skill training.

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/emergency-reports/gaza-situation-report-208>

## 2.4 Barriers To Media Access

Palestinian cellular providers have not been permitted to upgrade their networks leaving most Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza with slower connections than in Israel. 3G equipment is banned from entering Gaza with Palestinian carriers only offering 2G networks.<sup>21</sup> According to the PCBS data, only 35.4% of West Bank residents have access to 3G. Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and West Bank generally have comparative difficulty accessing digital media and using the electronic space.<sup>22</sup> Restrictions on cellular frequencies and the placement of towers has resulted in high mobile prices for Palestinian consumers.<sup>23</sup>

According to data from the PCBS, in 2019<sup>24</sup> the main reasons stated for not having internet among the Palestinians surveyed were:

- » 62.5% said they did not need the internet, they did not find it useful, or they were not interested
- » 59% sited the high cost of the service
- » 57.9% sited the high cost of equipment
- » 32.8% sited lack of confidence, knowledge, or skills to use the Internet
- » 13% sited privacy or security concerns
- » 12.5% sited cultural reasons (including exposure to harmful content)
- » 10% said that while internet service is available in the area, it does not match household needs (e.g. quality, speed)

## 2.5 Media Preferences

There are limited data or studies available on the preferred media of different groups, but there is some data on Internet preferences. 23.1% of Palestinians live in rural areas, while 76.9% live in urban areas, urban middle-class citizens are more likely to possess phones with internet connectivity. Data from the PCBS, on the internet user habits of people over 10 years of age, shows: 76.3% of males use the internet for making calls, 59.1% for downloading images or movies, 48% to obtain information about goods or services, 36.7% to download applications, 33.1% to send or receive e-mails, 25.8% to watch television (either paid or free of charge) and 22.7% to access chat sites, blogs, newsgroups or online discussions. For female users, 55% use the internet to search for health information on injuries, disease, nutrition etc, 15.6% used it to consult Wikipedia or other online encyclopedias for learning purposes and 10 % use it to look for a job or submit a job application.

Newspapers are still seen as popular amongst Palestinians as a cheap way of following news as part of their daily routine with a cup of tea or coffee. The newspapers Al-Quds, Al-Ayyam and Al-Hayat al-Jadida are preferred by older urban and rural populations.

## 2.6 Challenges Facing The Media

There are several challenges facing the Palestinian media. A lack of funding and investment and a significant decline in the revenues of media institutions has stifled creativity and limited their performance and the salaries they can pay their employees. Obstacles related to travel and the continuous closures of the crossing points has led to poor communication with the outside world and an inability to participate in international conferences, trainings, and workshops. It is difficult to update equipment, such as cameras, as occupation authorities prevent the entry of some essential equipment, justified by claims about security concerns. The pandemic affected revenue as some banks and companies stopped their ads on social media. Some directors of independent media networks expressed anger against electricity and internet companies which threaten to stop their services during the COVID-19 crisis.

Journalists in the Palestinian territories also face personal danger, the risk of arrest and assault and campaigns against them. Several journalists are reported to have been deliberately killed during the ongoing conflict Reporters and fixers

21 <https://www.reuters.com/article/israel-palestinians-telecom-idUSL8NIPJ3FW>

22 "Population census according to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics PCBS, 2017"

23 <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-pledges-to-finally-permit-long-restricted-palestinian-4g-cell-service/>

24 Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2019 report



lack protection and training related to protecting themselves due, in part, to a lack of funding.<sup>25</sup>

Journalists' face problems when working from home. Power cuts, technical issues and the slow internet speed hamper their work and specifically the ability to upload large-sized media files. The low salaries for journalists, does not cover the average cost of living in Jerusalem and other cities. Authority agencies require payment to cover licenses and frequency broadcasts, at a time when media organisations are suffering from a worsening financial crisis.

When the state of emergency was announced after the first COVID-19 cases, the authorities emphasised the importance of respecting public freedoms, especially freedom of opinion and expression. It was asserted that the state of emergency would not be used as an excuse to assault citizens' rights to freedom of opinion, and expression and the need for Palestinian journalists to avoid publishing false news or spreading rumours was stressed. However, some key informants interviewed for this guide noted that the COVID-19 emergency legislation have restricted freedom of expression as there was pressure to stop anyone, other than those legally authorised, to issue any statements or news related to the state of emergency from COVID that was not based on an official source.<sup>26</sup>

Telecommunications companies and internet providers in the West Bank continue to block sites, for reasons of "threatening the national security, and civil peace, disturbing public order and public morals, and stirring up Palestinian public opinion", often these blockages continue indefinitely after the initial cause has dissipated.<sup>27</sup>

**FAKE NEWS AND MISINFORMATION** During the COVID-19 outbreak, social media sites and other media outlets contributed to the spread of false news and rumours, creating fear and confusion. Several organisations engaged in combating the spread of fake news and non-fact checked content, activities included a campaign launched by MADA (The Palestinian Centre for Development and Media Freedoms) which was entitled: Rumours about Corona are not freedom of expression.

In September 2020, the Arab Centre for the Advancement of social media conducted research entitled "Fake News in Palestine: Exploratory Research into Content, Channels and Responses". The survey revealed that the majority of Palestinians (72%) were exposed to misleading news with a majority (70%) of participants reporting an increase during the COVID-19 pandemic compared to a 58% increase during periods of increased violence/conflict.<sup>28</sup>

25 <https://www.indexoncensorship.org/2014/08/gaza-journalists-israel-palestinians/> and <https://www.icrc.org/en/doc/resources/documents/interview/protection-journalists-interview-270710.htm>

26 <https://www.madacenter.org/en/article/1314/>

27 <https://www.madacenter.org/files/Digital%20Rights%20in%20the%20State%20of%20Emergency.pdf>

28 <https://www.apc.org/en/pubs/72-palestinians-have-been-exposed-misleading-news-7amlehs-new-research-fake-news-palestine>

## SECTION 3:

# *The Media In Disaster And Other Responses*

NATURAL DISASTERS, ONGOING CONFLICT AND COVID-19 ARE WORSENING THE ALREADY DIRE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, HEALTH, AND HUMANITARIAN SITUATION IN THE PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES. COVID-19 AND LOCKDOWN MEASURES HAVE COMPOUNDED THE DIRE CONDITIONS WHICH WERE MOVING FROM BAD TO WORSE BEFORE THE PANDEMIC.

## 3.1 Disasters Overview

Palestinians make up the largest population of the world's refugees. Unemployment levels in the Palestinian territories are high (33% in 2019) and poverty levels are rising (currently 29.2%). In Gaza, 80% of the population depends on international assistance and is lacking in food security, hygiene resources, health care, continuous electricity and safe drinking water.<sup>29</sup>

The UN 2022 occupied Palestinian territory Emergency Appeal<sup>30</sup> states, that the pandemic has further compounded vulnerabilities in the context of increasing tensions and a protracted protection crisis in the West Bank. People in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, have experienced a protracted protection crisis: increasing armed incursions into refugee camps, the use violence against civilians, and the continuing threat of displacement and demolition. While in the Gaza Strip, an escalation of hostilities in May 2021, combined with a long term decline in development has further increased residents hardship, almost two-thirds of whom are refugees. After 15 years of land, air and sea blockade Gaza is in a critical condition. Unemployment is exceptionally high (50.2 % per cent).

**NATURAL DISASTERS** The Palestinian territories are prone to natural disasters, including earthquakes and subsequent landslides. The threats from natural disasters are growing. Dangers include flash floods, droughts, and desertification, as well as extreme weather events. Water scarcity, natural resource depletion and severe environmental degradation also pose a threat. The absence of planning and policy for land use over recent years has caused an increasing vulnerability to floods. In addition, flooding, landslides, and desertification have reduced the land available for agriculture, contaminated underground water and reduced safe drinking water.

**CONFLICT FIRST INTIFADA** Started on December 8th, 1987, and lasted until 1993. The conflict was mediated by the 1993 Oslo I Accords which set up a framework for Palestinians to govern themselves in the West Bank and Gaza and enabled mutual recognition between the newly established Palestinian Authority and Israel's government. In 1995, the Oslo II Accords expanded further on this, mandating the complete withdrawal of Israel from 6 cities and 450 towns in the West Bank.<sup>31</sup>

**SECOND INTIFADA (INTIFADA AL AQSA)** The Second Intifada took place between 2000 – 2005 and was partly sparked by the stagnated peace process, a visit by the former Israeli prime Minister Ariel Sharon to the Al-Aqsa Mosque and by Palestinian grievances over Israel's control over the West Bank. In response, the construction of a barrier wall around the West Bank was approved and construction started in 2002 by the Israeli government.<sup>32</sup>

**PALESTINIAN DIVISION (THE FATAH-HAMAS CONFLICT)** In 2006, Hamas won an election of the Palestinian legislative council, beating Fatah and sparking high tensions between the two factions dominating Palestinian politics. By 2007 violence between the armed forces of the two sides escalated and after weeks of fighting Hamas imposed control over the Gaza strip. Since this time, despite several attempts, no reconciliation has occurred.

**GAZA BLOCKADE** In June 2007, Israel declared the Gaza strip under Hamas a hostile entity and imposed a blockade. Since then, the two million Palestinians in the Gaza strip have been living with severe access restrictions, isolation, and a growing humanitarian crisis.

**GAZA'S FOUR CONFLICTS IN 14 YEARS** Since 2008, Israel has military escalations and conflicts in Gaza, in 2008, 2012,

29 <https://unctad.org/es/node/27712>

30 [https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/content/resources/2022\\_opt\\_ea-english\\_eng.pdf](https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/content/resources/2022_opt_ea-english_eng.pdf)

31 <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/israeli-palestinian-conflict>

32 <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/israeli-palestinian-conflict>

2014, and 2021.<sup>33</sup> The conflicts have had a devastating impact on people across Gaza. The most recent conflict at the time of writing was between 10-17th May 2021, which resulted in 198 Palestinians and 10 people Israeli's being killed and 52,000 people are currently in need of food and cash support according to the UN. As a result of the May hostilities, socio-economic conditions and the humanitarian situation are deteriorating.<sup>34</sup>

**COVID** COVID-19 started spreading on 5 March 2020 in the West Bank and on 21 March in the Gaza Strip. According to UNCTAD COVID-19 has shattered the economy of the Palestinian territories. The UN envoy to the Middle East, Nikolay Mladenov, warned in July 2020, that the Palestinian Authority was on the verge of “total collapse” due to the coronavirus pandemic.<sup>35</sup>

According to the WHO<sup>36</sup> latest figures, there have been 628,000 confirmed COVID-19 cases across the Palestinian territories, 58% in the West Bank and 42% in Gaza. There have been 5,400 recorded deaths. The Palestinian National COVID-19 Vaccination Campaign started on 7 March 2021; however, insufficient quantities of vaccinations and community hesitation resulted in slow implementation.

### 3.2 The Role Of The Media In Disaster And Conflict

The first intifada took place in a time before the internet. Consequently, newspapers documented events and shared pictures both locally and globally. At the time, there was no Palestinian television broadcasting from inside the Palestinian territories, but foreign media agencies published news on international media platforms.

The second intifada took place after the growing development of media. Palestinian radio and television stations were able to broadcast the conflict.

In the most recent conflict of May 2021 Israel blocked access for reporters to enter Gaza, obstructing media coverage of the conflict.<sup>37</sup> Media buildings and infrastructure was also attacked including, 20 Palestinian, regional and international media outlets during the conflict.<sup>38</sup> conflict. Some WhatsApp and Facebook accounts of Palestinian journalists in the Gaza Strip were also blocked at this time.<sup>39</sup>

Despite this, social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and TikTok, played a large role during the Gaza War of 2021. The concept of citizen journalism expanded during this time. Media professionals and citizens journalists used live broadcasting of events and interacted with international audiences.

**COVID-19** The media has been employed extensively throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, providing information, contributing to the formation of public opinion, and crystallising attitudes and trends. While the authorities have particularly relied on audio-visual and print media (news sites) to communicate with audiences, the Palestinian Ministry of Health has also used social media such as Facebook on a daily basis, utilising visuals to disseminate data and daily statistics. Radio, television, and daily newspapers used their social media pages to publish data and statistics on the COVID-19 crisis, and to receive and respond to inquiries and questions from the public.

**TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION DURING COVID** Throughout the COVID-19 crisis, interactive media has been used to encourage two-way communication between the public, experts, medics, the media, and the authorities. Media organisations used their websites and social media sites, and WhatsApp was dedicated to receiving inquiries and complaints from the public and transferring them to the related authorities. Radio call-ins received calls and questions from the public. Some media institutions had a specialised employee during emergencies and crises to respond to the public inquiries and provide support. One of the most prominent interactive programmes was “The Public Asks” programme, which was broadcasted on Al-Quds Radio in Gaza and also through social media (Facebook). The

33 [https://info.wafa.ps/ar\\_page.aspx?id=7563](https://info.wafa.ps/ar_page.aspx?id=7563) – Palestinian news and information agency

34 <https://www.unocha.org/story/daily-noon-briefing-highlights-occupied-palestinian-territory-and-israel-0>

35 <https://www.israelhayom.com/2020/07/22/un-envoy-warns-pa-at-risk-of-total-collapse-due-to-coronavirus-crisis/>

36 <https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrjoiNTVIN2YxNjJlOTYONi00MTVhLTglnzktYTxNjRjYTIxODk3liwidCl6ImY2MTBjMGI3LWJkMjQlNGlZOS04MTBlTNkYzI4MGFmYjU5MClmMiQjh9&pageName=ReportSection>

37 <https://rsf.org/en/news/israels-arguments-denying-foreign-reporters-access-gaza-are-spurious>

38 <https://rsf.org/en/news/rsf-asks-icc-prosecutor-say-whether-israeli-airstrikes-media-gaza-constitute-war-crimes>

39 <https://www.timesofisrael.com/whatsapp-blocks-accounts-of-gaza-based-journalists-in-hamas-chat/#:~:text=A%20few%20hours%20after%20the%20latest%20ceasefire%20took,who%20confirmed%20their%20Whatsapp%20accounts%20had%20been%20blocked.?msclkid=f858d69ca8eb11ecbef3095f2a3149e7>



programme offers three local issues to be voted on through the Facebook page, and the most popular is discussed with specialists. Other examples of two-way media during COVID-19 include:

- » [The “Healthy Guide” programme](#) talks about diseases in general including COVID-19. It receives questions from the public which are answered by specialists.
- » [Al-Aqsa Radio broadcasts the “Al-Aqsa Doctor” programme](#) via radio and on Facebook, which hosts a doctor who talks about COVID-19 and ways to prevent and treat it. Questions and inquiries are received from the public.
- » [Hebron Radio broadcasts a morning programme](#) called the “Morning Papers” in Hebron, which interacts with audiences about COVID-19 and updates them with the latest news and educational information about the virus.
- » [Ajyal Media Network](#) in Ramallah runs a variety of interactive programmes on its radio, TV and social media, such as the “Ajyal this Morning”. This programme shares up-to-date information received from the Ministry of Health and the World Health Organization and presents it on all its platforms. It also responds to inquiries and questions from the public.
- » [Nojoom Radio](#) in the Gaza Strip was broadcasting a daily radio programme called “the Stars Gathering Us”, in which a specialist was hosted every day to talk about COVID-19. Up to date health information from the Ministry of Health and the World Health Organization was shared, and questions from the public received and answered.

They also referred the public to the relevant authorities using Facebook and WhatsApp. The Palestinian Ministry of Interior published the daily quarantine hours and other emergency procedures on its Facebook page. Visits to news websites such as Ma’an have also increased during the COVID-19 pandemic period. People have been able to use the media to track the pandemic through the provision of live updates and the promotion of health and hygiene practices. The media has been a major source of accurate information for the public and has played a role in combating rumours.

## SECTION 4:

# Media Overview

THIS SECTION PROVIDES A CONCISE OVERVIEW OF EACH OF THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF MEDIA IN THE PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES: DIGITAL MEDIA PLATFORMS, SOCIAL MEDIA, TELEVISION, RADIO, PRINT AND TRADITIONAL FORMS OF COMMUNICATION. IT DOES NOT AIM TO GIVE AN EXHAUSTIVE REVIEW OF ALL MEDIA, INSTEAD IT FOCUSES ON THE MAIN MEDIA PROVIDERS. IS IMPORTANT TO HIGHLIGHT THAT CURRENT DATA WAS NOT AVAILABLE FOR ALL MEDIA TYPES, AND THE INFORMATION PRESENTED HERE REFLECTS THE AVAILABLE PUBLISHED WORK AND INTERVIEWS.

## 4.1 Digital Media Platforms

Most of Palestine's media including TV, radio and newspapers, have a presence on social media platforms. Social networking sites and websites are the major source of news and information on daily events.

Figure 3: Ranking of popular websites and news sites in the Palestinian territories, according to three sources:

Data from ipoke 40	Palestinian Sources of General News and Information <sup>41</sup>	Alexa.com
The most visited and popular websites in Palestine 2021		Top ranking websites in Palestine
<a href="http://alfajertv.com">http://alfajertv.com</a>	Maan News Agency	Alwatanvoice.com
<a href="http://maannews.net">http://maannews.net</a>	Alwatan voice	Maannews.net
<a href="http://alwatanvoice.com">http://alwatanvoice.com</a>	AlQuds news network	Samanews.ps
<a href="https://shobiddak.com">https://shobiddak.com</a>	Palestine Now news	Arab48.com
<a href="https://qudsn.net">https://qudsn.net</a>	Palestine Today	Wattan.net
<a href="https://www.shasha.ps">https://www.shasha.ps</a>	Palestine News Network	Albawabhnews.com
<a href="https://www.jobs.ps">https://www.jobs.ps</a>	Palestine Net (Links to news outlets in English and Arabic)	Alwafd.news
<a href="https://nn.ps">https://nn.ps</a>	Wafa (Palestine News Agency)	Ssoidp.gov.ps
<a href="https://www.alhadath.ps">https://www.alhadath.ps</a>	<a href="http://www.abyznewslinks.com/pales.htm">http://www.abyznewslinks.com/pales.htm</a> (Links to news sources in Arabic)	Bop.ps
<a href="https://www.dooz.ps">https://www.dooz.ps</a>	Palestine Media Center (PLO)	

The most popular news websites, including of radio and TV outlets, are listed below (date 2015).

Figure 4: The most popular news, according to CFI Media Development (2015):<sup>42</sup>

POPULAR NEWS WEBSITES			
Website			Type
Alwatanvoice.com	530 000	28 000	
Maannews.net	20 000	35 000	
Wattan.tv	690 000	2 000	
Raya.ps	700 000	3 000	
Panet.co.il	1 800 000	8 700	

## 4.2 Social Media Platforms

The Palestinian territories have been divided geographically into different areas meaning people cannot communicate with one another easily, or often see each other in person. The advent of social media like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp, has allowed Palestinians to communicate helping to break down the borders and divisions caused by conflict and occupation. There are 2.7 million Palestinian users of social media as of January 2022, representing 54% of the total Palestinian population. This is a 20% increase from January 2020. Most access to social media at 98% is by

40 [https://ipoke.co/report/SocialMediaOnPalestine2021.pdf?utm\\_source=Palentine+Digital+Report+2021+%7C+ipoke](https://ipoke.co/report/SocialMediaOnPalestine2021.pdf?utm_source=Palentine+Digital+Report+2021+%7C+ipoke), the website provides updated information about media in Palestine.

41 <http://www.bu.edu/mzank/jerusalem/cp/pal-news.htm>

42 <https://cfi.fr/en/content/institution>

mobile phones.

Data published by Alexa in 2022 provides insight into the amount of time spent on sites, The data show Facebook is ranked first and Twitter second. See below for details:

Figure 5: The top sites in Palestinian, according to Alexa 2022

Site	Daily time on site	Daily page views per visitor	% of traffic from search	Total sites linking in
Facebook.com	17:43	8.67	8.80%	11,492,297
Twitter.com	12:41		11.40%	6,666,485
Google.com	17:28	18.51	0.20%	6,458,120
Istagram.com	8:59	11.50	14.70%	6,238,485
Youtube.com	19:43	10.91	13.20%	4,562,408
Wikipedia.org	3:43	3.09	74.00%	1,409,659
Microsoft.com	4:28	3.29	29.10%	771,705
Amazon.com	11:42	10.58	17.80%	709,590
Whatsapp.com	3:08	1.16	14.30%	705,088

According to the Statcounter<sup>43</sup> rating of social media sites by page views (February 2022), Facebook gets the largest number of page views: 90.29%, YouTube: 5.89%, Twitter: 2.05%, Instagram: 1.24%, Pinterest: 0.45%, and reddit 0.04%.

#### In January 2022 according to DataReportal:<sup>44</sup>

- » There were 3,615,100 Facebook users, representing 64.3% of the entire Palestinian population. The gender split is 51.2% male and 48.8% female. The biggest difference between male and female users is in the age band 35 - 44 with 39,500 more male users than female. People aged between 25-34 are the largest user group, comprising 1,149,300 people.
- » Facebook messenger totalled 2,763,600 users, which accounts for 49.1% of the Palestinian territories' entire population. Men make up most users: 53.3%, particularly in the age group from 35 - 44. The largest user group is people aged between 25 - 34 with a total of 909,400 users.
- » Instagram is ranked third in terms of usage, with 1,981,600 users - 35.2% of the total Palestinian population. The largest user group is people aged between 18 to 24 with 746,900 users. Women make up 53% of Instagram users.
- » LinkedIn had 305,400 users in the Palestinian territories, which accounts for 5.4% of the population. The largest user group is aged between 25 - 34 with a total of 190,000 users.
- » Twitter is only used less than 2% of the population. The largest user group is people aged between 18 - 24, making up 55% of total users. 65% of twitter users are women.

### 4.3 Television stations

The Palestinian ruling authorities control content produced by media in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. It is responsible for administrating television licenses and has a history of condemning and closing stations that it considers to be against the Palestinian Leadership. In 2019 there were 10 TV stations operating in the West Bank and 1 in Gaza.

Figure 6: Local TV Stations Operating in the Palestinian territories (2010-2019).<sup>45</sup>

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
West Bank	17	14	16	13	13	10	10	9	10	10
Gaza	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

The leading broadcasters are: Palestine TV and Al-Aqsa TV, Palestine TV (PBC) is owned by the President's office, and Al-Aqsa TV is owned by Hamas.

The most-watched international channels in Palestine are Al-Jazeera, MBC, Al- Arabiya, and Abu Dhabi TV.<sup>46</sup>

43 <https://gs.statcounter.com/social-media-stats/all/palestinian-territory>

44 <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2022-palestine>

45 Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistic "Local TV Stations Operating in Palestine since 2010 till 2019, accessed January 2022.

46 Media in Palestine, 2017: <https://fanack.com/palestine/media-in-palestine/>, and BBC News, 2018: "Palestinian Territories Profile-Media" <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world->



TV stations are:

- » Palestine TV (PTV) is operated by the Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation (PBC) in Ramallah. It started broadcasting in 1999 and airs content targeting the Palestinian diaspora.
- » Al-Aqsa TV is a satellite station established in 2006 in the Gaza strip and airs religious, political and entertainment programming.
- » Kol El Nas TV <https://www.kolalnastv.com/tv/>, a commercial/private company with regional coverage. Its main audiences is in Tulkarm, North West Bank and historical Palestine and it broadcasts general entertainment.
- » Nablus TV <https://www.nablustv.net/>, a commercial/private company with local coverage in Nablus, broadcasting news updates.
- » Palestine Today TV <https://paltodaytv.com/>, public service company with international coverage with audiences in all of the Palestinian territories and Lebanon.

Regionally Kolalnastv TV is popular in the West Bank. Its main source of funding is from commercial advertisements. It broadcasts live via Facebook and YouTube for young people and teenagers. bank and the occupied Palestinian cities. It usually broadcasts news updates, movies, drama series and comedy programmes.

The percentage of households that own televisions in the Palestinian territories in male-headed households is 91.4% and 84.8% in female-headed households.<sup>47</sup>

#### 4.4 Radio Channels

There are dozens of local and regional radio stations operating in the Palestinian territories. Arguably the most well-known stations are affiliated with the Palestinian Authority and Hamas, although there is no exact data on this. Private radio stations, which are inclined to be more independent, operate in the West Bank.

In the West Bank, there are 41 radio stations registered on the Wafa website.<sup>48</sup> The majority of stations are in Hebron, Nablus and Ramallah. Along with stations owned by different factions, there are also community or village stations broadcasting over Internet. In Gaza, the majority of the stations in Gaza are owned by political factions. Most of the radio stations have offices in Gaza City and broadcast from there. A few radio stations focus on issues relating to marginalised groups; The Bethlehem-based PNN, launched in 2013,<sup>49</sup> with two stations based in Gaza, one in Rafah and one in Jabaliya, focusing on women's issues.<sup>50</sup> Hawwa Radio in Gaza also focuses on women's issues.

Internet-only radio is starting to grow, they often cover specific issues such as one in the Aza refugee camp dedicated to refugee issues, East Jerusalem villages which are facing encroaching settlements and a farming cast from near Jenin.<sup>51</sup>

According to data from the PCBS in 2019,<sup>52</sup> 64.8% of households in the Gaza Strip own a radio compared to 50.3% in the West Bank. As radio can often be accessed via mobile phone It may be useful to note that 97.2% of people in the West Bank and 97.3% in the Gaza Strip own a mobile phone.

The notable radio stations are:

- » The Voice of Palestine, located in Ramallah. It provides a diversified mixture of programming involving culture, stories, news, useful information, and music. It broadcasts in the Palestinian territories and to the diaspora. Owned by the Palestinian Authority, it mainly depends on Authority funding. The most popular programme on the station is Sabah El Khair Programme.
- » Ajyal Radio was established in Ramallah in 2001, by a commercial and private company linked to the PA. Its main

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middle-east-14631745

47 <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/media-and-telecommunications-landscape-west-bank-and-gaza-29#:~:text=There%20are%20two%20terrestrial%20and%20broadcast%20from%20Gaza%20City>


48 [https://info.wafa.ps/ar\\_page.aspx?id=2476](https://info.wafa.ps/ar_page.aspx?id=2476)

49 <http://english.pnn.ps/>

50 <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2013/09/palestinian-women-divorce-marriage-law.html>

51 <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2013/09/palestinians-radio-stations-media.html#ixzz7N8gDxLhS>

52 Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2019 report



audience is young people, children, women, and people with disabilities. It airs political debates and news updates. The most popular programme is 'Ajyal this morning'. The station has an international fan base and a global audience

- » Gaza FM operates in the Gaza strip. It is owned by a commercial, private company and its main source of funding is from advertisements. It is aimed at adults, but there are some programmes for young people..
- » Al-Aqsa Voice- Hamas station represents Hamas' media broadcasting in the region.
- » Radio Amwaj, Ajyal Radio and Radio Bethlehem 2000 are newer stations that focus on news and current affairs in both Arabic and English.

#### 4.5 Print Media

The main Arabic-language daily newspapers in the Palestinian territories include:

- » Al Resala <https://alresalah.ps/> is Authority-owned, with audiences in the Gaza Strip.
- » Al Manar <https://www.manar.com/> has audiences in the West Bank Governorates and Jerusalem.
- » Al Hayat Al Jadida <https://www.alhaya.ps/ar> covers all of the Palestinian territories.
- » Al Ayam <https://www.al-ayyam.ps/> has audiences in West Bank Governorates and Jerusalem
- » Al-Isteqlal Newspaper <https://www.alestqlal.com/> is owned and funded by a private company. It caters to all ages and especially women, children and young people. It is distributed in cities in the Gaza Strip (North of Gaza, Gaza, Khan Yones, Der Al-Balah, and Rafah). It prints and distributes around 60.000 copies of the newspaper and usually discusses issues related to politics.

#### 4.6 Art And Traditional Forms Of Communication

Traditional forms of media and communication play an important role in information dissemination during crises. Mosques play a strong role in mobilising society and disseminating news and information about events taking place in local neighbourhoods. The Palestinian theatre has a role in writing theatrical scenarios about real life situations and any suffering being experienced. Plays are performed on cultural and historical occasions. The Palestinian Dabke, a traditional folk dance, "isn't just a dance, it's an expression of identity, pride, resistance and more".<sup>53</sup> Its performance is said to have greatly contributed to strengthening the steadfastness of Palestinians.

**CLERGYMEN AND THE MINISTRY OF ENDOWMENT (AWQAF)** 97.9% of Palestinians are Muslim and in line with other Muslim countries, Clergymen and the Ministry of Endowment in Palestine are responsible for passing on the teachings of Islam and intellectual heritage. They use various media platforms to broadcast programmes, speeches and audio recordings that convey the faithful Islamic narrative and a true picture of events during crises. In Gaza the Ministry of Endowment transmits recorded speeches during periods of conflict to support solidarity and publishes materials to be distributed to citizens in mosques and markets.

The Ministry of Endowments played an important role during the COVID-19 pandemic through various means including in mosques and places of worship. Some mosques deliver sermons, supplications and official messages to citizens related to COVID-19 via their minarets.

**THE PALESTINIAN THEATRE** Many theatre groups were formed after the start of the Palestinian revolution in 1965, to perform in coffee shops, schools, and youth clubs. The Palestinian theatre often have political, social and economic themes and promotes the Palestinian cause both locally and internationally. The most popular and well-known theatres are:

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<sup>53</sup> <https://www.middleeasteye.net/video/art-palestinian-dabke>



Figure 7: Prominent Palestinian theatres and theatre groups

Name	Location	Established	Website	Details
The Palestinian National Theater "Hakawati"	Jerusalem	1984	pnt-pal.org	
Folk theatre "Sanabel"	Jerusalem	1979	sanabeltheatre.org	Produces theatre for children, youths, girls, adults and contributed to "street theatre" and "rural theatre"
Ishtar Theatre	Ramallah	1991	ashtar-theatre.org	a programme for schools that teaches theatre to students along with the scientific subjects they receive in their classes.
Al-Hara Theatre	Bethlehem	2005	alharah.org	
Ayam Al Masrah	Jerusalem/ Gaza	1995	theatreday.org	Considered a drama training centre for children from 5 - 17 years old, with youth-inspired work.
Palestinian folk theatre	Ramallah	1991	popular-th.ps	
Tantora Theatre	Ramallah/ Hebron	1995		

## 4.7 Media Training Opportunities

Safety is a major topic for training sessions, offered by both local and international organisations. However, the absence of an overall strategy for the provision of training leads to duplication. There are limited training opportunities for media managers. Courses lack resources and materials.

Palestinian institutions specialising in media development and training include: the Media Development Centre at Birzeit University, the Filastiniyat Institution, the Arab Media Internet Network (AMIN), the Palestinian Centre for Development and Media Freedoms (MADA) and the Palestinian Journalists' Syndicate (PJS). These institutions have branches in the Gaza Strip and provide training programmes there and in the West Bank. Training programmes cover media production, social communication networks, occupational safety, and technical skills such as photography, montage and information security. The Media Development Centre at Birzeit University, the Anti-Corruption Commission and the Judicial Information Centre at the Ministry of Justice, jointly offer a short-term training programme. Many universities provide postgraduate degrees in media. These universities include, in the Gaza Strip: Islamic University of Gaza, Al Aqsa University, and Alazhar University, and, in the West Bank: Al Najah University, Ber Zeit University, Hebron University and others. There is no official list of training providers, but examples of prominent and respected training providers are:

A summary of prominent media training and programmes is provided below:

Figure 8 Media training institutions, programmes and websites

University	Location	Ownership	Website	Degree
<b>Birzeit University</b>	Ramallah		<a href="https://www.birzeit.edu/en/study/programs/media">https://www.birzeit.edu/en/study/programs/media</a>	BA in Media
<b>An-Najah National University</b>	Nablus	Public, Government	<a href="https://eco.najah.edu/en/academics/admission/">https://eco.najah.edu/en/academics/admission/</a>	BA Print and Electronic Journalism BA Public Relation and Communication BA Radio and Television
<b>Hebron University</b>	Hebron		<a href="https://www.hebron.edu/index.php/en/arts-dep-en/arts-dep4/arts-dep4-plans.html">https://www.hebron.edu/index.php/en/arts-dep-en/arts-dep4/arts-dep4-plans.html</a>	BA in Media studies
<b>Islamic University of Gaza</b>	Gaza		<a href="https://arts.iugaza.edu.ps/">https://arts.iugaza.edu.ps/</a>	BA in Press and Media Master in Press
<b>Al Aqsa University</b>	Gaza	Governmental institute	<a href="https://www.qou.edu/en/indexEnPage.do">https://www.qou.edu/en/indexEnPage.do</a>	BA in Media BA In Public Relations and Media MA in Media
<b>Al Azhar University</b>	Gaza		<a href="https://alqsa.edu.ps/en/page/1993/Alaqs-a-University-Gaza-Faculty-of-Media">https://alqsa.edu.ps/en/page/1993/Alaqs-a-University-Gaza-Faculty-of-Media</a>	BA in Media BA in Press BA in Public Relations BA in Radio and TV
<b>Al Quds Open University</b>	Jerusalem, West Bank and Gaza		<a href="https://www.qou.edu/en/faculties/media/">https://www.qou.edu/en/faculties/media/</a>	BA in Digital Communication BA in PR and Advertising BA in New Media

Other relevant courses and training opportunities include:

- » Training courses on the art of dialogue and on gender-sensitive reporting are run by the Women's Affairs Technical Committee (WATC) and the Filastiniyat Institution.
- » The Ma'an Development Centre runs courses on reporting on specialised topics such as development and the environment, dialogue skills, and use of social networks by the media.
- » The Arab Media Internet Network (AMIN) conducts training on media and security.
- » Palestinian Centre for Development and Media Freedoms (MADA) holds training workshops on the right to access information and on freedom of opinion and expression.
- » Press House Palestine conducts several technical (photography, corresponding skills, legal rights) and media safety and protection courses.
- » UN OCHA hold training courses with media personnel working with humanitarian organisations to strengthen two-way communication with affected communities.
- » DW Akademie and BBC MA have supported projects with Civil society organisations in the West bank and Gaza strip to strengthen media and information literacy through providing courses focused on digital safety, media and information literacy and journalism.



This guide is one of a series of Media Landscape Guides which map the media landscape in different countries. The guides have been produced by the CDAC Network in cooperation with DW Akademie and supported by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. This project is part of the global initiative "Transparency and media freedom - Crisis resilience in the pandemic".



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