



## NYT torn between accusations on Israeli and Palestinian sides



An NYT spokesperson told Al Arabiya News the newspaper “respects” the group’s right to publicize its opinion. (Twitter)

By Eman El-Shenawi | Al Arabiya News

Sunday, 20 July 2014

A pro-Israel watchdog likened the New York Times to Islamist movement Hamas on a billboard that was erected outside the well-known newspaper’s newsroom this week.

“Hamas attacks Israel: Not Surprising,” the banner says, above a picture of a missile. Beneath that it states: “The New York Times attacks Israel: Also not surprising,” above an image of a pen.

“Stop skewing facts. Stop key omissions. Stop the Anti-Israeli Bias,” the billboard closes.

A picture of the banner, which was paid for by **CAMERA**, the Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America, was **tweeted** by The NYT’s Media Editor Peter Lattman shortly after it was put up.



**Peter Lattman**  
@peterlattman



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New sign just posted outside @NYTimes newsroom

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### 'Respecting' CAMERA's rights

In response to the campaign, NYT spokesperson Eileen Murphy told Al Arabiya News the newspaper "respects" CAMERA's right to publicize its opinion.

"This sign is part of a continuing ad campaign by CAMERA, which as you know has a particular point of view as it relates to the situation in the Middle East. We respect CAMERA's right to advertise their opinion even though we disagree with it," Murphy said in a statement.

The NYT has recently come under criticism for its reporting on Israel amid deadly confrontations in the Gaza Strip, including from Israel's Ambassador to the United States, **Ron Dermer**, last week, and has had to **edit mistakes** in an **editorial**.

The screenshot shows the top navigation bar of The New York Times with 'HOME' and 'SEARCH' links. Below the masthead, there are several article teasers. The main article is titled 'Four Horrific Killings' with the subtitle 'Can Israeli and Palestinian Leaders End the Revenge Attacks?'. It is attributed to 'THE EDITORIAL BOARD' and dated 'JULY 7, 2014'. On the left side, there are social media sharing options for Email, Facebook, Twitter, Print, and More. Below these is a green box with the name 'ANDREA SCHENBERG'. The main text of the article begins with: 'In the space of a few weeks, the brutal killings of four teenagers — one Palestinian and three Israelis — have inflamed tensions in Israel and the occupied territories, potentially igniting a conflict that could be even more vicious than the intifadas of 1987 and 2000. It is the responsibility of leaders on both sides to try and calm the volatile emotions that once again threaten both peoples.' A second paragraph starts with 'The hostilities and recriminations began with the kidnapping and murder last month of three Israeli teenagers in the West Bank: Eyal Yifrach, 19; Naftali'.

New York Times editorial attacked as anti-Israeli

One mistake included having to acknowledge "incorrectly" accusing Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu neglecting to condemn the murder of innocent **Palestinian teenager Mohammad Abu Khdeir** - despite the Israeli Prime Minister's statement that very day where he called the murder "**reprehensible**."

Following the incident, Dermer pegged a response, called "5 Reasons Why New York Times Editorial Today Is An Embarrassment To Journalism," which he posted on **Buzzfeed**.

As of Sunday, the picture of the CAMERA billboard tweeted by Lattman had been retweeted 915 times and "favorited" 447 times.

Lebanon-based veteran journalist and Director of Media Unlimited Magda Abu-Fadil said she found the attack on the NYT by a pro-Israel group "surprising."

"Having observed The New York Times for decades, I dare say that it's far from being anti-Israeli. In fact it tends to be more pro-Israeli," Abu-Fadil told Al Arabiya News.

"I don't find the NYT particularly pro-Arab or necessarily very balanced in its coverage of Middle Eastern affairs. It strikes me as funny to be attacking the New York Times for being anti-Israeli when its record speaks for itself that it has tended to be more pro-Israeli than anti."



CAMERA's previous campaigns against the New York Times

### Social media reacts

The campaign has prompted a barrage of both pro-Israeli and pro-Palestinian remarks on social media.

And despite the banner accusing Israel of being pro-Palestinian, seemingly pro-Palestinian tweeps posted:

*"Zionist propaganda on 40th street."*

*"They missed out the Israel attacks Palestinians bit."*

*"The ultimately ironic title of 'Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America.'"*

*"The Israeli PR machine's insidious genius at work."*

Meanwhile, apparent pro-Israeli tweeps commented:

*"We just canceled our @nytimes subscription over its Israel coverage."*

And ne tweep even wrote: *"A dying liberal Islamist newspaper with no readers."*

But Abu-Fadil warns that such posts may be destructive to how a media outlet's bias tendencies should be properly assessed.

"One doesn't judge from a tweet or an article what a newspaper's slant is. It's an accumulation of things; you see what the track record is, in terms of editorials, adjectives used, what coverage is in favor of what and how frequent the coverage is. That gives you an idea where the bias, or the tendency, is," Abu-Fadil said.

The billboard has been hired by CAMERA since January this year – this is its third pro-Israeli campaign.

The original notice read: “Would a great newspaper slant the news against Israel? The New York Times does.” In the ad, CAMERA accused the newspaper of “Misrepresenting facts, omitting key information, skewing headlines and photos” and exhorted it to “Stop the bias.”

The second update was a response to the sacking of NYT top editor Jill Abramson. Under the paper’s famous logo, the ad said: “Unfair to Jill Abramson? Definitely unfair to Israel.”

CAMERA has directed a **six-month study** on The NYT’s alleged anti-Israel bias, which it published as a monograph last year.



CAMERA's previous campaigns against the New York Times

On its **website**, CAMERA said the study found that: “The newspaper consistently treats Israel with a harsher standard, omits context, and shows a clear preference for the Palestinian narrative.”

This stands in contrast with previous accusations that the daily was slanted towards Israel.

### **Pro-Israel coverage?**

American media has often been criticized as being pro-Israeli in its coverage of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, with the New York Times being one of the most widely read newspapers in the U.S. with a daily readership of about **3.9 million**.

In a 2007 **interview** with Faisal J. Abbas, now Editor-in-Chief of Al Arabiya News, then Deputy Foreign Editor of The New York Times, Ethan Bronner, responded to allegations of bias after the paper failed to

publish the findings of a Human Rights Watch report in 2003.

The findings listing Israeli violations against the Palestinians (according to an American book entitled 'Israel-Palestine on Record: How The New York Times Misreports Conflict in the Middle East' co-authored by Howard Friel and Richard Falk).

"I do not think that we view a report by a human rights organization as something we absolutely must carry,"

Bronner said, adding that he did not regard failure to publish the report as bias or a mistake.

The NYT was also criticized for failing to label Israeli settlements as a violation of international law.

"With regards to settlements, we stay away from assertions of legality on most international issues, because law is less clear about international affairs than about national affairs," Bronner said at the time.

*Last Update: Sunday, 20 July 2014 KSA 16:08 - GMT 13:08*