

Video blog on Gaza devastation by British Channel 4 News presenter attracts wide audience

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A harrowing video blog by veteran Channel 4 news presenter Jon Snow on his recent five-day visit to the devastated Gaza Strip has attracted more than one million viewers.

In the three minute YouTube presentation, *The Children of Gaza*, Snow describes what he found at the al-Shifa hospital in Gaza, which has had to dedicate two floors to dealing with children killed and maimed in the Israeli bombardment of this tiny strip of land. Just 25 miles long and seven miles wide, with its borders sealed to the outside world by Israel and Egypt, Gaza has rightly been described as an “open air prison” for two million people.

The scenes are “still etched in my mind,” Snow recounts directly to camera. Channel 4’s main news presenter since 1989 explains, “What I never knew is what I know now: which is that those people who live in Gaza are mainly, but unbelievably young. The average age is 17. That means that about a quarter of a million are under 10.”

In such a densely packed urban area, he continues, “if you decide to throw missiles, shells, and the rest, then you will undoubtedly kill children. And that is what [the Israeli government] are doing.”

The short presentation is interspersed with footage of some of the young victims of the one-sided war, including a two-year-old girl, Nema; her severely bruised Panda-like eyes testament to the broken skull and fractured nose she suffered as a result of an Israeli artillery strike.

The plight of such young children is the “essence of what is happening in Gaza,” Snow says.

He acknowledges that Hamas is firing rockets into Israel, but continues that “of course Israel—courtesy of

American finance—has invented the most brilliant shield which is keeping absolutely everything out. And that’s a big difference. Suffering is amongst the ground troops, mainly 20-year-olds, who go in and get killed.”

The video was shot in the Channel 4 *News* studio 17 days into Israel’s murderous offensive against a defenceless population. The cynically named Operation Protective Edge is now into its 25th day, and has lasted longer than Operation Cast Lead, in December 2008-January 2009, which was condemned by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights as a war crime.

Since Snow produced his blog, hundreds more men, women and children have died or been injured. Many of these were taking shelter after being warned to clear out of homes and apartments in areas deemed no-go zones by the Israel Defence Force.

Many of the recent dead and injured, such as the 20 Palestinians killed at the UN’s Jabalia Elementary Girls School on Wednesday, were amongst thousands of families that have fled to take refuge in what are supposedly safe areas. It was the second attack on a UN school since the offensive began on July 8, as Israel deliberately targets civilians with the aim of wiping out and terrorising all resistance to its brutal occupation of Palestinian land.

What makes Snow’s presentation so unique—and accounts for why it has been taken up so widely—is not only his evident emotion at these horrific events. It is the fact that he has dared to take a stand in defence of the truth.

The ruling elites in Britain, Europe and the United States, as well as the Arab bourgeois regimes, are all too aware of the monumental war crime being carried

out in Gaza. While they wring their hands and call for a “ceasefire”, they are complicit in the slaughter—having not only repeatedly backed Israel’s right to “self-defence” but also supplied the arms and finances that make it possible.

Only this week the US replenished the Israeli military with arms to enable it to continue its offensive, part of the \$3 billion in funding it gives to Israel annually.

The UK sold Israel £6.3 million-worth of arms last year alone. Not once has there been any demand by the official parties to stop this trade. Instead, seven Conservative Party Members of Parliament are currently in Israel as part of a visit by the Conservative Friends of Israel. They include former minister Baroness Neville Jones, Sir Edward Garnier, Andrew Percy and Bob Blackman. In a statement, they said their visit was aimed at gaining “a better understanding of the complexities of daily life in the area and [to] express their solidarity with the people of the region.”

They are not visiting the Palestinian territories.

On July 23, around the time Snow was at the al-Shifa hospital, a meeting of the European Union’s foreign ministers issued a statement effectively endorsing Israel’s action. While calling the firing of rockets by Hamas “criminal and unjustifiable acts,” the ministers insisted on “Israel’s legitimate right to defend itself against any attacks.”

As for the United Nations, even while condemning the assault on its buildings, no action is proposed, let alone taken, for Israel’s flagrant flouting of international law.

Instead, the energies of Washington, London, the EU and the UN are focused on targeting Russia for punitive measures as part of its war-mongering offensive against the Putin regime. Sweeping financial sanctions have been imposed against Moscow over unproven allegations that it was responsible for the crash of Malaysia flight MH17 in eastern Ukraine, which killed 298 passengers and crew.

The stark contrast between the response to Moscow and the inaction against Israel has not passed unnoticed. Millions recognise that what is deemed a war crime depends on who is doing it and whose interests it serves.

Snow’s video was not broadcast on the regular Channel 4 *News* bulletin. Such is the Orwellian world of official news sources that it appears this was because

it may have broken the media regulator Ofcom’s broadcasting code on “due impartiality”. Channel 4’s producers have defended running the blog on its web site, however, stating that the “feedback we have received [on it] has been overwhelmingly positive...”

The response to Snow’s video underscores the widespread opposition to the one-sided “reporting”—or rather propagandizing—in favour of Israel’s actions in Gaza, which finds no outlet in the official media.

Many of the recent protests in support of the Palestinians in the UK, for example, have condemned the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) as the British Brainwashing Corporation.

Writing in Lebanon’s *Daily Star*, Jessy El Murr, a Sky News Arabia journalist recounted how America’s NBC’s Middle East correspondent Ayman Mohyeldine sent tweets, in which he used words such as “emotional”, “unbelievable” and “horror” to describe witnessing the killing of four Palestinian boys on a Gaza beach on July 16.

“His network pulled him out of Gaza almost immediately after the incident, citing security concerns,” El Murr explains. It was only after thousands responded, condemning his removal by NBC, that Mohyeldine was sent back to Gaza.

“No such luck for CNN’s Diana Magnay,” El Murr continues. “She used the word ‘scum’ in a tweet to describe a group of Israelis who were threatening to attack her if she said anything ‘wrong’ about Israel. Although she deleted the tweet, her network pulled her out of Israel and sent her to Moscow.”

Meanwhile, the International Federation of Journalists has called for Israel to be held to account for attacking journalists reporting on the Gaza Strip after four media workers were killed and three media outlets were attacked, including *Al Jazeera*.



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