

ANALYSIS OF MEDIA PROPAGANDA REPORTING THE PALESTINIAN CONFLICT ON INSTAGRAM @eye.on.palestine

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ABSTRACT

This study discusses how the Instagram account @eye.on.palestine acts as a digital propaganda agent in voicing the narrative of the Palestinian people's struggle through social media. This account consistently presents visual content in the form of images, videos, infographics, and narratives that depict the suffering of civilians, infrastructure damage, and symbols of struggle such as the Palestinian flag, children, and medical volunteers. This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach using content analysis to explore the digital propaganda techniques employed by the account during the period from April to June 2025. Data was collected through digital observation and documentation of the account's posts, then analyzed using the Hypodermic Needle Theory and visual communication frameworks. The results of the study show that the @eye.on.palestine account uses propaganda techniques such as emotional framing, visual persuasion, religious and nationalist symbolism, and calls for public mobilization. The content is not only informative but also has a strong persuasive and performative effect in shaping global public opinion in favor of Palestine. These findings show that social media has become a strategic space for non-state actors to build narratives of resistance and international solidarity. Additionally, high user engagement, whether in the form of comments, likes, or shares, serves as an indicator of the success of the digital propaganda constructed by this account. Thus, this study confirms that social media plays an important role in global narrative conflicts, particularly in humanitarian issues such as the Palestinian conflict.

Keywords: Digital propaganda, Instagram, Palestine, Visual communication.

1. INTRODUCTION

In this increasingly connected digital era, social media has become a key instrument in the dissemination of information and the formation of global public opinion. Visual-based platforms like Instagram enable individuals, communities,

and non-state actors to share narratives quickly, massively, and powerfully with millions of users worldwide. This phenomenon has also had a significant impact on how the public accesses, interprets, and responds to information surrounding humanitarian conflicts, one of which is the ongoing conflict between Palestine and Israel (Salim, 2023).

One social media account that plays a significant role in the digital narrative of the Palestinian conflict is the Instagram account @eye.on.palestine. This account consistently presents visual content in the form of photos, videos, and infographics depicting the suffering of Palestinians due to military aggression, human rights violations, and power imbalances (Utama, 2023). In many cases, this account acts as a "visual spokesperson" for the Palestinian people, filling a news gap often overlooked by mainstream media outlets, which tend to be biased and favor pro-Israel narratives (Purba et al., 2025).

The @eye.on.palestine account not only disseminates information but also constructs narratives that can be categorized as a form of digital propaganda. In the context of communication, propaganda is a form of messaging intended to influence the opinions, emotions, attitudes, or actions of a particular group for a specific purpose, whether political, ideological, or humanitarian (Dalimunthe et al., 2025). Propaganda is not always negative; it can be a legitimate tool in the fight for justice and human rights, especially when carried out by oppressed groups who lack strong media access (Ernada et al., 2024).

From the perspective of mass communication theory, the propaganda displayed by this account can be analyzed using the Hypodermic Needle Theory and Classical Propaganda Theory, which emphasize the direct and powerful effects of media on audiences (Marta et al., 2022). Furthermore, Roland Barthes' visual semiotic approach is also relevant for analyzing how certain meanings are constructed through visual elements such as color, facial expressions, religious symbols, and accompanying captions (Fadillah et al., 2024).

The existence of accounts like @eye.on.palestine also demonstrates how social media can serve as a space for alternative narrative struggles amidst global media hegemony. In the context of the Palestinian conflict, where the dominant narrative is often controlled by prominent actors with specific political interests, the presence of social media amplifies the voices of marginalized groups. A study by Sulistyaningsih (2024) revealed that social media has enabled the emergence of "symbolic resistance" by non-state groups to counter the propaganda of powerful states in international conflicts (Dalimunthe et al., 2025).

Although the @eye.on.palestine account frequently faces digital attacks, including mass reporting, algorithmic blocking, and hacking, the account remains active and has even seen a significant increase in its number of followers. This phenomenon demonstrates strong global solidarity with the Palestinian struggle and demonstrates how digital technology expands the arena of political and humanitarian struggle.

Against this backdrop, this research is crucial. The researcher is interested in analyzing the forms and propaganda techniques used by the @eye.on.palestine Instagram account in reporting on the Palestinian conflict. In other words, this study aims to understand how propaganda is formed in the digital space through conflict visualizations, and how these narratives shape global public perception, particularly among Indonesian audiences.

This study focuses on content uploaded by the @eye.on.palestine account from April to June 2025. This limitation was chosen to maintain the focus of the analysis and align with the intensity of news coverage during the current period of conflict escalation. Analysis was conducted on various types of uploaded visual content, including photos, videos, and captions, to explore narrative themes, strategies for visualizing suffering, and forms of moral and emotional appeal to audiences.

The research problem is: What forms of media propaganda does the @eye.on.palestine account display in reporting on the Palestinian conflict? To answer this question, this study aims to analyze the techniques and content of social media propaganda via the @eye.on.palestine Instagram account during the Palestinian conflict.

The benefits of this research can be divided into two categories. Theoretically, this research can enrich the body of studies on digital propaganda, particularly in the context of humanitarian conflicts addressed through social media. Practically, this research can provide academics, media activists, and the general public with a deeper understanding of how humanitarian narratives are shaped, constructed, and disseminated through digital spaces, as well as provide strategic input on the use of social media as a tool for advocacy and the struggle for justice (Ritonga et al., 2025).

This research also strengthens previous studies in Indonesia that highlight the role of social media in influencing public opinion on the Palestinian issue. A study by Satria et al. (2024) revealed that visual images of injured Palestinian children or victims of military aggression have strong emotional appeal and are frequently used in digital campaigns. Meanwhile, research by Fernando and Lestari (2023) noted that the use of religious and nationalistic symbols in Palestinian digital content is effective in generating empathy and mobilizing public solidarity in Indonesia.

Based on these theories and research, the approach used in this study is to understand the meaning contained in the visual and narrative content of the Instagram account @eye.on.palestine. By identifying the message structure, symbols, and content packaging strategies, this research is expected to uncover the propaganda techniques used and their impact on the construction of public opinion regarding the Palestinian conflict.

Thus, this study aims not only to examine forms of digital propaganda conceptually but also to demonstrate that narratives on social media have significant power in shaping perceptions, building solidarity, and even becoming

part of the ideological struggle of the global community regarding complex and multi-layered humanitarian issues such as the Palestinian conflict.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with content analysis as the primary technique to explore the meaning of messages conveyed by the Instagram account @eye.on.palestine. This approach was chosen because it can reveal the symbolic and narrative meaning of a visual communication phenomenon in depth, not just at a superficial level (Yahfuz et al., 2024). In this context, the study aims to understand how propaganda is constructed visually and narratively on social media, and how these elements work strategically to shape public perceptions of the Palestinian conflict. The analysis was conducted systematically by observing, describing, and interpreting content published by the account during the period of conflict escalation, from April to June 2025.

The primary data source in this study was the visual and narrative posts from the @eye.on.palestine account during that time period. The content analyzed included photos, short videos, infographics, captions, and other visual communication symbols. Data were collected through digital documentation and observation techniques, including screenshots, noting visual elements, and classifying content based on theme and intensity. Secondary data sources were obtained from scientific journals, previous research reports, and relevant academic literature, particularly those discussing propaganda, social media, and the Palestinian conflict (Ardhi et al., 2025). This approach enabled researchers to understand not only the content presented but also the context, function, and potential effects of that content on the audience.

To analyze the data, researchers used content analysis stages, including data reduction, thematic categorization, interpretation of meaning, and drawing conclusions. The main categories included visual themes (e.g., violence, solidarity, suffering), narratives used (e.g., calls to action, testimonies, religious quotes), and specific symbols characteristic of propaganda (e.g., the Palestinian flag, the Al-Aqsa Mosque, children, ambulances). Data validity was maintained through theoretical and source triangulation, referential validation, and narrative confirmation based on guidelines from Susanto and Jailani (2023), who emphasize the importance of a reflective approach in examining digital communication phenomena. In this way, the research results are expected to provide a deep and representative understanding of the use of propaganda strategies in social media, especially through the @eye.on.palestine account.

3. RESULT AND ANALYSIS

This study analyzes how the @eye.on.palestine account uses visual content to convey the narrative of the Palestinian struggle, focusing on the forms of propaganda conveyed through images, videos, and narratives. Based on content analysis from April to June 2025, it was found that this account consistently shared visuals of civilian suffering, infrastructure damage due to attacks, the use of symbols of the struggle such as the Palestinian flag, child victims, and medical personnel, as well as calls for international solidarity in the form of demonstrations, donations, and digital campaigns. This content is produced and packaged in a powerful, emotional, and easily reshared visual form, allowing it to reach a global audience quickly and massively.

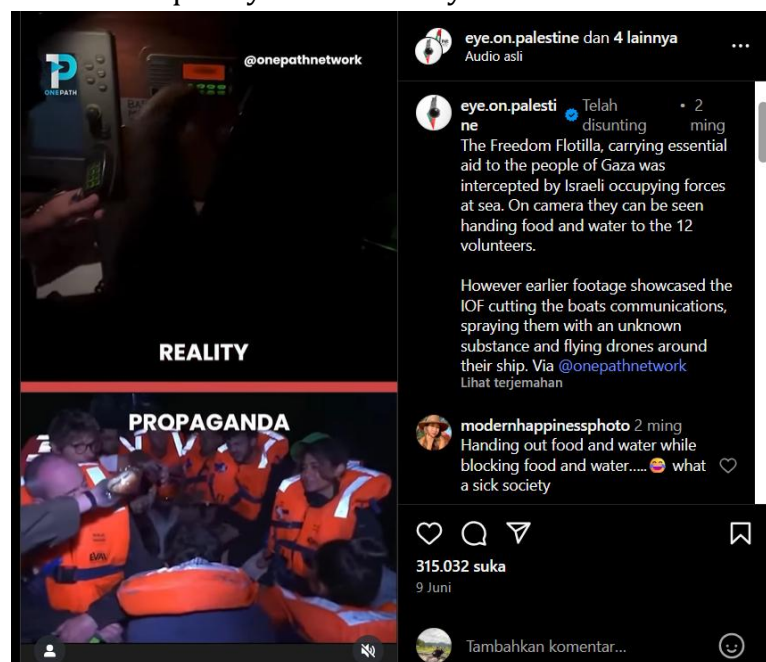


Image 1: Instagram @eye.on.palestine, 2025

One clear example of constructed visual propaganda is the Reels video titled "The Freedom Flotilla," which depicts 12 international volunteers bringing aid to Gaza, only to be intercepted by the Israeli military. While the military delivers food and water at the end of the video, the initial footage depicts aggressive actions: cutting off communications, spraying an unknown substance, and drone surveillance. This narrative is designed to emphasize the duality of the Israeli military's stance—providing aid for image purposes, but previously engaging in intimidating actions. This visualization reinforces the impression of injustice and cruelty experienced by pro-Palestinian parties. Techniques used in this content include emotional framing and symbolic disinformation, leading the audience to conclude that there is a discrepancy between the actions shown on camera and the reality behind the scenes. The video also creates a dramatic effect by adding

poignant background music and text highlighting the peaceful resistance that continues to be suppressed by military power.



Image 2: Instagram @eye.on.palestine, 2025

Another piece of content analyzed included a post containing a global call to action, with a clear message: “March on all United States embassies worldwide! Stand in solidarity with the Palestinian people...”. This post exhibited propaganda in the form of a direct appeal to the global community, using persuasive language, visuals of the Palestinian flag, and graphics that prominently featured terms such as “genocide,” “US-Israeli war,” and “demand an end.” The propaganda techniques employed included political memes, nationalist symbols, and visual persuasion. The image was designed to raise awareness and emotional engagement, associating physical presence on the streets with concrete forms of support for the Palestinian people. The use of red and black, along with images of previous mass demonstrations, amplified the visual effect and increased mobilization power. This technique combined visualization as a form of mass agitation with a narrative that emphasized the moral imperative to act.

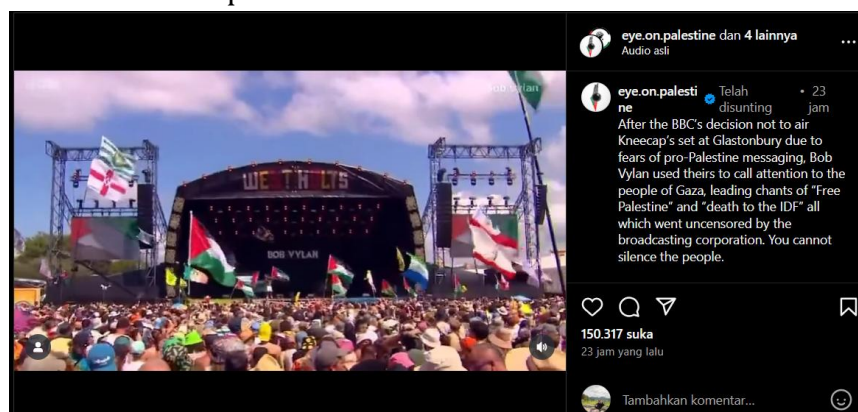


Figure 3: Instagram @eye.on.palestine, 2025

Other Reels content demonstrates how the Palestinian issue has also infiltrated popular culture. In a post featuring British musician Bob Vylan on stage at Glastonbury, the messages "Free Palestine" and "Death to the IDF" are voiced openly and uncensored by the BBC, despite the band Kneecap's previous performance being banned due to concerns about its pro-Palestinian narrative. In this context, digital propaganda transcends Instagram and enters popular culture, demonstrating public resistance to censorship by major institutions like mainstream media. The framing technique used in this content is contrasting: highlighting the unequal treatment of the media and symbolizing that "the voice of the people cannot be silenced." This reinforces the narrative that the Palestinian struggle has become part of a global social movement that even involves international artists and musicians. Religious and nationalistic symbols are also inserted through graphics and Arabic captions, emphasizing the context of the Palestinian Muslim struggle.

These three examples, when linked to the Hypodermic Needle Theory, demonstrate how Instagram content can "inject" the meaning of struggle into the minds of audiences without significant filtering or critical resistance. Audiences perceive visual information directly and emotionally, primarily due to its dramatic, poignant nature and manipulation of time and perspective. This theory is relevant because it demonstrates that the digital propaganda on the @eye.on.palestine account effectively builds solidarity and influences public opinion. On the other hand, the visual communication approach explains how the use of color, symbols (flags, children, raised hands), and visual repetition serve to reinforce messages and broaden the audience's emotional reach.

In this context, the propaganda used by the @eye.on.palestine account is not only persuasive but also symbolic and performative. The content is not simply delivered but "staged" to create global resonance. By depicting the suffering of civilians, child victims, hospital damage, and narratives of volunteer heroism, this account creates an unbalanced narrative of war—which then fosters sympathy and anger toward the perceived oppressor.

The impact on public opinion can be seen in the high level of user engagement. Each post on this account receives an average of over 100,000 likes, thousands of comments, and is reshared on various stories and other support accounts. Comments were dominated by expressions of empathy, moral support, and calls to continue advocating for Palestinian freedom. This demonstrates that the visual and narrative propaganda techniques employed by this account have successfully shaped public opinion in favor of Palestine. Furthermore, a significant increase in followers occurred after the account was reported or hacked several times, demonstrating that digital resistance does not diminish its influence but rather reinforces the perception that this account is a symbol of the oppressed struggle.

Thus, the @eye.on.palestine account can be positioned as an effective digital propaganda agent, utilizing a combination of visuals, narratives, symbols, and

emotional framing to build international support for the Palestinian struggle. The account's success lies not only in its content, but also in its ability to create a space for empathy and mobilization in cyberspace that transcends national and cultural boundaries. This research confirms that propaganda in the digital era has transformed from an instrument of the state to a tool for grassroots struggle controlled by a solid global digital community.

4. CONCLUSION

This research shows that the Instagram account @eye.on.palestine consistently and strategically uses visual media as a primary instrument in conveying the narrative of the Palestinian people's struggle. Through content analysis from April to June 2025, it was found that this account created powerful digital propaganda through images, videos, and narratives that showcased the suffering of civilians, symbols of the struggle, and calls for global solidarity. The propaganda techniques used included emotional framing, visual persuasion, national and religious symbolism, and mobilizing public opinion through calls for demonstrations. This content was not only informative but also performative and emotionally touching, thus shaping the global audience's perception of the Palestinian conflict in a more favorable manner. Within the framework of hypodermic needle theory and visual communication, it appears that this account's messages were effectively "injected" into the collective consciousness of the digital public, creating massive opinion and sympathy for the Palestinian struggle. The high level of audience engagement on each post, along with positive reactions in the form of comments, moral support, and re-shared content, are clear evidence of this account's success in shaping public opinion. Even when facing attempts to silence or hack, this account actually experienced an increase in followers and support. Thus, it can be concluded that @eye.on.palestine acts as an effective digital propaganda agent and is able to build international solidarity, proving that social media has become a strategic arena in the struggle for narratives and global humanitarian struggles.

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