

Facts and Figures – Quarter 3 2008

Summary of key findings

- The **UK press** continues to put Israel high on its agenda – **1 in 2 newspaper editions** carries at least one story
- The Israel-related stories receiving the most coverage in Q3 were **Iran-Israel relations**, the **Kadima leadership** and the **Prisoner exchange**
- **Comment and editorial pieces** are **twice as likely to be negative as positive**
- The Guardian has the **highest proportion of critical comment and editorial pieces**, with **53%** negative, **6%** positive and **41%** neutral
- There were nearly **three times as many** authored articles on the **BBC News website portraying Israel negatively** than positively.
- The greatest number of **breaches** of journalistic standards occurred on the **BBC News Website** and in **The Independent**
- The **most common breach** was '**Lack of context** by exclusion of relevant information and facts' – **75%** of all breaches in Q3
- The **number of individual breaches**, fell by **35%** – from 43 last quarter to 28 this quarter

This quarterly report analyses Israel-related coverage in the media from July to September 2008 (Q3). The report covers:

1. Breaches of journalistic standards

Analysis of the breaches identified and the news outlets responsible for them

2. Volume and scope

Statistics detailing the frequency of coverage of Israel across news outlets

3. Positioning

Analysis of the position taken on Israel in comment and opinion pieces

4. Key story profiles

Profiles of how three key stories were covered through Q3

1: Breaches of journalistic standards

This section analyses the breaches identified in Q3 and the news outlets responsible for them.

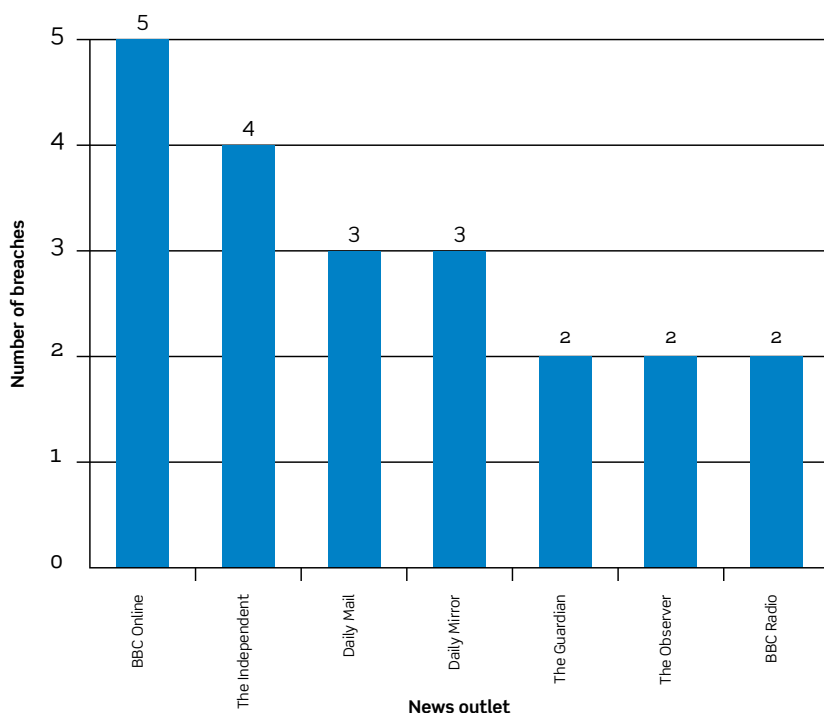
Analysis by news outlet

Over the course of Q3, Just Journalism identified **28 breaches of journalistic standards**. Breaches occurred in print, broadcast and online media. For further details about the journalistic standards by which we evaluate coverage, please see: www.justjournalism.com/journalistic-principles

Please note, these are the journalistic principles that guide news organisations in the UK.

Figure 1 illustrates the **number of breaches identified in different news outlets** in Q3:

Figure 1 - Journalistic breaches by news outlet

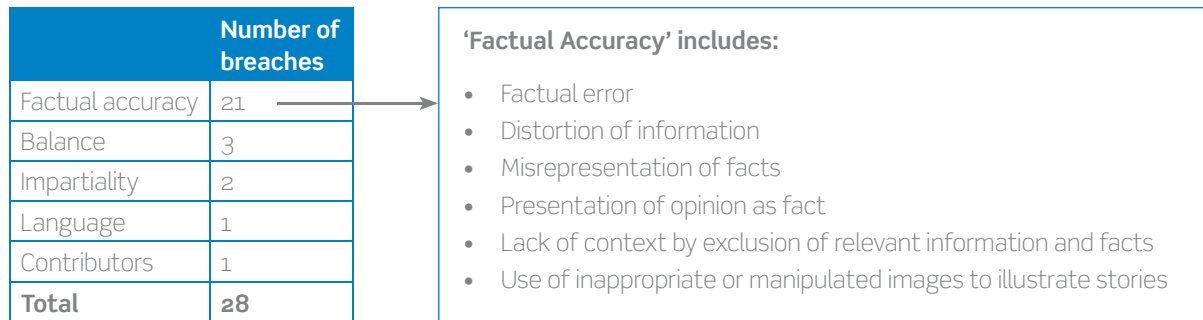


The **BBC News website** contains the highest number of breaches (5), followed by **The Independent** (4). **One breach** was also identified in The Daily Telegraph, Financial Times, The Times, The Independent on Sunday, BBC TV and ITV News.

Analysis by category of breach

The 28 breaches identified in Q3 divide into five categories, listed in Figure 2

Figure 2 - Categories of breaches in Q3

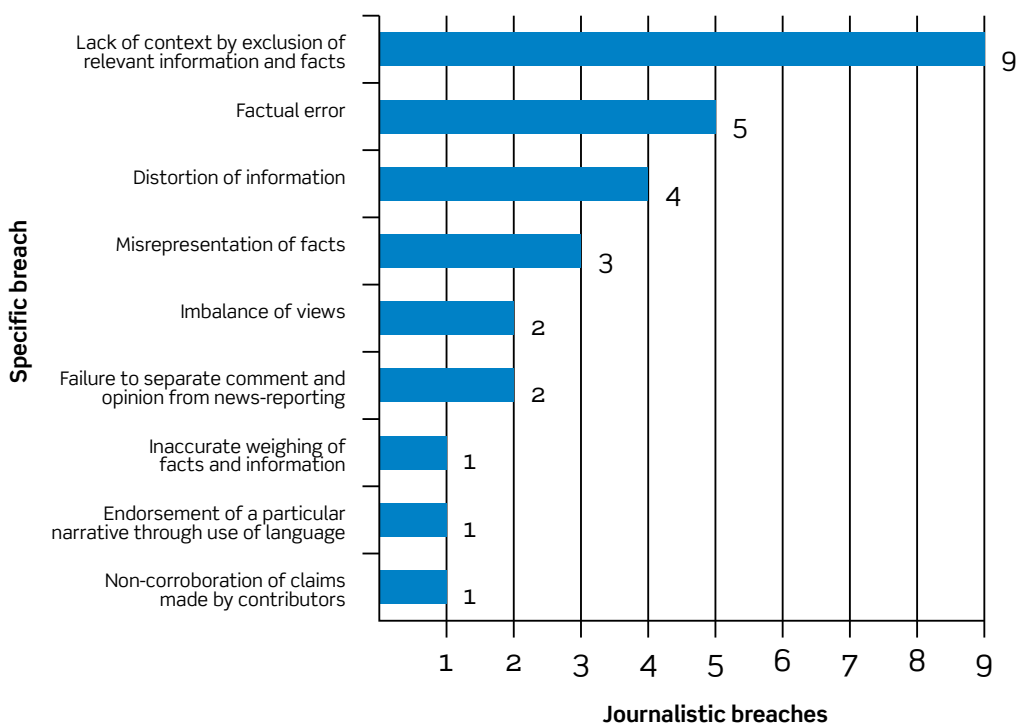


Factual accuracy is by far the **most common category of breach**, accounting for **75%** of all breaches in Q3. **The Press Complaints Commission's** Code of Practice states: "The Press must take care not to publish inaccurate, misleading or distorted information, including pictures."

For fuller **definitions** of all categories of breach, please visit the methodology section of our website at: <http://www.justjournalism.com/journalistic-principles>

The categories listed above divide into **specific breaches**, and the **frequency** of those specific breaches identified in Q3 is shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3 - Specific journalistic breaches



The **most common breach** is 'lack of context by exclusion of relevant information or facts', accounting for 32% of all breaches in Q3. **Examples** of this breach include:

- Repeated omissions of Egypt's responsibility in the Gaza blockade and Lauren Booth's attempts to leave Gaza – [BBC News Website](#), [Daily Mail](#) and [The Daily Telegraph](#). The accusations were levelled specifically at Israel alone.
- The omission of Iranian President Ahmadinejad's blatant existential threats against Israel when discussing Israel's stance on Iran, implying that these statements are irrelevant to the discussion – [The Independent on Sunday](#), [BBC Television](#) and the [BBC News website](#).

All the coverage containing journalistic breaches can be viewed on www.justjournalism.com

2: Volume & Scope

This section provides statistics detailing the amount and frequency of coverage of Israel across news outlets.

Press

- Just Journalism monitored a total of **920 editions** from **21 publications** from July to September 2008 – **9** daily and **8** Sunday national newspapers, **1** regional and **3** weekly publications. Of these editions **51% contained coverage of Israel** – so, on average, each publication featured Israel-related stories every second day.
- Of the daily newspapers, **The Guardian** had the **highest frequency of coverage**, with **84%** of all editions containing coverage of Israel, followed by **The Independent** (77%), **Financial Times** (72%) and **The Daily Telegraph** (68%).
- Of the Sunday newspapers, **The Sunday Times** had the **highest frequency of coverage**, with **92%** of all editions containing coverage of Israel, followed by **The Observer** and **The Independent on Sunday** (both 77%).

Comment and Editorial

- There was a total of **121 comment and editorial pieces** referring to Israel during Quarter 3 in the publications monitored.
- Combined editorial coverage in **The Guardian** and **The Independent** constituted **50%** of all the editorial coverage monitored in the newspapers, with 34 and 27 articles respectively.

BBC News website

- Just Journalism monitored a total of **230 items about Israel** on the BBC News website.
- Of these, **40 articles had named authors**, mainly journalists reporting directly from the region.

BBC Radio

- We monitored **316 BBC Radio 4 broadcasts** from **6 programmes** throughout Q3 – The Today Programme, The World at One, PM, The World Tonight, The World This Weekend and Sunday.
- **29%** contained coverage of Israel.

For a full list of media outlets monitored, please consult our website www.justjournalism.com.

3: Positioning

This section looks at the position taken on Israel in comment and opinion pieces.

Press

- Comment and editorial articles were **more than twice as likely to be negative as positive**, with 29% taking a critical position compared with 13% positive. Negative articles are defined as those that portray Israel in a broadly negative light.
- **The Guardian** carried the highest proportion of negative comment of all the print media outlets, with **53%** of items negatively positioned, **41%** neutral and **6%** positive. **The Independent** followed closely behind with **52%** of its comment pieces positioned negatively and none positively.
- In marked contrast, **The Times** and **The Economist** contained no negative comment pieces and **37%** and **20%** positive comment coverage respectively.

BBC News website

- Whilst authored articles on the BBC News website do not necessarily constitute comment and opinion, because of the website's unique editorial style, Just Journalism analysed these articles during Q3. We found that there were nearly **three times as many pieces portraying Israel negatively** as pieces casting Israel in a positive light.

4: Key Story Profiles

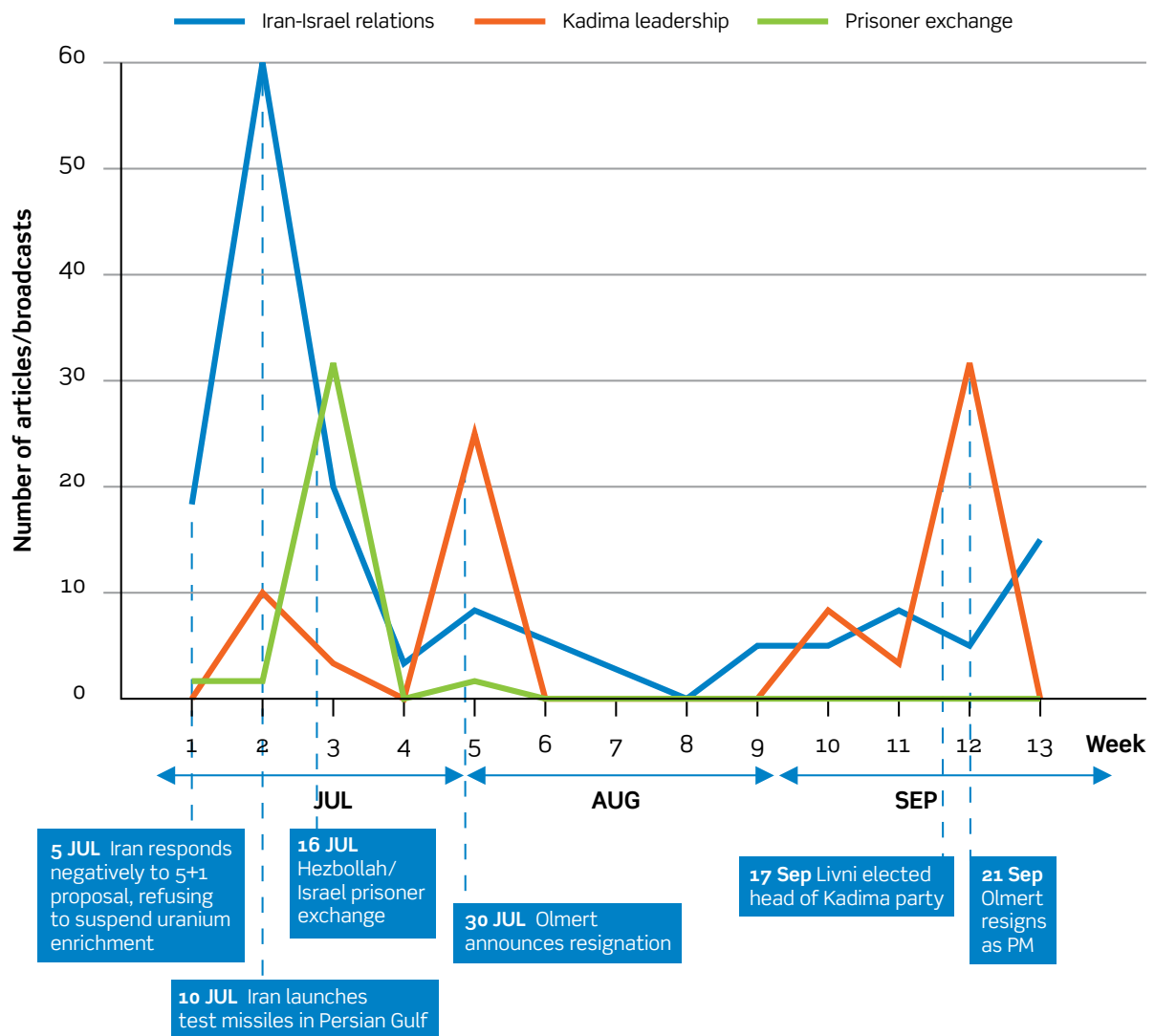
This section describes the profiles of how three key stories were covered through Q3.

A range of Israel-related stories were covered by the media in Q3. The stories receiving the greatest amount of coverage, as measured by numbers of articles/broadcasts were:

- Escalating tensions between **Israel and Iran**
- Israeli PM Ehud Olmert's resignation and Tzipi Livni's election as head of the **Kadima** party
- The **prisoner exchange** between Hizbollah and Israel

Figure 4 illustrates the **profile of coverage** received by these three key news stories through Q3. It displays the number of pieces of coverage each week across all media during the months of July, August and September.

Figure 4 - Key story profiles in Q3



Iran-Israel relations

- This is the only Israel-related story which stayed in the news consistently throughout Q3.
- The largest focus of coverage was over the test firing of missiles in the Persian Gulf on 10th July.
- There was also a steady increase in coverage through September, triggered by comments made by Israeli minister Rafi Eitan on 9th September, and Ahmadinejad's speech to the UN on 23rd September.

Kadima leadership

- The level of coverage spiked in response to two events: Ehud Olmert announcing his resignation and Tzipi Livni's election as the new head of Kadima.
- At other times, the level of coverage was relatively low.

Prisoner exchange

- This story received a significant level of coverage across all media, but for a short period surrounding the exchange itself on 16th July.