



Web-Street Reactions G A Z A

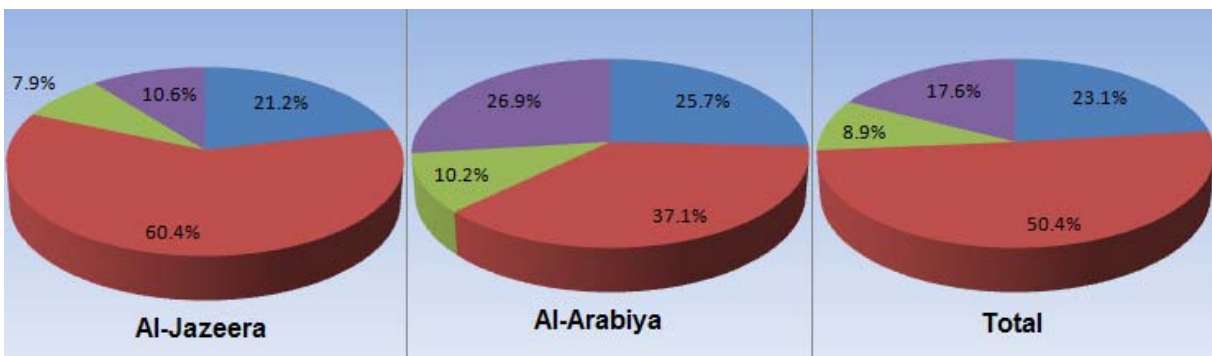


PI Online analyzed more than 2500 commentaries made by Arab readers on Al-Jazeera and on Al-Arabiya regarding the situation in Gaza following the Israeli bombing. The commentaries were readers' reaction to three news articles on Al-Jazeera published during the first two days of the incursion [December 27 and 28, 2008] and one article in Al-Arabiya published on December 28, 2008. All articles were detailing the bombing and the ensuing casualties.

The 2682 comments were segregated into four categories:

1. Those who condemned Israel
2. Those who directed their anger and laid the blame on the Arab States
3. Those who considered Hamas responsible
4. A neutral group showing bewilderment or expressing mourning.

Results:



Legend: o Blaming Arab countries o Condemning Israel o Blaming Hamas o Bewilderment/Mourning

Among the four categories, comments extracted from both networks of Al-Jazeera and Al-Arabiya, The percentage of the number of writers condemning the Arab countries was the highest. It reached a high of 60.4% on Al-Jazeera and was at 37.1% on Al-Arabiya, but was still the highest percentage among the four groups. The harshest criticism of the posters was directed at the Egyptian leadership. The disparity among the two networks is indicative of the different kind of readership on both. Al-Jazeera participants in general exhibit a more combative stand in their remarks. It should also be noted that while the Arab governments were blamed, the readers saw little possibility of action by these governments. A separate survey on Islam Online was quite telling and showed the pessimism that permeates the Arab Street as far as the capacity or the will of their leaders to react. Out of more than 10,700 respondents to the question "Do you see any deriving benefit from convening an Arab Summit regarding the Gaza massacre", 91% casted the "NO" vote.

For those condemning Israel, there was some overlap in some posts where the level of anger was equally spread to encompass the Arab governments. Those directing their anger solely at Israel utilized however the most lethal and revengeful words.

If we consider that all these comments were made on Arabic sites, the initial blaming of Hamas was somehow also significant particularly on Al-Arabiya during these two days [10.7%] immediately following the bombing. We should note however that an un-quantified faster review of the sites during the subsequent days and as the Israeli operation was expanded, shows a considerable decrease in messages blaming Hamas.

For those who expressed more sorrow than anger at a particular party, the tones of the messages reflected desperation and sadness. This group while refraining from pointing fingers seemed the most psychologically hurt at vetting their anger. The Muslim words, *La hawla wa la quwwata illa billah* [There is no might or power except with Allah] which are often a sign of total surrender to God's will, were most often used among this group.

Statistics & References:

Commentaries	Condemning Israel	Blaming Arab Countries	Blaming Hamas	Bewilderment /mourning	Total
Article 1 - Al-Jazeera	60	180	39	8	287
Article 2 - Al-Jazeera	60	267	12	69	408
Article 3 - Al-Jazeera	215	480	60	85	840
Total Al-Jazeera	335	927	111	162	1535
% Al-Jazeera	21.8%	60.4%	7.2%	10.6%	
Al-Arabiya	295	426	117	309	1147
% Al-Arabiya	25.7%	37.1%	10.2%	26.9%	
Total	630	1353	228	471	2682
Total %	23.5%	50.4%	8.5%	17.6%	

- 1 <http://www.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/02B9FoE9-F798-4D3B-AB7B-24DFD69145AA.htm>
- 2 <http://www.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/B1759701-282C-4B96-AC99-4BA711775093.htm>
- 3 <http://www.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/9CBA3761-274D-49BA-8302-3B566DFAA3Bo.htm>
- 4 <http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2008/12/27/62897.html>
- 5 <http://www.islamonline.net/polls/arabic/27-12-08/SurveyResult.asp>

Note: Some commentaries directed their anger at multiple sources. We have statistically included them with the group that best represented the theme of the particular message.

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