



Human Rights Discourse and the Media

An Analysis of the International
Media Coverage of the B'tselem,
Human Rights Watch and
Amnesty International Reports
on Israel's Apartheid



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Executive Summary

In recent years, the discourse used by advocates for Palestine regarding Israel's occupation of Palestine has increasingly been shifting. This shift has manifested in the publication of reports by major human rights organisations B'tselem, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International asserting that Israel has established a system of oppression and domination over the Palestinian people, constituting apartheid. These organisations are reliant on the media to spread messages contained in their reports to the general public, but has the media been serving its purpose?

This report seeks to analyse what B'tselem, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International have set out to achieve in releasing their reports, how the reports were received in the international media and how the media's coverage of the reports impacts upon their aims. It finds that each report received double the coverage of the one prior and that each report received extensive further exposure in articles covering reports following it, thus compounding evidence and providing legitimacy behind the idea that Israel commits apartheid as presented by each report. Additionally, it finds that almost half of all articles with 'apartheid' in the headline dating back to July 1 2014 were produced after the publication of the B'tselem report, suggesting that the reports had significant impact on the proliferation of the term 'apartheid' in general discourse.

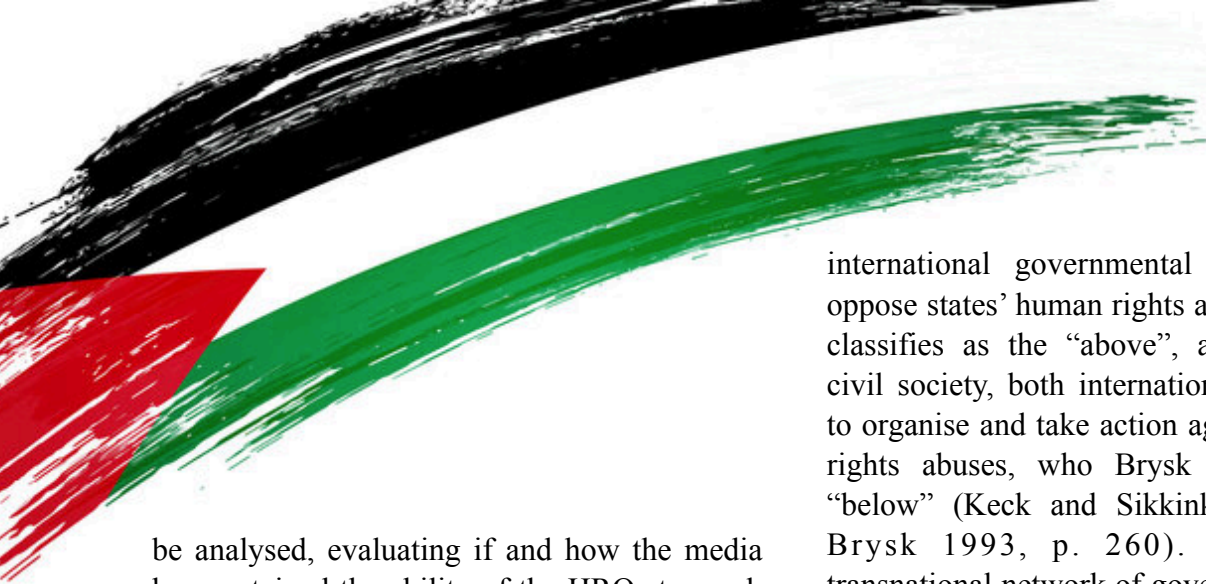
As such, HROs should support the published reports and continue to publish reports asserting that Israel commits apartheid to

consolidate evidence for the assertion that Israel commits apartheid. Additionally, the media should commit to fair and equitable coverage of human rights organisations' reports, to ensure that readers are properly informed of the organisations' research and conclusions.

Introduction

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is generations old, dating back definitively to at least 1921 when Palestine was split in two, with one half promised to become the national home of the Jewish people, by the Balfour Declaration (Smith 2010, p. 67). Israel has maintained military rule over the Occupied Palestinian Territories since 1967, and while this rule was granted on the condition that it were temporary, it has yet to be relinquished (Al Tahhan 2018). This, alongside the brutal conflicts that have erupted and human rights abuses that have been committed against the Palestinian people by Israeli soldiers time and time again under this rule, has caused international human rights organisations (HROs) — notably Israel-based B'tselem, New York-based Human Rights Watch and London-based Amnesty International — to accuse Israel of committing apartheid against the Palestinian people.

This report will contain seven sections. First, a literature review will be conducted to establish a theoretical base for analysis of the aims of HROs in producing reports and the media's ability to constrain these aims. Second, the methodology underlying the quantitative analysis in this report will be discussed. Third, the status quo regarding the international community's attitudes toward Israel's occupation of Palestine will be discussed to analyse why it is impossible that change will occur from above. Fourth, the aims of the B'tselem, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International reports will be analysed. Fifth, the international media coverage of the reports will




be analysed, evaluating if and how the media has contained the ability of the HROs to reach the general public. This will be assessed by conducting a quantitative analysis of international media articles covering each report and a discourse analysis to note how the reports were framed. Sixth, the HROs impact on the discourse surrounding Israel's occupation of Palestine will be analysed. This will be assessed by conducting a quantitative analysis of the the articles produced each year relating to Israel with 'apartheid' in the headline. Finally, recommendations will be made for the future.

Literature Review

The transnational advocacy network framework by Keck and Sikkink demonstrates that the goal of HROs is, logically, to improve human rights conditions and that the relationship between HROs and the achievement of this goal is indirect but effective, and this is illustrated in the (Murdie 2014, p. 31). This framework suggests that HROs "mobilize information strategically to help create new issues and categories and to persuade, pressure, and gain leverage over much more powerful organizations and governments" with the aim "not only to influence policy outcomes, but to transform the terms and nature of the debate" (Keck and Sikkink 1998, p. 2). The two goals of HROs definitively, then, are to "change the behavior of states and of international organizations" and to "make [issues] comprehensible to target audiences, to attract attention and encourage action". In simpler terms, they are to pressure

international governmental organisations to oppose states' human rights abuses, who Brysk classifies as the "above", and to encourage civil society, both international and domestic, to organise and take action against said human rights abuses, who Brysk classifies at the "below" (Keck and Sikkink 1998, pp. 2-3; Brysk 1993, p. 260). Together, this transnational network of governments and civil society - including foundations, the media and intellectuals - form a network of "shared values", collectively pressuring the violator state such that human rights conditions improve and the network's advocated goal is achieved (Murdie 2014, p. 32).

In the case of state perpetrated human rights abuses, international governments are key to the achievement of the network's final goal. Brysk (1993, pp. 259, 261) suggests, like the transnational advocacy network framework, that human rights can be improved through the force of global populism. The mobilisation of information erodes the violator state's legitimacy and propels regional and global institutions into motion, posing a direct challenge to the violator state. Evans (2022, p. 77) substantiates this in stating that, in the case it is in a government's interests to act as a good international citizen and to take a stance against human rights abuses that its domestic citizenry express their opposition against, or else face removal from office. Evans (2022, p. 15) also argues that it is a national interest imperative of all governments to act in accordance with international values and norms, and therefore to express opposition to those states who violate human rights, in order to ensure future collaboration with like-minded states. This therefore suggests that, just as states are pressured by their citizenry, they are similar compelled by fellow members of the international community to protect international values. It is then the pressure that the international community, through the power of global institutions, can collectively



place against the violator state, with the removal of economic and diplomatic support, which wields power in changing human rights norms and practices in the violator state (Biersteker 2015, 166; Brysk 1993, p. 261). This is affirmed by the UNSC, who target sanctions against those regimes who violate human rights with the goals to “coerc[e] behavioural change” and “signal support for international normative frameworks” (DPPA 2022, pp. 4-5). The outcome of this process, the behavioural change in the violator state, therefore realises the HROs’ original goal: the improvement of human rights.

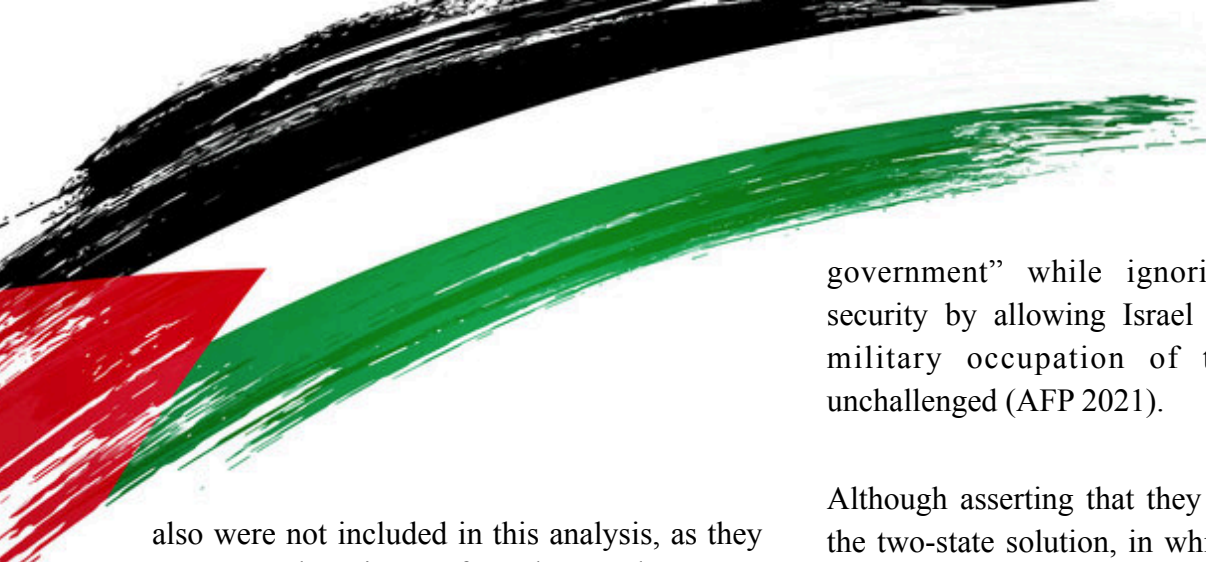
The media plays a highly impactful, whether that be disruptive or otherwise, role in the dissemination of the HROs reports and messages to the general populace and therefore on their goal of mobilising action below the state. This impact is explained by two intersecting theories: agenda setting theory, which posits that the extent to which the media covers a topic can determine what degree of importance it will hold in the eyes of the general public; and framing theory, which asserts that those with power in the media “select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient ... in such a way as to promote a particular problem, definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation” (McCombs and Guo 2014, p.251; Entman 1993, p. 52).

Methodology

To determine the prospective impact of media coverage on the goal of the listed HROs’ reports on Palestine, a quantitative analysis of

the international media articles covering the reports has been conducted. The amount of articles published in response to each report and from which media organisations they originated was recorded to explore the degree of importance the international media placed on the reports, in alignment with agenda setting theory. The amount of articles that listed the HRO report’s definition of apartheid, covered the Israeli response to the report, drew comparisons to South Africa or was a negative opinion piece has also been recorded, as these often serve as fundamental aspects of the journalists’ perception of the situation which they then frame the article around, skewing the readers’ understanding of the report and therefore the wider Israeli occupation. For example, a focus on the Israeli criticism of the reports could incline readers to agree with it on the basis of not having been exposed to other perspectives, and not including the report’s definition of apartheid and instead relating it to South Africa’s apartheid could disincline them from agreeing with the report on the basis of not understanding what apartheid in this context actually means. Finally, the amount of articles discussing Israel that were released each year including the term ‘apartheid’ in their headline was recorded with the aim of determining whether the HROs reports were in fact able to “transform the terms and nature of the debate” as Keck and Sikkink suggested was a major aim of transnational advocacy networks.

Articles were collected from a total of 30 media organisations, from the UK, the US, Canada, New Zealand, Ireland, France, Germany, India, Turkey, Qatar and Israel. Due to the language barrier, the collection and analysis of international reports has been limited to those in English, and, due to accessibility issues, only written articles published on online media outlets were collected, thereby excluding radio and video news reporting. Similarly, ‘letters’ submissions



also were not included in this analysis, as they represent the views of readers and are not written by the journalists at the news reporting agencies.

The International Status Quo on Israel's Occupation of Palestine


In contravention of international law, Israel continues to build illegal settlements in the OPTs and Palestinians in their thousands have been evicted to make room for the at least 600,000 Jewish people who have settled in occupied East Jerusalem and the West Bank (Najjar 2022). There has been a joint international opposition to these settlements, including from the US as of 2020, and their illegality has been acknowledged (McKernan 2022; Lederer 2021). Despite these expressions of concern and demands to cease the evictions, there has been a lack of meaningful action to counter them.

War crimes perpetrated by Israel, such as the indiscriminate bombings by Israel on Gaza in May 2021, have received a similar response: ineffectual condemnation by the wider international community and even support by the US. The US has not abandoned the rhetoric that Israel's military engagements with Hamas are a regular exercise of self-defence, and that even in the May 2021 Gaza bombings they saw "no significant overreaction" despite the extreme, disproportionate Palestinian civilian casualties as a result of the conflict (Plett Usher 2021). Germany has echoed the US' sentiment, asserting that "Israel's security will always be of central importance ... to every German

government" while ignoring Palestinians' security by allowing Israel to continue their military occupation of the West Bank unchallenged (AFP 2021).

Although asserting that they are supporters of the two-state solution, in which both Palestine and Israel develop sovereign statehood over separate territories in what is now considered Israel, many major international actors, particularly the US, the UK, Canada, France, Germany and New Zealand, do not recognise Palestinian statehood. In fact, the New Zealand parliament failed a motion to recognise Palestine after the 2021 Gaza bombings as it was not deemed "helpful" (Neilson 2021). This sentiment is echoed throughout the international community: the UK refusing to recognise Palestine until such time that it "best serves the objective of peace" (UK Parliament 2021) and the US denying their recognition on the basis that "Palestinians must make peace with Israel before gaining statehood themselves" (Cooper 2011): both justifications placing the burden of solving the conflict on the Palestinians, the oppressed.

Exacerbating this difficulty, the US government subjects human rights groups in support of Palestine to gross double-standards. For example, a bill in April 2021, which sought to only provide the Israeli military support on the condition that it would not support the perpetuation of human rights abuses against Palestinians, failed, whereas the framework for cooperation between the US and UNRWA was strict on the clause that no support would be provided to refugees in the Palestinian Liberation Army out of fear for the security of Israel (TRT World 2021).



International opposition of the violator state in this context is absolutely key, and the unconditional support that the US holds for Israel therefore stifles progress in two ways: it stops smaller states who are opposed to Israel's actions from speaking out in fear of reputational consequences and it rules out the ability to apply global economic and diplomatic pressure against Israel. Not only is the US the main financial contributor to Israel's military, having provided them \$3.8 billion in the 2022 financial year, it is the single permanent member of the UNSC who consistently vetoes motions for international condemnation of Israel's abuses against the Palestinian people, that allows the Israeli military to continue abusing the Palestinian population (Congressional Research Service 2022, p. 1; Magid 2021). This restrains real progress and support for Palestine in the international community, cancelling out the voices of those opposed and conferring Israel's abuses a sense of legitimacy and the ability to remain comfortable continuing its actions unchallenged (Cormaic 2021). Additionally, as universal sanctions only emerge through the UNSC, and indeed sanctioning against Israel would only be effective where the US, exporter of 92% of Israel's arms since 2017, is concerned, then regardless of how the rest of the Council may vote, the US has the power to single-handedly halt any attempt to apply real, global pressure against Israel (DPPA 2022; Tress 2022).


There is a pattern of the international community ineffectually condemning Israel's

human rights abuses and war crimes without committing to pressuring Israel against such acts, prioritising Israel's national defence above Palestinian civilian lives and, in fact, laying the burden of solving the conflict on Palestine, rather than Israel. It is these enabling assumptions and actions throughout the international community that B'tselem, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International seek to challenge.

B'tselem, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International and Their Influence on the 'Above' and 'Below'

Applying the transnational advocacy network framework to the context in Palestine and Israel, three HROs have challenged the discursive status quo discussed above by releasing reports that assert that the Israeli regime practises the crime against humanity of apartheid. These include: *A regime of Jewish supremacy from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea: This is apartheid* published by B'tselem: The Israeli Information Centre for Human Rights in Occupied Territories in January 2021; the second, *A Threshold Crossed: Israeli Authorities and the Crimes of Apartheid and Persecution* published by the Human Rights Watch in April 2021; and the third, *Israel's Apartheid Against Palestinians: Cruel System of Domination and Crime Against Humanity* published by Amnesty International in February 2022.

Each report collected and mobilised information to be disseminated to foundations, the media as a vehicle to reach the people, and governing bodies of all levels, whether that be the Israeli or US government or the UN, thus reaching "above" and "below". These aims are articulated by Human Rights Watch, who states its goal to "expose the facts widely, and pressure those with power to respect rights and secure justice" in the preface of its report



(Human Rights Watch 2021) and Amnesty International, whose mission statement, as recorded in the report, is to “mobilize the humanity in everyone” and to ensure that “those in power keep their promises, respect international law and are held to account” (Amnesty International 2022, p. 2). B’tselem’s report, while lacking distinction between its desired outcomes from “above” and “below”, calls for “all of us ... to say no to apartheid” (B’tselem 2021).

Ultimately, all three of these HROs compound upon one another not only in terms of those targeted in their transnational advocacy networks, but also in terms of their final aim: to define Israel’s prejudice and abuses against the Palestinian people as apartheid in international discourse and to end the state sanctioned abuse of the Palestinian people and the inequality between Jewish Israelis and Palestinians in Israel and in the OPTs.

As elaborated in the above discussion on the international status quo, the international community’s stance is clear and unchanging. While some governments are becoming more explicit in their condemnation of Israel’s treatment of the Palestinian people, none are willing to accept that Israel’s actions constitute apartheid (Berman 2022; Levitt 2022). It is therefore vital that, where the HRO reports have inevitably been ineffective on the ‘above’ IGOs, the ‘below’ global, though particularly US, citizenries must be informed of the HROs’ conclusions and be convinced to apply pressure to their governments in order to enact that change ‘above’.

The Media as a Constraint on the Information Mobilisation of B’tselem, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International

The reach of the HRO reports to civil society is constrained by the media. Gendzier (2011) suggests that the mass media are complicit in “maintaining a high level of ignorance about Israel [and] the Palestinians” and, as a result, “public understanding of what lies behind conditions in Gaza and the Occupied Territories virtually disappears.” While those previously engaged with the transitional advocacy network with regards to the abuses against the Palestinians are likely to see the HROs’ work, the majority of the general public rely on the mass media to hear about their work. As articulated by McCombs and Guo (2014) and Entman (1993), the media holds the power to control the degree of importance that the public attributes to the release of the HRO reports by producing more or less articles covering them, thus setting the public agenda, and also to mould how the public views these reports by including or excluding certain information and opinionated responses to them, thus framing the reports in certain ways in the minds of the readers.

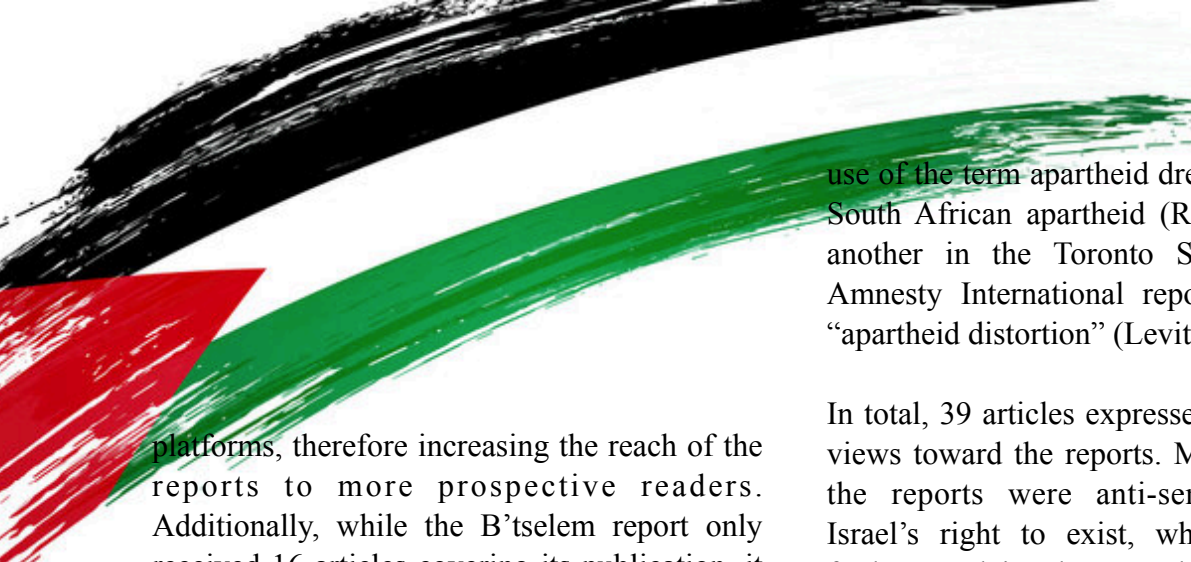
The quantitative analysis demonstrated in Figure 1 reveals that a total of 155 articles were produced in response to B’tselem, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International reports from the 30 analysed media organisations. Of these, 16 were published on only 10 media platforms after the release of the B’tselem report, while 42 were published on 22 media platforms after the release of the Human Rights Watch report and 97 were published on 26 media platforms after the release of the Amnesty International report. This shows that each report received over double the attention of the report before it on more media

Figure 1: Media Articles Covering HRO Reports

	B'tselem	Human Rights Watch	Amnesty International	HRWB	AIB	AIHRW	All	Total
The Guardian	3 3 DEF 1 ISR		1 1 DEF 1 ISR	1 1 DEF 1 ISR	1 1 DEF 1 ISR		1 1 DEF 1 ISR	7
The Times		1 1 DEF 1 ISR	2 1 DEF 2 ISR 1 NEG				1 1 ISR	4
The Telegraph		1 1 DEF 1 ISR	1 1 DEF 1 ISR				1 1 DEF 1 ISR 1 SA	3
BBC		1 1 DEF 1 ISR	1 1 DEF 1 ISR					2
Sky News UK		1 1 DEF 1 ISR	1 1 DEF 1 ISR					2
Reuters		1 1 DEF 1 ISR	1 1 DEF 1 ISR					2
Irish Independent		1 1 DEF 1 ISR					1 1 DEF 1 ISR	2
Irish Times		1 1 DEF	2 2 DEF 1 ISR	1 1 DEF		1 1 DEF 1 ISR		5
RTE			1 1 DEF 1 ISR				2 2 DEF 1 ISR	3
New Zealand Herald								
France 24	1 1 DEF 1 ISR	1		1 1 DEF 1 ISR			2 2 DEF 2 ISR	5
Deutsche Welle		1 1 DEF 1 ISR					2 1 DEF 2 ISR	3
TRT	1 1 DEF	1 1 DEF 1 ISR					1 1 DEF 1 ISR	3
Al Jazeera	2 2 DEF	1 1 DEF	1 1 DEF 1 ISR	2 2 DEF 1 ISR		1 1 DEF	2 2 DEF 1 ISR	9
Times of India								

Figure 1: Media Articles Covering HRO Reports Cont.

New York Times				1 1 DEF 1 ISR				1
LA Times	1 1 DEF 1 ISR						1 1 DEF 1 ISR	2
Washington Post			1 1 DEF 1 ISR 1 NEG	1 1 DEF		1 1 DEF 1 ISR	2 2 DEF 2 ISR	5
CNN								
NBC	1 1 DEF 1 ISR	1 1 DEF 1 ISR	1 1 DEF 1 ISR					3
ABC	1 1 DEF 1 ISR	1 1 DEF 1 ISR	1 ISR				2 2 DEF 2 ISR	5
Huffington Post							1 1 DEF 1 ISR	1
Fox News			1 1 ISR					1
Wall Street Journal		1 1 NEG	5 5 NEG 1 DEF					6
CBC			1 1 DEF 1 ISR					1
The Globe and Mail				1 1 DEF 1 ISR			1 1 DEF 1 ISR	2
The Toronto Star		2 2 DEF 2 ISR	1 1 ISR	2 2 DEF 1 ISR		2 2 ISR 1 SA 1 NEG	3 3 DEF 3 ISR	10
Haaretz	4 3 DEF 1 ISR 1 NEG	2 2 DEF 2 ISR 1 SA 1 NEG	4 2 DEF 3 ISR 1 NEG		1		2 1 DEF 2 ISR 1 SA	13
Jerusalem Post	1 1 DEF 1 SA	6 1 DEF 1 ISR 1 SA 5 NEG	16 1 DEF 1 ISR 8 NEG 3 SA	6 3 DEF 1 ISR 1 SA 4 NEG		3 2 SA 3 NEG	9 4 DEF 4 ISR 3 SA 6 NEG	41
Times of Israel	1 1 DEF 1 ISR	1 1 ISR	7 3 DEF 4 ISR 1 SA 1 NEG	1 1 DEF 1 ISR		3 1 DEF 3 ISR	1 1 DEF 1 ISR	14
Total	16	25	49	17	2	11	35	155



platforms, therefore increasing the reach of the reports to more prospective readers. Additionally, while the B'tselem report only received 16 articles covering its publication, it was later referenced 57 times in articles covering the Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International reports. Similarly, the Human Rights Watch report was mentioned in 46 of the 97 articles covering the Amnesty International report. Not only did each report consecutively gain more coverage, but the previous reports were also increasingly invoked, consolidating the evidence suggesting that Israel practises apartheid and providing each report more legitimacy.

Although the amount of coverage increased with each report, it was not all positive or objective exposure and, in certain cases, the articles framed the reports quite negatively. Though 73 of 87 non-Israeli (all excluding Haaretz, Jerusalem Post and Times of Israel) articles included the reports' working definitions of apartheid, of the total 155 articles, 57 did not, leaving out the fact that each report differentiates the Israeli practise of apartheid significantly from the South African practise and that it is a crime covered by international law in its own right. In fact, 16 articles reported that the reports drew direct comparisons between Israel and South Africa, some going so far as to suggest that the reports “exploit[ed] the apartheid image” in a “cynical appropriation” of the suffering of South African victims of apartheid with a “transparent political agenda” (Steinberg 2021; Haskel 2021). Primarily, these critiques were contained in Israeli media, however, an article in The Telegraph also suggested that Amnesty's

use of the term apartheid drew “direct links” to South African apartheid (Rothwell 2022) and another in the Toronto Star suggested the Amnesty International report was a case of “apartheid distortion” (Levitt 2022).

In total, 39 articles expressed explicit negative views toward the reports. Most suggested that the reports were anti-semitic and denied Israel's right to exist, while one took this farther to claim that B'tselem, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International's use of such terms as “Jewish supremacy” “echo[ed] antisemitic language used by the Third Reich, the Nazi Party and contemporary neo-Nazis” (Esterson 2021). Another suggested that the reports “compar[ed] Israelis to Nazis, by alleging that they consider Palestinians to be ‘an inferior racial group’” (Blum 2022). Once again, this criticism mostly took place in the Israeli media, however, The Times, Washington Post, The Toronto Star and particularly Wall Street Journal's coverage also included heavy criticism of the reports. One reporter accused Amnesty International of propagating “venomous falsehoods about Israel” and doing “nothing to advance prospects for peace between Israel and Palestinians” (Levitt 2022). Another called labelling Israel's treatment of the Palestinians a “despicable ... lie” (Kontorovich 2022). These criticisms have a profound impact on the audience's engagement with the reports, leaving absolutely no room to question Israel's treatment of the Palestinian people for fear of being anti-semitic and damaging the reputation of the HROs themselves.

More pertinent than the journalist's personal opinion is the Israeli response, which was consistently included in 91 of the articles. It was particularly prominent in non-Israeli articles, where it featured in 66 of the 87 articles. Israel has consistently rejected the apartheid label, regarding it as an anti-Israel “slur” (Kingsley 2021). Israel condemned the



Human Rights Watch report as an “unreliable propaganda pamphlet” (Reynolds 2021), the Israel Foreign Ministry following this with a Tweet, sardonically posting “Wanted: A Human Rights organization that cares more about helping the Palestinians living under Hamas oppression and less about demonizing Israel” (Israel Foreign Ministry 2021). Similarly, Israel denounced Amnesty International’s report as “false, biased and anti-Semitic” and accused the organisation of “echoing the same lies shared by terrorist organizations” (Paradkar 2022). It even preliminarily asked Amnesty International not to publish the report, announcing that it “denies Israel’s right to exist as the nation-state of the Jewish people” (Ibish 2022). The Israeli Ambassador to the UN even accused both Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International of waging “a Jihad war against the only vibrant democracy in the Middle East” with their reports (Lederer 2022).

Multiple news organisations failed to cover the reports at all, namely CNN, The India Times and the New Zealand Herald. In some cases, like the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation prior to its coverage of the Amnesty International report, this was indicative of underlying policies guiding newsrooms against discussing Palestine, going so far as to avoid the usage of the word Palestine (opting for “Palestinian Territories” instead), which “systematically contribute to coverage of the issue that skews towards pro-Israel partisans” (Yousif 2021). This prompted over 2000 people to sign a letter calling for “fair and balanced coverage” that includes “historical and social context, reporters with knowledge of

the region and, crucially, Palestinian voices” (Elghawaby 2021). Notably, this outrage led to its coverage of the Amnesty International report the following year (Thomson Reuters 2022).

Elghawaby (2021) suggests that this balanced coverage is vital to a change in the status quo, particularly in US policymaking. Hellyer (2021) suggests that such a scathing report from Human Rights Watch, based in the US itself, is changing the “direction of policy discussions.” Indeed, a more balanced coverage would allow for the increased coverage of reports such as these, and force more reluctant leaders in the international community to reckon with growing awareness of the true discrimination the Palestinian people face. Israeli Foreign Minister, Yair Lapid, is certainly under pressure to reopen political communications with Palestinians, sensing the “tangible threat” that Israel may find itself banned from international sporting and cultural events as international bodies become receptive to the apartheid label (Krauss 2022; McGreal 2022; The Associated Press 2022).

B’tselem, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International on Transforming the Nature and Terms of the Debate

Although the HRO reports themselves were not always received with positive reception, the quantitative analysis demonstrated in Figure 2 reveals that the HROs were successful in proliferating the use of the term apartheid in relation to Israel in the media. In this way, the goal of transnational advocacy networks as described by Keck and Sikkink (1998) of “transform[ing] the terms and nature of the debate” with regards to Israel’s occupation of Palestine was achieved. In data going back to July 1 2014, the beginning of the 2014 Gaza War, until the end of data collection on 28th of April 2022, 614 articles were published covering Israel with ‘apartheid’ in the headline, 293 of these since the publication of B’tselem

Figure 2: Media Headlines Relating Israel and Apartheid

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021a	2021b	2022	Total
The Guardian	1	1	1		4	2			5	5	19
The Times	2	1		1	1				2	2	9
The Telegraph	1			2	1				2	2	8
BBC		1		1					1	1	4
Sky News		1			1		1			1	4
Reuters				2		1	2		1	2	8
Irish Independent									3	1	4
Irish Times	1	1		2			1		3	4	12
RTE					1					4	5
New Zealand Herald											
France24				1		1			3	1	6
Deutsche Welle				2					1	1	4
TRT			1	4	2	1	1		10	2	21
Al Jazeera		1	1	11	2	6	2		18	4	45
Times of India											
New York Times				3					1	1	5
LA Times			1			2			1	1	5
Washington Post			1	2		2			2	3	10
CNN											
NBC									2	1	3
ABC						1	1		4	4	10
HuffPost		3	2	1					1	1	8
Fox News		4		7	1	2	1		4	1	20
WSJ									1	2	3

Figure 2: Media Headlines Relating Israel and Apartheid Cont.

CBC				1						2	3
Globe and Mail									2	1	3
Toronto Star		1		2					6	6	15
Haaretz	8	10	12	14	15	13	18		33	15	138
Jerusalem Post	1	11	8	11	15	12	15		47	29	149
Times of Israel	1	6	11	28	15	9	7		22	21	120
Total	15	41	38	95	58	52	49		175	118	641

report. The articles published since the publication of the first HRO report then represent over 45 per cent of all articles within just over one year over an almost nine year time period. Although around 60 per cent these articles were published by Israeli media organisations, many non-Israeli media organisations also had a noticeable increase in headlines mentioning apartheid in 2021, four even for the first time. Of a total 234 articles produced by non-Israeli media organisations, 126 were published after the publication of the B'tselem report, accounting 54 per cent, rather than the original 45 per cent, of all articles.

It may be argued that the spike of reporting on the term apartheid can be attributed to the May 2021 Gaza bombings, which made headlines all over the world, rather than the B'tselem or Human Rights Watch report. While this event certainly drew public attention, this conflict itself could play no part in proliferating the term 'apartheid'. This conflict simply compounded the point of the HROs' reports and represented a distinct example of the very discrimination and war crimes that they pointed out as a manifestation of Israel's apartheid. The HROs' reports, then, had an even greater impact on the exposure of non-Israeli audiences to the construction of Israel as

an apartheid state than on Israeli audiences. Similarly, the spike in headlines relating Israel to apartheid, regardless of whether the article was in support or opposition of the usage of that label, represents the introduction of the term apartheid to the general discourse. As it took place in 2021, entirely after the publication of the B'tselem report, it can also be suggested that the spike was created by the publication of the three separate reports by major HROs and therefore that, just as the media has the power to shape the perceptions toward HROs and their works, HROs can inversely pressure the media to discuss the discourse emerging from their reports.



Conclusion and Recommendations

Building off the transnational advocacy network framework, the aims of B'tselem, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International are to mobilise information and to transform the nature and terms of the debate regarding Israel's occupation of Palestine so that apartheid is accepted as the current state of affairs. The HROs then have two audiences who they seek to mobilise to challenge this state of affairs, the above and the below. Given the international community's unconditional support for Israel, it is almost entirely dependent upon the below to see real progress.

The HROs' reach to the below can only be facilitated but is simultaneously stifled by the media, who have the ability to influence the general public's understanding of the HRO reports through agenda setting and framing. While there was a significant negative reaction in the media to the HRO reports, this predominantly originated from Israeli media. The vast majority of non-Israeli articles included the reports' definition of apartheid, only two criticised the reports on the basis of comparison to South Africa and very few negative opinion pieces originated from non-Israeli media. However, most did include Israeli criticism of the reports, impacting on readers' impressions of the reports. Overall, the coverage of each report doubled each time, and thus the prospective reach of the HRO reports to readers exponentially increased, increasing the chance of pressure below being applied to the above.

The HROs have been successful in transforming the terms of the debate in the

media, as the amount of headlines discussing Israel's practice of apartheid greatly exacerbated since the publication of the first HRO report in 2021. This indicates that as the media has the power to constrain the reach of the HRO reports, HRO reports can inversely pressure the media to approach discourse emerging from their reports that it would otherwise avoid.

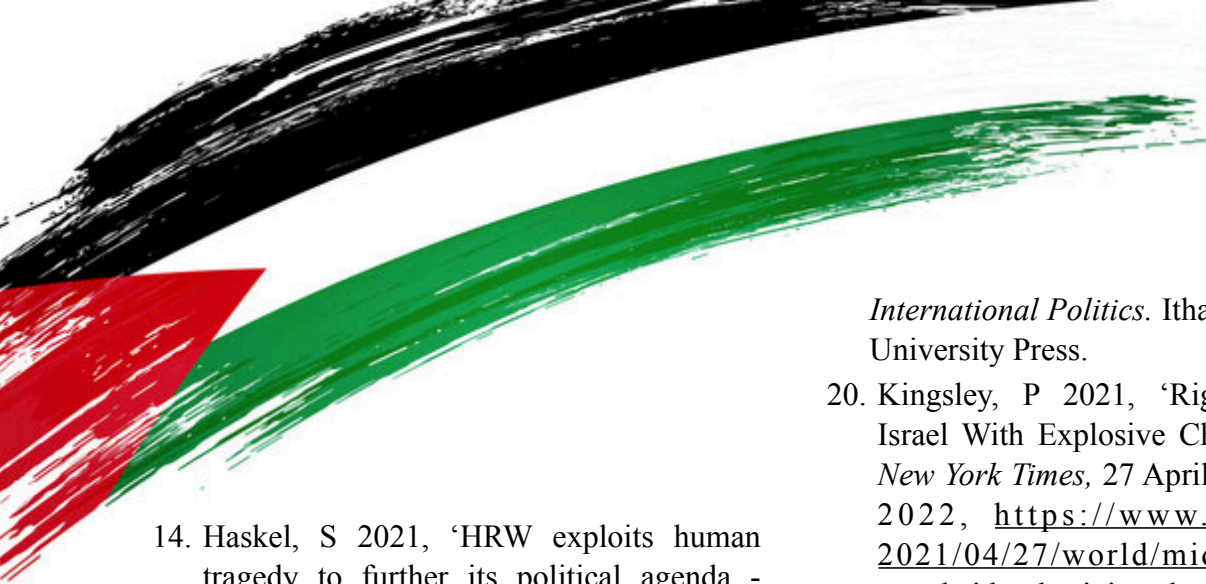
Going forward, it is recommended that HROs strongly endorse the published reports and continue to produce reports of their own consolidating the idea that Israel commits apartheid. This will create more legitimacy behind the idea, and force news networks to reckon with the fact that they must report on it as the public becomes more familiar with and receptive to the idea that Israel commits apartheid.

It is also recommended that the media provides just and equitable coverage. This is not to say that journalists should be prevented from expressing opposition to the conclusions of the reports, but that the media should produce at least one article on each report that emerges in the future and makes sure to highlight the report's working definition of apartheid to keep readers properly informed, rather than drawing historical comparisons where the original piece did not.




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