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Contrasting Al Jazeera's forensic *October 7* report with TVNZ's Tame interview

October 7, directed by Richard Sanders, Al Jazeera Investigations (Documentary); *Israeli-Hamas War: Israeli Ambassador on rising deaths in Gaza*, TVNZ Q&A with Jack Tame (Current Affairs).

FOR a more informed report of what actually took place when Hamas fighters broke through the perimeter fences surrounding Gaza to attack Israel on 7 October 2023, Al Jazeera's hour-long documentary, *October 7*, which was broadcast on March 20, exposed the lies of the Israeli/US propaganda machine, and has been pivotal in transforming the Palestine/Israel narrative and so too the politics of the Middle East.

Examining seven hours of footage from both sides of the conflict, including from CCTV, dashcams, personal phones and headcams of dead Hamas fighters, it includes a comprehensive list of those killed and reveals widespread human rights abuses by both Hamas fighters and others who followed them through the fence.

However, Al Jazeera's investigation also found that many of the worst

stories that came out in the days following the attack were false. This was especially true of atrocities that were used repeatedly by politicians in Israel, repeating the old propaganda trope alleging babies were beheaded and young women were raped, to justify the ferocity of the Israeli Defence Force (IDF) subsequent bombardment of the Gaza Strip.

In particular, the Al Jazeera documentary revealed that IDF claims, that it found 8 burned babies at a house in Kibbutz Be'eri, later embellished in fanciful detail by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, were entirely untrue. There were no babies in the house and the 12 civilians inside were killed by Israeli forces when they stormed the house.

This was but one of a number of incidents where the Israeli police and army appear to have killed Israeli citizens, making Al Jazeera's *October 7* documentary a deep dive into the events that has now led to the deaths of tens of thousands of people, the significance of which will reverberate for decades.

In stark contrast, here in Aotearoa New Zealand, the *Q&A* interview, which TVNZ's Jack Tame conducted with the Israeli ambassador just days later, in April, was a tragedy for different reasons

Hard on the heels of a leaked *New York Times* directive detailing what words its staff can and cannot be used to describe the carnage Israel is raining on Palestinians, proof positive since those reports are published verbatim

here in New Zealand, that our understanding of the conflict is carefully managed to always reflect a pro-Israel bias (Baroud, 2024; De Jong, 2023; Pilger, 2006), Jack Tame's show reflected the anti-Palestinian propaganda paradigm.

Forget the humanity of an estimated 120,000 dead and wounded Palestinians and countless others facing famine and disease sheltering in tents or what is left of destroyed buildings, Western media are discouraged from using phrases such as 'genocide', 'occupied territory', 'ethnic cleansing' and even 'refugee camps', along with 'slaughter', 'massacre' and 'carnage'.

And so in like vein did Jack Tame conduct the *Q&A* interview with the Israel Ambassador to New Zealand, Ran Yaakoby, which was taped in the Israeli embassy.

Curiously, while acknowledging at the top of the broadcast that 'Tensions continue to intensify in the Middle East', raising the prospect that both sides of the story might be aired, viewers were told it would involve an interview with the Israeli Ambassador alone.

By that date, April 22, more than 34,000 Palestinians had perished, the vast majority of whom were women and children, and most of them were killed inside their own homes, in hospitals, schools or United Nations shelters.

From his introduction, 'establishing' that the genocide taking place in Gaza had its genesis in the October 7 attack by Hamas, and not in the Nakba of 1948 followed by almost 76 years

of systematic repression, Jack Tame was complicit in an almost hour-long presentation of pro-Israel propaganda.

Attempting to justify the atrocities it has committed against the Palestinians, which has seen it facing the charge of committing war crimes and genocide, currently being considered by the International Court of Justice (ICC), the Israeli ambassador had a field day.

Presenting an appalling lack of balance, included Tame's nodding agreement with the Israeli ambassador's discredited claims of Hamas atrocities alleging 'beheadings' and 'necrophilia', and for describing Israelis as being 'butchered' (five times he used the word) while Palestinians were merely 'killed'. It was a new low in the New Zealand media's record of bias when it comes to the presentation of the facts about the Palestine/Israel conflict.

In the very week that we were preparing to remember, on Anzac Day, the horrific sacrifices made in previous wars and even as Israel's genocidal slaughter of Palestinians brought us closer to World War Three than at any time since the Cuban missile crisis, that TVNZ should have pre-recorded—and so had time to edit, but didn't—such a disgraceful presentation was simply appalling. The programme was the subject of protests claiming bias outside the TVNZ headquarters in Auckland on April 26 and many public complaints (Pacific Media Watch, 2024), yet, ironically, Tame was awarded New Zealand's 2024 Voyager Political Journalist of the Year Award.

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