

BBC's suppression of "Gaza: Medics Under Fire": Solidarity with NHS workers standing against censorship and genocide

NHS FightBack
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NHS FightBack condemns the BBC's politically motivated suppression of the documentary, *Gaza: Medics Under Fire*. We wholeheartedly support the stand taken against the BBC by Health Workers 4 Palestine (HW4P) and other leading clinicians who issued an open letter demanding a broadcast date for the documentary.

The decision to indefinitely postpone the scheduled broadcast is a blatant act of censorship and an indictment of the Britain's publicly funded state broadcaster. At stake is the silencing of those who risked and lost their lives to save others from a genocide.

The documentary provides firsthand testimony of the systemic targeting of Gaza's healthcare system by the Israeli military: The past 19 months has seen doctors murdered, and medics slaughtered while treating the wounded. It features medical personnel, many known to the global health community, who remained at their posts under bombardment trying to save lives while documenting war crimes.

The suppression of *Gaza: Medics Under Fire* is an attack on the global healthcare community. As doctors, nurses, paramedics, and National Health Service (NHS) staff, we know that an injury to one is an injury to all. In Gaza, medics work without anaesthetic, electricity, or clean water, treating the maimed while burying their own families. Their voices must be heard, not silenced.

The open letter to BBC Director-General Tim Davie, *Silencing the Frontline: Health Workers Demand BBC Air "Gaza: Medics Under Fire"*, states:

"This is not a neutral editorial choice. It is part of a wider, disturbing pattern of silencing Palestinian voices and stifling those—especially in the UK health sector—who speak out against atrocities. The BBC's refusal to air this film constitutes censorship by omission, and it is no less dangerous than overt propaganda."

The letter continues:

"The health workers featured in this documentary have witnessed countless colleagues being killed and have risked their lives not only to care for their patients, but to document and expose the relentless targeting by Israel of healthcare infrastructure and personnel. Suppressing their voices is to erase the truth."

It concludes:

"We demand that the BBC immediately confirms a broadcast date for this documentary and honours its duty to report with integrity, independence, and moral clarity."

The open letter is signed by nine highly respected clinicians and global health professionals, including leading members of HW4P. HW4P was founded by a group of doctors in the UK last October to oppose the censorship they faced in advocating for the rights of Palestinian health workers and the healthcare of Palestinians and has been established across 70 cities globally.

As of March this year, at least 1,400 health care workers have been killed in Israeli attacks. The World Health Organization has reported that 94 percent of hospitals in the Gaza Strip have been damaged or destroyed and there are only 2,000 beds for a population of over 2 million.

The *Medics Under Fire* documentary records the destruction through the eyes of its victims. It is forensic evidence in the legal sense, moral testimony in the human sense. Suppressing it undermines international humanitarian law.

Basement Films, the producer of the documentary has stated, "We gathered searing testimony from multiple Palestinian doctors and health workers who had survived attacks on hospitals and their homes that killed both colleagues and loved ones.

"We also spoke to multiple medics who had been

detained and testified they had been tortured, and we made solemn undertakings that their stories would be told, and done so as soon as possible.”

Basement Films added, “The film has been made by an experienced and multi-award-winning team both from Basement Films, and the BBC. It has been fact-checked, complied and signed off multiple times within the BBC, as well as experts we consulted with.”

The indefinite delay in showing the documentary from its scheduled screening in February follows the BBC in the same month pulling any further streaming on BBC iplayer of the documentary *Gaza: How to Survive a Warzone* after its initial broadcast on BBC2 on February 17. The BBC has stated the two documentaries are part of an ongoing “review”.

That documentary, produced by two London based directors working remotely with two cameramen inside Gaza’s “safe zone”, follows three children and a young mother over a nine-month period surviving under the rubble of non-stop Israeli bombardment. Israel’s war criminal Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has banned access to Gaza by outside journalists. Last Sunday the death toll among Palestinian journalists killed since October 2023 reached 220, with the life of Hassan Majdi Abu Warda claimed among at least 30 Palestinians killed that day by Israeli air strikes.

A witch-hunt against the documentary was instigated when David Collier, a self-described “100 percent Zionist” activist, named Abdullah Alyazouri—the 13-year-old narrator—as the son of a Hamas-affiliated official, Dr. Ayman Alyazouri. The film was smeared as Hamas “propaganda,” even though it includes Palestinians expressing criticism of Hamas and offers no political advocacy—only the truth of life under siege.

A clique of pro-Israel media figures, including former BBC executives, accused the BBC of violating editorial guidelines and implied the documentary was somehow compromised by “terrorist” connections. Their concern was over how the documentary elicited global sympathy for Palestinians—especially children—as they face collective punishment at the hands of the Israeli war machine.

The protest over BBC censorship has been joined by prominent figures in the film and media industry, including actress Susan Sarandon and film maker Mike Leigh. On May 12 they were among more than 600 signatories to send their own open letter to the BBC director general demanding a release date for *Medics Under Fire*.

This states:

“We stand with the medics of Gaza whose voices are being silenced. Their urgent stories are being buried by bureaucracy and political censorship.”

Raising the BBC’s record of censorship, the open letters asks, “If the voices of Palestinian doctors aren’t considered credible—just as the voices of Palestinian children were previously dismissed—then whose voices does the BBC consider legitimate?”

The BBC’s censorship of *Gaza: Medics Under Fire* demonstrates the complicity of the entire political establishment in Israel’s genocidal offensive. The smears against opponents of the mass murder of Palestinians as “terrorist sympathisers” have reached fever pitch just as the Netanyahu regime has launched the final phase of its drive to ethnically cleanse Gaza via the expulsion of more than 2 million Palestinians.

The Starmer Labour government defends Israel in the High Court and denies genocide to protect British arms exports—specifically components for F-35 jets which have rained death on Gaza.

Amid this criminal conspiracy to silence British medics where are Unison, Unite, GMB, the Royal College of Nursing and the British Medical Association? Why have they not raised their voices in solidarity with our Palestinian colleagues—the doctors executed in their wards, the paramedics crushed in their ambulances, the nurses bombed beside their patients?

Their refusal to speak out is an abdication of all moral, professional and political responsibility, proving once again that the union bureaucracies have nothing to do with workers’ resistance and act as instruments of state and corporate control.

The fight against censorship and war crimes must be taken up by the more than million strong NHS workforce. We call for the formation of rank-and-file committees of health workers, independent of the union leaderships and for all health workers to demand the immediate broadcast of *Medics Under Fire*.

Defend the right to speak out against genocide and mobilise international solidarity with our colleagues in Gaza!



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