



The Terminated

Empathetic Western media personalities fall victim to a comprehensive movement aimed at silencing support for Palestine

“Gaza is currently being treated like a concentration camp,” wrote Melissa Barrera, a 33-year-old Mexican actress, in a story on her Instagram account, and she was subsequently fired from her role in an upcoming installment of the popular franchise, ‘Scream’. In her story, she referred to the

Israeli treatment of the people of Gaza as “genocide and ethnic cleansing.” Many users on platform X supported her for speaking the truth, with many advocating for a boycott of the franchise. In response, the production house, Spyglass, issued a statement on the matter,

labeling her remarks as “anti-Semitic” and a form of “inciting hate.” The western media has reached a new low by penalizing anyone who demonstrates awareness and empathy during such a significant humanitarian crisis. What has been occurring for over 45 days now is a one-sided war,

a type of collective punishment, against a defenseless people. Furthermore, Melissa Barrera is not an isolated case in this matter. The list of individuals who have been terminated for taking a humane, compassionate stance on the war in Gaza is extensive. And the justification for their dis-

missals is consistently the same tired excuse: anti-Semitism. However, at such a time, the very essence of our humanity demands us to be anti-Zionist, countering the Israeli propaganda machine that seeks to portray Palestinians as a people without any rights to be defended whatsoever.



Michael Eisen

The first high-profile case of individuals being dismissed for taking a pro-Palestinian stance occurred when Michael Eisen, the former editor-in-chief of the biomedical and life sciences journal eLife, was fired by the journal’s board. This action was taken after

he quoted a post from the satirical website The Onion on X, with the headline, “Dying Gazans Criticized for Not Using Last Words to Condemn Hamas.” The post criticized the indifference towards the lives of Palestinian civilians. Eisen wrote, “The Onion speaks

with more courage, insight, and moral clarity than the leaders of every academic institution put together.” He then expressed his desire for more moral stances on the conflict. In response, the journal’s board of directors issued a statement mentioning that Eisen

had received clear feedback regarding his leadership approach, communication, and social media usage. They stated that his actions had been detrimental to the cohesion of the community they were trying to build, as well as to eLife’s mission, which is stated on

their website as “bringing about real change in the way the results of research are reviewed and communicated.” This mission has nothing to do with dismissing editors-in-chief for expressing their humanity and acting in a humane manner.

David Velasco

David Velasco, the editor-in-chief of Artforum magazine, was also dismissed following the publication of an open letter addressing the war. The letter expressed support for Palestinian liberation and called for an end to the violence and harm inflicted

upon civilians, which was nothing more than an expression of its signatories’ belief in the fundamental essence of humanity: protecting the suppressed. The letter also advocated for an immediate ceasefire and the delivery of humanitarian aid

to the besieged enclave, where the population has endured a brutal military operation since Hamas’s October 7 Operation Al-Aqsa Flood. The signatories of the letter also condemned the complicity of governing bodies in grave human rights violations and war crimes.

Moreover, they demanded an end to the institutional silence surrounding the ongoing humanitarian crisis faced by 2.3 million Palestinians in the occupied and besieged Gaza Strip. This very “institutional silence” resulted in severe consequences for David

Velasco, leading to the loss of his job. In response, renowned US photographer Nan Goldin, along with other artists, announced their refusal to collaborate with Artforum in the future in protest against Velasco’s termination.



BBC, MSNBC, and the rest

In yet another display of shameless oppression against free speech and advocacy for the defenseless people of Gaza, six reporters from BBC News Arabic were investigated by the broadcaster and taken off the air. This action was taken based on allegations that they

had shown pro-Palestinian sentiment amidst Israel’s ongoing bombardment of Gaza. Their punishment was a result of liking or sharing posts on social media that criticized the Israeli government or expressed support for Palestine. The suspension of these BBC

journalists is part of a larger trend, including the removal of three Muslim anchors from MSNBC and an order from German media company Axel Springer instructing its staff to downplay Palestinian deaths in news coverage, as well as the Israeli military’s deliberate tar-

geting and killing of Palestinian journalists. Ahlam Muhtaseb, a professor of media studies at California State University, San Bernardino, later commented on the situation, stating, “There is a very absurd media push to dismiss and invisibilize any Palestin-

ian sympathy.” She shed light on the truth about the state of affairs in Western media, particularly in the United States, by asserting, “The one-sided Israeli victimhood narrative requires the support of media institutions and even the U.S. government itself.”

Jackson Frank, Zahraa al-Akhrass

Also falling victim to the concerning trend of terminating pro-Palestine journalists are Jackson Frank, a sports writer for Philadelphia local news outlet PhillyVoice, and Zahraa al-Akhrass, a Canadian journalist of Palestinian origin who was recently fired from her job due to her

pro-Palestinian social media posts regarding Israel’s attacks on Gaza. Frank was terminated after posting “Solidarity with Palestine always” and has since continued to comment on the conflict, asserting that Western media plays a significant role in promoting the “acceptance

of Zionism and Palestinian genocide.” He further claimed that many politicians, organizations, journalists, and media outlets bear responsibility for the bloodshed of Palestinians. Similarly, Akhrass was fired from Global News for expressing support for the Palestinian people through

her social media posts. She emphasized that her posts were made on her personal accounts, which are entirely separate from her role as a Global News employee. She voiced her concerns about the lack of empathy for Palestinians in Western media and stated, “My dismissal should be seen

within the context of a comprehensive movement aimed at silencing those who support Palestine in Western media.” Akhrass also highlighted that she is not the first Palestinian to be fired for advocating for Palestine during recent events, and she won’t be the last.



What we have covered so far in this article is just the tip of the iceberg. Many Palestinians

outside of Palestine have experienced oppression through arrests, job losses, and the increasing Is-

lamophobia in the West. However, as Edward Said once so eloquently stated, “You cannot continue

to victimize somebody else just because you yourself were a victim once. There has to be a

limit.” Hopefully, people worldwide are beginning to recognize the truth in his words, acknowl-

edging the necessity for a limit. Awareness is spreading, and the paradigm may be shifting as

younger generations see through the menacing propaganda perpetuated by Israel.