

Reading Comprehension: Mainstream vs Alternative Media

Read the following articles and answer the questions below.

Mainstream (liberal): Washington Post

Israeli troops fight in the heart of Gaza City amid global calls for pause (fragment)

By Loveday Morris, Hajar Harb, Michael Birnbaum and Hazem Balousha

TEL AVIV — Israeli troops set on ousting Hamas pushed into the heart of Gaza City on Wednesday, triggering new concerns for the remaining civilians in the Palestinian enclave's largest city as international calls mounted for more "humanitarian pauses."

Secretary of State Antony Blinken also categorically stated from Tokyo that the United States opposes any kind of reoccupation of Gaza or displacement of Palestinians out of the Strip.

Though it remained difficult to obtain a clear picture of where the Israeli forces were operating, fleeing residents said troops had reached the Ansar roundabout in central Gaza City, a block away from its main port. Footage of the Gaza City skyline posted by Hamdan Dahdouh, a cameraman with the Al Jazeera network, was filled with the sound of gunfire and whistling bullets. He said that "violent clashes" were taking place around the Ansar and al-Azhar neighborhoods in the middle of the city.

Civilians, some carrying white flags, streamed out of the city as Israeli authorities announced a four-hour pause in fighting along Salah al-Din Road, the main north-south route. They carried back packs and shopping bags filled with the few belongings they could carry.

Fadi al-Rubai, 25, who spoke to The Washington Post by phone, described fleeing from al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza City with his family of nine on foot as fighting drew closer. They passed a large number of tanks and Israeli soldiers along the route.

"There was great destruction around us," he said.

Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant had declared a day earlier that ground forces were "tightening the noose" on the city. "We are making progress, and our forces from the north and the south are advancing to the heart of Gaza City and are fighting within urban spaces," he said in a speech marking one month since the start of the war.

The Israeli advance into Gaza's most populous city has heightened concerns for civilians. While Israel has repeatedly warned residents to leave, a lack of safe passage, distrust, fear and airstrikes even in areas deemed to be safe zones have meant many have stayed. According to the Gaza Health Ministry, more than 10,000 people have been killed in the airstrikes and ground attacks that followed Hamas's attack on southern Israel a month ago, during which as many as 1,400 people were killed and around 240 abducted.

Pressure on Israel mounted Wednesday as top diplomats from the Group of Seven leading industrial democracies announced a unified stance on the Israel-Hamas war after intensive meetings in Tokyo. They condemned Hamas, supported Israel's right to self-defense and called for "humanitarian pauses" to speed aid to desperate civilians in the Gaza Strip.

The joint statement from the United States, Germany, Britain, Japan, France, Canada and Italy underscored "the importance of protecting civilians and compliance with international law."

In his speech Tuesday evening, Gallant said that there would be “no humanitarian pause without the return of the hostages.” He acknowledged pressure on Israel for a pause but said it was determined to press on.

“It is impossible to stop this fighting until we achieve our goals,” he said. “This war was pushed on us, and we have no way to go back. There’s no stopping. We can only go forward to victory over Hamas and bringing the hostages back.”

However, while Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has resisted the pressure to take a break from his country’s effort to hit Hamas, he has signaled increasing openness to “tactical” pauses, which U.S. officials view as positive movement.

1. What is the article about?
 - a. Several countries are demanding a cease-fire from Israel.
 - b. Israeli troops are advancing in Gaza City.
 - c. Palestinian refugees are fleeing to neighboring countries.
2. According to the article, what is the position of the US?
 - a. The US will support Israel unconditionally.
 - b. The US condemns Israel's actions and is calling for a cease-fire.
 - c. The US opposes any kind of reoccupation of Gaza, condemns Hamas and supports Israel's right to self-defense.
3. Why did civilians escape the city?
 - a. Because Israeli troops are moving closer.
 - b. Because there was a 4 hour pause in the fight.
 - c. All of the above.
4. Why have civilians not left the city yet despite warnings
 - a. Due to a lack of safe passage, distrust, fear and airstrikes even in areas deemed to be safe zones.
 - b. Due to a lack of safe passage and blockages on land.
 - c. Due to airstrikes and lack of proper transportation.
5. According to the article, what is Israel's position?
 - a. They started the war and will continue fighting until they reach their goals.
 - b. Although they did not start the war, they will continue fighting until they reach their goals, but might be open to some pauses.
 - c. They did not start the war; therefore, they demand some tactical pauses.

Alternative (conservative): Daily Wire

Kirby Rips Palestinian Journalist Over Anti-Israel Remarks: 'Hamas Actually Does Have Genocidal Intentions'

By Ryan Saavedra

WASHINGTON, DC October 31, 2023: National Security Council spokesman John Kirby during the daily press briefing in the James Brady Room at the White House on Tuesday October 31, 2023.

Coordinator for Strategic Communications at the National Security Council John Kirby shot down accusations from a Palestinian journalist during a White House press conference on Tuesday that he was just echoing what Israel's military says.

The remarks from Nadia Bilbassy, who was born and raised in Gaza and who now works for the Saudi-government controlled Al-Arabiya news channel, come after Hamas terrorists murdered 1,400 Israelis, injured 5,300+, and kidnapped more than 240 during the October 7 attack.

She claimed that Israel was "in violation of international humanitarian law and the Geneva Convention" and asked why the administration would not "embrace" those who want Israel to be publicly admonished by the U.S.

"With due respect, John, some people think that you repeat what the Israeli army spokesman [is] saying," she claimed. "It's exactly what they're saying, you're repeating here. So, how can you — why not — [the dissenting] voices, not just understanding them and 'we have a channel because we're a democracy.' Why not — what's wrong with them?"

"What's wrong with standing here and say when Israel do something wrong because you're the best friend, you have leverage on them, why not criticizing them?" she asked.

Kirby fired back, "Well, your question presupposes that we've made some determination that the law of armed conflict has been violated and I don't think — we're not at that point."

Bilbassy asked if the U.S. disagreed with what the U.N. claimed was happening.

"I would just tell you that we're not going to react in near real time to every event," Kirby responded. "Israel has a right and responsibility to defend itself and we're going to make sure they have the tools and capabilities to do that. Again, we're one month after this, and we ought not forget what happened one month ago. 1,400 people slaughtered in their homes, at a music festival, and when Hamas decided to conduct operations, it was with the intent of killing people."

1. What is the article about?
 - a. The response of National Security Council spokesman to the accusations of a Palestinian journalist.
 - b. The response of the US to what the UN has claimed about the ongoing war.
 - c. The position the US has taken in the war.
2. What was the accusation of the Palestinian journalist?
 - a. That the spokesman is biased towards Israel.
 - b. That the spokesman was only echoing what Israel's military says.
 - c. That the spokesman is not telling the truth.
3. What did the Palestinian journalist claim?
 - a. That Israel was in violation of international humanitarian law and the Geneva Convention.
 - b. That the UN condemns Israel's actions completely.
 - c. That Palestina is being help by Saudi Arabia.
4. According to Kirby, what is the position of the US with regards to the claim of the journalist?

- a. The US hasn't determined that the law of armed conflict has been broken by Israel.
 - b. The US has determined that Palestina and not Israel has broken the law of armed conflict.
 - c. The US has determined that Ireal has broken the law of armed conflict.
- 5. What was Kirby's response to the question of whether or not Israel agrees with the UN?
 - a. The US disagrees.
 - b. The US agrees.
 - c. He dodged the question.

Alternative (liberal): Democracy Now!

U.N. Warns Gaza Is Becoming a "Graveyard for Children" as Israel Bombs Hospitals, Ambulances

The United Nations warns a "tragedy of colossal proportions" is underway in the Gaza Strip, one month after Israel laid siege to the Palestinian territory and began a round-the-clock bombardment. On Monday, U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres renewed his urgent call for an immediate ceasefire, citing the more than 10,000 Palestinians killed by Israel strikes. Over 4,000 of the dead are children.

Secretary-General António Guterres: "Gaza is becoming a graveyard for children. Hundreds of girls and boys are reportedly being killed or injured every day."

Earlier today, the Israeli military ordered the immediate evacuation of Al-Rantisi Children's Hospital in Gaza City. Israel already shelled the hospital two days ago and is threatening to bomb the building. After headlines, we'll speak with the president and founder of the Palestine Children's Relief Fund, who established the Gaza Strip's only pediatric cancer center at the hospital.

On Monday, Israel's military admitted it struck a convoy of ambulances outside Al-Shifa Hospital last week. Those attacks killed 15 people and wounded dozens. This is Haneed Abdelhakim Saad, a patient who narrowly survived the assault.

Haneed Abdelhakim Saad: "The ambulance came to take us to Egypt for treatment. While we were on the road, they started firing at us, and the ambulance in front of us was hit. The people in front of us were martyred, and we were moved back to Al-Shifa Hospital. ... I lost consciousness and woke up in the hospital. They told me that I had debris in my mouth and that I had a 3% chance to make it, that my condition was very critical. I have a fracture in the head. My shoulder is dislocated."

- 1. What is the article about?
 - a. The UN's warning about the ongoing Israel-Palestina conflict.
 - b. The killing of children in Gaza.
 - c. Israel is bombing hospitals and ambulances.
- 2. What is the UN warning about?
 - a. Hospitals in Gaza are being evacuated.
 - b. Hundreds of children are being killed in Gaza.

- c. Israeli troops are advancing towards Gaza city.
- 3. What is the UN calling for?
 - a. Immediate evacuation of all children in the Gaza Strip.
 - b. For hospitals to be left out of the conflict.
 - c. For an immediate ceasefire.
- 4. What did the Israeli army do this week?
 - a. They took over a children's hospital and captures a convoy of ambulances.
 - b. They struck a convoy of ambulances and attacked a children's Hospital.
 - c. They destroyed an entire children's hospital, including the ambulances.
- 5. Where were the ambulances originally headed to?
 - a. Al-Shifa hospital.
 - b. Gaza City.
 - c. Egypt.