


# Eyeless in Gaza? Reporting the Israel-Hamas conflict

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 The current fighting in Gaza is dominating the headlines but journalists are not being allowed in to report. [This AP article](#) shows how Israel is trying to keep control over the flow of news, while at the same time attempting to allow some reportage. The result has been the Western media massed on the border with reporters trying to update viewers or readers from outside of Gaza.

This is pretty typical of much war reporting. It is rare that the person on the ground actually has anything like a complete or balanced picture. Modern wars are asymmetric and almost impossible to 'cover' in a conventional editorial sense. Military organisations know that the propaganda war is as important as the territorial conflict. This is especially true of the Middle East.

However, information and pictures are getting out. [Channel 4 News](#) had a compelling film of Norwegian doctors dealing with a rising tide of casualties in appalling hospital conditions.

[Aljazeera](#) has people on the ground and is pumping out information through blogs and Twitter as well as its English and Arabic channels. The BBC has at least one producer in Gaza and extensive eye-witness accounts [Online](#). Shocking images are already flooding on to [Flickr](#).

There has been at least one [crude hoax story](#) on the blogosphere but that was rapidly rooted out. According to [Global Voices](#) there is an interesting cyber-battle on [Facebook](#) alleging that Israeli intelligence has attempted to sabotage pro-Palestinian Groups. Some Facebook users also claim their posts have been [censored](#). If you want to join a wiki-style online debate about the policy issues, try [Debategraph's Gaza 'forum'](#).

Overall, the impression is that Israeli attempts to manage the story have back-fired. The narrative of innocent Palestinians besieged by the mighty and merciless Israeli military has dominated TV screens.

Perhaps if more hacks had got in they might have been able to ask more searching questions about whether Hamas was using civilians as human shields and why it was shelling Israeli villages.

Linja Eleijat's blog has very thorough analysis of US newspaper coverage [here](#).

A good article in the [FT](#) about Israel's PR war [here](#)

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