



ماعت للسلام والتنمية وحقوق الإنسان  
Maat For Peace, Development, and Human Rights

# Double standards and selective policies:

## A comparison between the Western vision of the war on the Gaza Strip and Ukraine

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## Introduction:

The conflict in Gaza has entered its third week, with Israeli occupation forces continuing their bombing campaign since October 7. These bombings have been devastating, with Israel utilizing highly destructive bombs, including reports of the use of internationally banned white phosphorus bombs. The death toll among Palestinians has reached 5,087, while injuries have surpassed 15,273 in the Gaza Strip, according to the Palestinian Ministry of Health statistics as of October 23, 2023. Disturbingly, it is estimated that 70% of the victims are civilians, particularly women and children. The United Nations reports that Israel has destroyed 42% of the infrastructure in the Gaza Strip. These actions carried out by the Israeli occupation forces are in clear violation of international humanitarian law, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. It is disheartening to witness the inaction of Western countries and the United States of America, who have applied international law to pressure Russia in its conflict with Ukraine, yet have failed to hold Israel accountable for its actions in the Gaza Strip. These countries, along with the United States, continue to provide unwavering support to Israel, which only emboldens it to commit further crimes that may amount to war crimes or crimes against humanity. To illustrate the extent of this support, it is worth noting that the United States alone has provided approximately \$263 billion to Israel between 1946 and 2023, making it the primary donor to the massive Israeli military budget.

The double standards of these Western countries were further exemplified by the United States' announcement on October 19, allowing Israelis to stay in the United States for up to 90 days without a visa, while simultaneously refusing to pressure Israel to open safe corridors for the transfer of the sick and injured out of Gaza to receive medical treatment.

These policies pursued by the United States and Western countries not only demonstrate their unwavering support for Israel but also reveal double standards that were evident in Israel's war on the Gaza Strip. While these parties supported Ukraine's right to resist the Russian army, they labeled Palestinian factions as terrorists for carrying out the same role against the occupying forces. Moreover, while supporters of Israel were granted the freedom to assemble and demonstrate in European countries, the same rights were denied to pro-Palestine demonstrators. These actions demand an end to the targeting of civilian populations. Additionally, while Israeli content, including

violent content, thrives on social media platforms, Palestinian content faces restrictions on reach and views. The standards followed by Western countries are no longer subject to doubt; they are selective and demonstrate double standards. The risk of undermining decades of work to establish the rules of international humanitarian law and global human rights standards, which ensure the protection of civilians during and outside of armed conflicts, is alarming. An illustrative example of this occurred in October 2023 when 800 European Union employees accused the President of the European Commission of employing double standards in the war on Gaza. The employees criticized the President's delayed condemnation of the ongoing bombings of civilians in the Gaza Strip and the disregard for international humanitarian and human rights laws. The European Commission's ambiguous stance regarding the siege imposed on Gaza, in contrast to its position on Russian actions in Ukraine, which were described as terrorist acts, was also a subject of criticism.

This report aims to examine the double standards policy pursued by certain European countries, topped by the United States of America, regarding Israel's war on the Gaza Strip compared to the Russian conflict in Ukraine. It will also address the policies pursued by Western media outlets and newspapers in this regard, as well as the practices of technology companies such as "Meta," which owns platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok. For the purpose of this report, the term "West" refers to select European countries, the USA, and Canada.

### **First: Only supporters of Israel are allowed**

The devastating bombing of the Gaza Strip by Israeli occupying forces on 7 October 2023 coincided with peaceful demonstrations and gatherings in various European countries. Some of these demonstrations were supportive of Palestine and called for a cessation of crimes against civilians in the Gaza Strip as well as for a ceasefire. Some of them were supportive of Israeli occupation and describe Palestinian factions as terrorists. However, European countries implemented double standards, selective policies, and various restrictions towards these gatherings; some European countries, such as France, Germany, the Netherlands, Britain, and Canada, allowed demonstrations and gatherings in support of Israel, while restrictions were imposed at the beginning of the bombing on demonstrations in support of the Palestinian cause and rejecting the violations against Civilians in the Gaza Strip. The double standards followed by some

European countries were also evident in banning peaceful pro-Palestinian gatherings, allowing pro-Israel ones, dismissing individuals sympathetic to Palestine from work, and canceling conferences and events led by individuals of Arab descent.

## 1. Peaceful demonstration and assembly

As soon as the Israeli bombing of the Gaza Strip began, various calls began on social media calling for solidarity against the crime of genocide that is likely to be committed by the occupying forces in the Gaza Strip. However, these calls are in line with the right to freedom of opinion and expression and the right to peaceful assembly, which are enshrined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and have long been urged by European States to ratify it. These calls also faced cancellation orders in other countries. In France, for example, the Minister of the Interior submitted a request to ban pro-Palestine demonstrations, but the French Council of State canceled the decision to ban pro-Palestine demonstrations or those calling for a ceasefire.

In Germany, the Berlin police rejected requests submitted by a number of independent Palestinian and German associations that attempted to hold peaceful gatherings to reject the killing of civilians and the destruction of infrastructure in the Gaza Strip by Israeli aircraft. The German Interior Minister considered that these calls may represent anti-Semitism or hate speech, and in her speech to the German Parliament, the minister stated that there are red lines of not tolerating anti-Semitic or anti-Israel incitement or violence. Other countries may have implemented similar policies; For example, in the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Prime Minister of the Dutch interim government, Mark Rutte, announced in a statement to the Dutch House of Representatives, that municipalities will prohibit peaceful demonstrations and gatherings in solidarity with Palestinian factions. In Switzerland, citizens in solidarity with the Palestinian cause in the cantons of Zurich and Basel were not allowed to demonstrate under the pretext of "possible human casualties and property damage during rallies organized by supporters of Palestine while some other cantons such as Geneva allowed demonstrations. In Canada, the mayor of Toronto issued a statement saying Palestinian gatherings support violence and threaten the safety and security of Jewish Canadians. The United States also faced the demonstrations that took place in support of Palestine in New York with crowds of security forces, and a number of people who participated in these demonstrations were subjected to arbitrary and forced detention.



US police crowds during a protest in support of Palestine

On the other hand, European countries allowed demonstrations in support of the Israeli occupation forces and did not place any restrictions that might prevent the organization of these demonstrations. On the contrary, the countries facilitated such demonstrations. These demonstrations have taken place under the protection of the police in the United States, France, Germany, and Italy.

In Germany, the Berlin police allowed supporters of Israel to organize demonstrations and gatherings to demand the release of hostages and prisoners held by Palestinian factions. On October 9, France allowed a demonstration by some of Israel's supporters in solidarity with Israel against the operation carried out by the Palestinian factions. Canada, which initially banned pro-Palestinian demonstrations, welcomed demonstrations led by members of the Jewish faith to condemn the Palestinian factions and demand the release of hostages and prisoners.

On the other hand, during the Russia-Ukraine war, some European countries allowed mass demonstrations to reject the Russian war on Ukraine, which began in February 2022. The earliest of these demonstrations took place in Berlin, a year after this war in support of Ukraine, and some buildings were illuminated with the Ukrainian flag

during the marches secured by the Berlin police. Government institutions in Belgium, France, and Poland also encouraged demonstrations in support of Ukraine and in rejection of the Russian war. These selective policies in accepting one demonstration and rejecting others show that European countries and the US view human rights as divisible rights, which is contrary to the principles outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which marks its 75th anniversary this year.

We recall that the right to peaceful assembly is guaranteed under international treaties and instruments and under Article 20 (1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which stipulates that “Everyone has the freedom to participate in peaceful meetings and associations.” Also, Article 21 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights stipulates to guarantee the right to peaceful assembly, no restrictions may be placed on the exercise of this right other than those imposed in conformity with the law and which are necessary to protect national security. What is also regrettable is that all countries that imposed a ban on these demonstrations are considered a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, this right is considered non-negotiable.

## **2. Arbitrary detention for those refusing bombing of Gaza**

Some European countries have detained individuals of various Arab nationalities for demonstrating in support of the Palestinian cause. As of the date of writing this report, Paris police have arrested 43 people who protested in demonstrations to reject the indiscriminate, deadly bombing of the Gaza Strip, while fines were imposed on 827 people. The French Ministry of the Interior also ordered the Palestinian activist, Maryam Abu Daqqa, to be placed under house arrest for about 6 weeks in a hotel in the city of Marseille, under the pretext of suspicions about her belonging to a terrorist organization. It is worth noting that she came to France to participate in a cultural symposium on women’s rights. In Germany, 190 people are currently being arbitrarily detained for participating in gatherings demanding an end to violence against civilians in the Gaza Strip. The Ministry of the Interior also confirmed that it would deport everyone who supports the Hamas movement, according to what the Minister of the Interior said. The United Kingdom also arrested a number of people who took the same approach to demonstrate under the pretext of chanting “Jihad” slogans, in accordance with the Anti-Terrorism Law; and in the US more than 150 protesters who demonstrated in New York

in support of Palestine remain detained, and In addition to many demands directed at Biden to put pressure on Israel to cease fire in Gaza.



Arrest of an activist who called for a ceasefire on civilians in Gaza arrested

On the other hand, the security forces in European countries and in the US did not arrest any of the demonstrators who came out to reject the attacks by the Palestinian factions on the Gaza envelope area. On the contrary, these forces ensure the security of the demonstrations, and every request submitted by the organizers has been approved in the US, France, Italy, and Germany. These demonstrations were organized by several Jewish movements, who did not report any instances of arbitrary treatment while planning them.

It would have been better if the European countries saw that what the Palestinian factions did was not an act of resistance to reject the occupation, to reject in turn the demonstrations carried out by organizations supporting Ukraine with the beginning of the Russian war in February 2022, but similar steps to reject Palestinian support did not occur in the context of Ukraine, but rather in the context of Ukraine. On the contrary,

the European Union encouraged the organization of gatherings, demonstrations and marches to reject what they described as “aggression” against Ukraine. This selective treatment of universal, indivisible rights reveals the non-uniform standards adopted by the United States and Western countries, even if these standards harm the human rights that they have always praised and paid billions to implement in different countries.

### 3. Arbitrary dismissal of Palestine supporters

Among the measures taken by some Western countries that represent a case of selective policies is the dismissal of some employees who expressed sympathy for Palestine after October 7, 2023, as the Canadian government sacked an Egyptian pilot, Mustafa Ezzo, who worked for Canadian Airlines after he shared photos of himself taking part in a protest in Montreal against Israeli aggression. The dismissal decision came after a group supporting Israel shared a photo of the pilot from his Instagram account, showing solidarity with Palestine. Accordingly, Air Canada fired Ezzo from work on October 9, 2023, under the pretext that his posts were unacceptable, at a time when some companies in Canada granted a week off to some individuals of Israeli nationality who work in technology companies to check on their family members in Israel. In the same context, some European countries provided work incentives for people of Ukrainian nationality after the Russian war on Ukraine. These incentives included paid leave, increased wages, and the provision of suitable housing for some people who lived in areas far from their place of work.

#### Second: Be with Israel or Remain Silent

The truth is the first victim of war, it is said about the circulation of misleading information during wars; it was seen after the Palestinian factions suddenly attacked Israel on October 7. Western media and newspapers began to promote stories that were not true at all. Perhaps the most popular after October 7 is the unproven allegations that Palestinian factions beheaded 40 children; it is the story that US President Joe Biden initially adopted, but then the White House retracted it because there was no confirmation of this incident. The news was published by an Israeli journalist working for the Israeli television network I24News. When pressed for sources of the news, Nicole Zedek said she heard this allegation from soldiers. Israel has not been able to confirm this claim yet.



The mainstream Western media still clings to the Israeli narrative: that Israel was the victim of a terrorist attack. This media machine tried to describe what happened as the 'Israeli September 11' attack to attract more sympathy for Israel in the complete absence of the other narrative, which is the continuation of the devastating bombing of the Gaza Strip, which kills civilians daily, including women and children, and exterminates alive. Entirely. Since October 7, Western media and newspapers have been trying to promote the Israeli narrative, rejecting alternative narratives. Even when some people who work in these media outlets and newspapers individually present the other view, they are subjected to arbitrary dismissal or investigation. Other reports, whose authenticity was not verified by Maat, claimed that MSNBC, an American television news station, broadcasts 24 hours from the United States. Three Muslim broadcasters working at the channel were dismissed. What is certain is that the British newspaper "The Guardian" dismissed the cartoonist "Steve Bell," who spent about 41 years in the well-known newspaper, based on a drawing that the journalist considered, with Israel's acquiescence, to be anti-Semitic.

The BBC also referred six journalists working for the network's branch in the Arab Republic of Egypt on charges of bias towards the Palestinian people, in addition to stopping dealing with another journalist cooperating with the network in Beirut for the same reason. The list of journalists who were requested for investigation includes Mahmoud Shalib, Sally Nabil, Salma Al-Khattab, in addition to the journalist in the sports department of the Cairo office, Amr Fikry, the independent journalist Aya Hossam in Cairo, and the two journalists, Sanaa Al-Khoury and Nada Abdel Samad, from Lebanon. These procedures contradict all media codes of conduct and also contradict the rights contained in international treaties and agreements, which are the right to freedom of information and the right to freedom of opinion and expression.

### **Third: Restrictions on Palestinian Content**

The double standards after the bombing of the Gaza Strip were evident in the Meta company's Facebook platform rejecting pro-Palestinian content and deleting this content while allowing Israeli content to circulate. Meta deleted the Quds News Network (QNN) page on Facebook under the pretext of combating misleading information during Israel's war on Gaza, even though the news network is a transmitter of the daily practices of the Israeli occupation forces that are transmitted on similar platforms. By making another

comparison, we found that at the beginning of the Russian war on Ukraine, Meta Company allowed its platforms, such as Facebook and Instagram, to spread content that incites violence against Russia and its president, Vladimir Putin.

## لقد أزلنا المحتوى الخاص بك

### أسباب حدوث هذا

يبدو أنك قمت بمشاركة رموز أو محتوى يعبر عن مدح أو دعم لأشخاص ومنظمات نعرّفها بأنها خطيرة أو تابعتها.

#### Facebook's policies in dealing with Palestinian content

Facebook has been accused of manipulating its algorithms to hide pro-Palestinian content to the extent that users resort to unusual posting methods to circumvent these algorithms. The issue did not stop at just deleting the content but restricted the access of content supporting civilians in the Gaza Strip to the public. Facebook platform users and bloggers noticed a decline in interaction with content condemning the Israeli bombing of the Gaza Strip. This issue was attributed to Facebook restricting access to this content. The issue did not stop only at restricting access to publications, as the percentage of views on visual content related to the Gaza Strip decreased compared to content supporting Israel in videos broadcast on Facebook.

These policies have prompted developers in the Arab region to invent some tools to bypass these restrictions, including, for example, “deleting dots from above words,” as Facebook algorithms cannot recognize them. Another example was replacing some letters in pro-Palestine content with English letters.

### إزالة النقاط من النصوص العربية - Convert Arabic texts to dotless

اكتب النص هنا - Write the text here

الأقصى  
القدس  
إسرائيل  
الاحتلال  
قصف غزة  
العدوان على غزة

مسح - Clear

تحويل - Convert

بعد التحويل - After converted

الأقصى  
القدس  
إسرائيل  
الاحتلال  
قصف غزة  
العدوان على غزة

نسخ - Copy

### some alternative tools to circumvent Facebook restrictions

Even with these attempts by some bloggers to bypass the restrictions placed by the parent company Meta on platforms such as Facebook and Instagram, these attempts to restrict access to Palestinian content continue.

The Instagram platform was not more different from Facebook, as some well-known accounts confirmed that their content had fallen to its lowest levels in terms of interaction. The restrictions faced by platform users included the inability to publish content, broadcast visual content on Instagram, post video clips on Facebook, or even like posts supportive of Palestine under the pretext that this content violates the community standards of these platforms. The Instagram platform has sent notices to the platform's users stating that the content they publish "contradicts the platform's guidelines regarding violence or dangerous organizations" about Meta's policy against violent content or information related to its extensive list of prohibited people and groups in line with imposing censorship on content that promotes " For federally designated terrorist groups in the United States. Palestinian journalist Faten Alwan also

received repeated warnings to permanently close her account on the Instagram platform if she continued to promote content that supported the Palestinian cause and condemned the Israeli occupation forces.

In comparison between Palestinian and Israeli content, we find that the platform allowed Israeli content that incites revenge against Palestinian factions and, at some time, against civilians, claiming that they are all terrorists. At the same time, we find that Meta Company, including its Instagram and Facebook platforms, did not follow the same policies at the beginning of the Russian war on Ukraine. The Facebook platform began directing its moderators to promote content related to the “Russian attack on Ukraine” to attract many Ukrainian sympathizers. The company has funded some publications with Ukrainian content for the same reason. Facebook has lifted restrictions on content related to the Azov Battalion, a terrorist group that participated in the fight against the Russian Federation. What is also striking is that the aforementioned unit, which is affiliated with the Ukrainian army, was previously banned under the company’s policy regarding dangerous individuals and organizations. Meta, which includes Facebook and Instagram, claims that Palestinian content incites violence while allowing some Facebook and Instagram users to call for violence only if the Russian Federation and its soldiers serve the Western agenda in Ukraine in policies that show a clear bias towards one party over another. According to an internal email sent to content moderators on Facebook and Instagram, the company also allowed some posts calling for the killing of Russian President Putin or Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko. The discrepancy in policies and procedures confirms that the standards followed in this company with what it contains on the platforms are not a coincidence but policies directed to illustrate double standards.

The TikTok platform also practiced selective policies in dealing with Palestinian content, compared to Israeli content. A group of journalists who broadcast Palestinian content on the TikTok platform received warnings that their TikTok accounts would be closed under the pretext of violating societal standards at a time when Israeli content was widespread. Some reports attributed these double standards followed by TikTok to the European Union threatening to close the platform if it allowed the promotion of support for Palestinian factions. The platform reported deleting more than 500,000 video clips and closing 8,000 live broadcasts related to the conflict between Israel and the

Palestinian factions, days after the European Union warned the company of the need to confront illegal content, in line with the new EU Digital Services Law. The TikTok platform also closed some accounts that presented the losses of the Israeli economy after the war in the Gaza Strip.



المخبير الاقتصادي - Mokhbir Eqtisadi ✓  
@MokhbirE

سلام عليكم جمهورنا العزيز في كل مكان.. نريد مساعدتكم الهامة جدًا!

قامت منصة "تيك توك" اليوم بغلق حساب المخبر الاقتصادي بشكل نهائي، وأتى ذلك الغلق بعد نشرنا مباشرة لأول مقطع من حلقتنا بالأمس عن خسائر الاقتصاد الإسرائيلي-رائد-لي.. طبعًا تعرفون السبب :) نحن نحاول استعادة الحساب الذي كان به فراية ربع مليون متابع ونشرنا به مئات المقاطع..

A picture of the closure of some accounts that exposed the losses of the Israeli economy

## Conclusions and Recommendations

Since the beginning of the bombing of the Gaza Strip on October 7, 2023, the United States of America and some European countries have practiced double and selective standards by allowing supporters of Israel to demonstrate while rejecting demonstrations calling for an end to the bombing of civilians in the Gaza Strip or support for Palestine. What is more, the detention of some of those who participated in these demonstrations is a flagrant violation of human rights, including the right to peaceful assembly and the right to freedom of opinion and expression, which are indivisible and universal rights, meaning they cannot be granted to a group of people and taken away from others. These double standards have gone beyond the countries and reached the Western media and newspapers since the bombing of Gaza determined to promote one narrative, that Israel is the victim, while the opposite is the norm. The civilians who are killed every day are the most evidence of that. Technology companies have also followed unfair and selective policies and used double standards in dealing with Palestinian content on the one hand and Israeli and Ukrainian content on the other. Perhaps this is further evidence that these companies do not have sufficient independence as they try to portray themselves.

### Maat recommends the following

- Western countries, including the United States, should immediately stop double standards in dealing with the war in the Gaza Strip.
- Technology companies should follow fair and non-selective policies in dealing with Palestinian content on social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram.
- Consider stopping warnings sent to Arab content creators and bloggers who promote the bombing of the Gaza Strip and violations against women and children;
- Stop arbitrarily dismissing people sympathetic to Gaza and return them to work as soon as possible.