

Israel buys ads during Super Bowl LVIII to justify Gaza genocide

Kevin Reed
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The Israeli state made use of the broadcast of the National Football League's Super Bowl LVIII on Sunday between the Kansas City Chiefs and the San Francisco 49ers to promote its murderous war in Gaza. Chief among the aims was to counteract or neutralize the popular opposition and horror felt by vast numbers of people to the Zionist regime's ongoing crimes.

In television ads, each costing \$7 million for 30 seconds, the Israeli government and others delivered messages to the more than 120 million viewers seeking to justify the destruction of Gaza and falsely equating opposition to the ethnic cleansing with "antisemitism."

The series of ads paid for by the State of Israel was aired before and during the football game. It used the hashtag #BringThemHomeNow to focus attention on the remaining 136 Israeli hostages being held by Hamas 120 days after the raid by militants on October 7. The ads were part of a multichannel campaign that ran throughout the Super Bowl weekend.

The Israeli propaganda campaign was timed to coincide with the Netanyahu regime's initiation of an air assault on Rafah, the city in the south of Gaza where 1.4 million Palestinians have taken refuge. More than 100 Palestinians were killed during a bombing raid that took place while the football game was underway in Las Vegas, Nevada.

The ad campaign was created by the National Public Diplomacy Directorate in the office of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and was aired by CBS and other channels. The purpose was to justify the slaughter of nearly 30,000 Palestinians in Gaza, most of them women and children. Tens of thousands have also been wounded or mutilated, and tens of thousands more are missing.

However, like previous pro-Israel propaganda efforts,

the attempt to blame Palestinians for the barbaric onslaught on Gaza with the backing of the US government had the opposite effect of that intended. Nearly 10,000 people registered a complaint with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) pointing out the commercial did not disclose that a foreign government had paid for it.

Meanwhile, the response on social media was swift and scathing. For example, Jewish Voice for Peace posted the following to Twitter/X: "The Israeli military is bombing Rafah, the most densely populated area in the world, while Americans watch the Super Bowl. This is intentional. This is genocide. We're demanding the world watching the #superbowl turn their eyes to #Rafah."

A Twitter/X user named Juno with 50,000 followers posted, "I'm sorry, is Israel seriously airing a SOB STORY PROPAGANDA AD during the SUPER BOWL while SIMULTANEOUSLY BOMBING THE REFUGEES AT RAFAH???????"

In another strand of the vile campaign, the billionaire owner of the NFL's New England Patriots, Robert Kraft, bought 30 seconds of time to air an ad produced by his Foundation to Combat Antisemitism (FCAS).

The ad features the comments of Dr. Clarence B. Jones, a lawyer and speech writer for Martin Luther King, Jr., who declaims, "All hate thrives on one thing ... silence. ... When we stand up to silence, we stand up to all hate." The voice is heard over various neo-Nazi images and the hashtag #StandUptoJewishHate.

Under conditions of mass demonstrations internationally against the US-backed Israel Defense Forces massacre in Gaza, Kraft is spreading the lie that Palestinians and all opponents of Zionism are "terrorists" and "antisemites." In fact, the pack of fascists who comprise the Netanyahu cabinet are the

principal purveyors of racist and chauvinist filth.

As we have noted previously on the WSWS, the annual Super Bowl has become the occasion for the American ruling elite to indulge in rabid nationalism and militarism, using the opportunity to stir up the most socially backward and primitive sentiments. The sports-watching public becomes a sitting duck for the endless barrage of self-congratulatory, flag-waving “pro-Americanism.” All the great problems in the US are supposed to be momentarily dissipated, as the country “comes together for one memorable night” in its supposed universal love of the big football showdown. It’s all very shabby and unconvincing.

This year, the game and broadcast also had the distinction of delivering to the public a filthy and hypocritical campaign aimed at normalizing the assault on Gaza, a barbaric war crime on a scale not seen since World War II.

As the wealthiest and most gladiatorial of professional sports in the US, professional football brings out, in a distorted, unhealthy fashion, the elements of social inequality and extreme violence that plague everyday life in American capitalist society.

These ugly connections were brought home on Wednesday, Valentine’s Day no less, during the Super Bowl victory parade and celebration held in Kansas City, Missouri. At the end of the rally to mark the Chiefs’ win, held on the west side of Kansas City Union Station, one person was killed and 22 others injured in a mass shooting incident—the *48th such incident already this year* in the US—that still remains under investigation. Some of those injured were children. Police have detained three people. An estimated one million people attended the parade and ceremony. Chiefs’ players were still on the stage when the shooting broke out.



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