

# Framing Palestine in Indonesian News Media: A Comparative Analysis of National Television and Online News Portals

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.65815/fm8n9941>

Submitted: 21-11-2025

Revised: 22-02-2026, 08-04-2026

Accepted: 10-05-2026

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## Abstract

Media coverage plays a central role in shaping public perceptions of international conflicts. In Indonesia, Palestine receives extensive attention from television networks, online news portals, and social media platforms, often through humanitarian, religious, political, and geopolitical frames. This article examines how Indonesian news media construct narratives concerning Palestine. Using qualitative content analysis, the study compares selected Indonesian television and online news coverage with particular attention to terminology, civilian narratives, humanitarian framing, political responsibility, and source selection. The article argues that media framing influences how Indonesian audiences understand the conflict and may reinforce particular interpretations of victimhood, responsibility, and international solidarity. The study also examines the tension between humanitarian reporting and politically polarized narratives. A more balanced approach should maintain sensitivity to civilian suffering while providing contextual information and distinguishing verified facts from political claims. The article concludes that Indonesian media have a significant role in shaping public discourse on Palestine and should strengthen verification, contextual reporting, and ethical coverage of conflict-related humanitarian issues.

*[Liputan media memainkan peran sentral dalam membentuk persepsi publik terhadap konflik internasional. Di Indonesia, Palestina mendapat perhatian luas dari jaringan televisi, portal berita daring, dan platform media sosial, seringkali melalui kerangka kemanusiaan, agama, politik, dan geopolitik. Artikel ini mengkaji bagaimana media berita Indonesia membangun narasi mengenai Palestina. Dengan menggunakan analisis konten kualitatif, studi ini membandingkan liputan berita televisi dan daring Indonesia yang dipilih, dengan perhatian khusus pada terminologi, narasi warga sipil, kerangka kemanusiaan, tanggung jawab politik, dan pemilihan sumber. Artikel ini berpendapat bahwa pembedaan media memengaruhi bagaimana audiens Indonesia memahami konflik dan dapat memperkuat interpretasi tertentu*

*tentang korban, tanggung jawab, dan solidaritas internasional. Studi ini juga mengkaji ketegangan antara pelaporan kemanusiaan dan narasi yang terpolarisasi secara politik. Pendekatan yang lebih seimbang harus menjaga kepekaan terhadap penderitaan warga sipil sambil memberikan informasi kontekstual dan membedakan fakta yang terverifikasi dari klaim politik. Artikel ini menyimpulkan bahwa media Indonesia memiliki peran penting dalam membentuk wacana publik tentang Palestina dan harus memperkuat verifikasi, pelaporan kontekstual, dan liputan etis tentang isu-isu kemanusiaan terkait konflik.]*

**Keywords:** Palestine, Indonesian media, news framing, conflict reporting, humanitarian communication

## Introduction

International conflicts are not experienced by distant audiences through direct observation alone. For most citizens, knowledge about war is mediated through journalistic institutions that determine which events become visible, which actors receive attention, which explanations are considered legitimate, and which consequences are emphasized. This makes news media an important institution in the construction of political meaning. Entman argues that framing involves selecting aspects of perceived reality and making them more salient within a communicating text, thereby influencing how audiences define problems, identify causes, make moral evaluations, and consider possible remedies (Entman 1993). News about Palestine therefore cannot be understood merely as a collection of factual statements. The organization of headlines, photographs, sources, quotations, chronology, terminology, and contextual explanations can produce substantially different interpretations of the same military or humanitarian event.

The Palestinian-Israeli conflict is particularly suitable for examining this process because it contains competing historical narratives, asymmetrical political claims, humanitarian consequences, religious symbolism, and intense international contestation. In Indonesia, these dimensions intersect with a strong public and governmental commitment to Palestinian self-determination. Previous research demonstrates that Indonesian media generally construct Palestine through humanitarian suffering, injustice, resistance, and solidarity, although the intensity and meaning of those frames differ across media organizations (Suwarno and Sahayu 2020; Afiq 2024). Recent studies similarly identify a broad pro-Palestinian orientation among Indonesian media while demonstrating considerable variation in the specific narratives used to explain the conflict (Ibrahim et al. 2025; Nuraini et al. 2025). This suggests that ideological proximity to a particular cause does not automatically eliminate internal differences in journalistic framing.

The development of digital news has further complicated the relationship between media form and conflict representation. Television remains influential because audiovisual images can create immediacy and emotional proximity, whereas online news portals operate through continuous updates, searchable archives, hyperlinks, multimedia formats, and rapid interaction with audiences. The distinction is important because the technological architecture of a medium influences the kinds of narratives that can be sustained. Research comparing television and press coverage more broadly demonstrates that framing varies according to both media characteristics and the type of news organization, with human-interest and conflict frames frequently becoming particularly prominent in emotionally charged reporting (Semetko and Valkenburg 2000). Indonesian studies comparing online outlets likewise show differences in headlines, imagery, narrative structure, and thematic emphasis (Maulana and Febriana 2024; Fauzi and Fianamalia 2024).

Previous studies have made significant contributions but leave an analytical space for a more integrated comparison between television and online news. Much of the existing Indonesian literature examines individual platforms, particular periods, or specific framing models. Some studies focus on textual structures, while others examine critical discourse, humanitarian narratives, or peace journalism separately. What remains less developed is an explanation of how media format, editorial priorities, source selection, and conflict-journalism principles interact in constructing Palestine as a news object. This article addresses that gap by treating framing not simply as a textual feature but as a journalistic process connecting selection, emphasis, attribution, visual representation, and normative interpretation.

The article consequently asks how Indonesian national television and online news portals frame Palestine, what similarities and differences characterize their representations, and what those differences mean for the quality of public discourse concerning the conflict. The central argument is that Indonesian media demonstrate a relatively consistent humanitarian orientation toward Palestine, but the consistency of political sympathy should not be confused with consistency of journalistic framing. Television and online media may converge in portraying civilian suffering while diverging in explaining causation, identifying responsibility, contextualizing historical developments, and presenting political alternatives. The quality of Palestine reporting should therefore be evaluated not primarily through the question of political neutrality, but through the journalistic principles of accuracy, verification, contextual completeness, source diversity, proportionality, and protection of civilians.

## **Literature Review and Theoretical Frameworks**

Framing theory provides the principal analytical foundation for this study. Entman's formulation is particularly useful because it connects textual selection with political interpretation. A frame can define a problem, diagnose its causes,

make moral judgments, and suggest remedies (Entman 1993). The implication is that journalists exercise interpretive power even when they do not explicitly advocate a political position. A headline that foregrounds civilian casualties, for example, constructs a different problem definition from a headline emphasizing military retaliation. Similarly, describing an event as an attack, operation, retaliation, resistance, escalation, or humanitarian catastrophe does more than provide vocabulary; it places the event within a particular causal and moral structure. Framing analysis therefore makes it possible to investigate not only what Indonesian media report about Palestine but how they make particular meanings more accessible than others.

Pan and Kosicki expand this perspective by conceptualizing news framing through syntactical, script, thematic, and rhetorical structures (Pan and Kosicki 1993). This framework is particularly relevant to comparative analysis because differences between television and online media may emerge at multiple levels. Syntactically, outlets may differ in headline construction and source placement. At the script level, they may emphasize different actors and sequences of events. Thematically, one outlet may interpret the conflict primarily through humanitarian suffering while another emphasizes diplomacy or geopolitical competition. Rhetorically, differences may become visible through photographs, emotional vocabulary, metaphors, labels, and visual sequencing. Framing therefore operates through the entire architecture of news rather than through isolated words.

The second theoretical foundation is the concept of news frames developed by Semetko and Valkenburg. Their study identifies recurring frames including conflict, human interest, attribution of responsibility, economic consequences, and morality, and demonstrates that framing varies according to both outlet characteristics and subject matter (Semetko and Valkenburg 2000). These categories are particularly applicable to Palestine because the conflict simultaneously involves military confrontation, civilian suffering, responsibility for violence, humanitarian consequences, and competing moral claims. The human-interest frame can make distant suffering emotionally immediate, while the responsibility frame directs attention toward actors and causes. The conflict frame can simplify complex political realities into opposing sides, whereas a morality frame can place events within broader ethical or religious judgments.

Peace journalism provides a complementary theoretical perspective. Galtung argues that conventional war journalism frequently privileges visible violence, elite sources, zero-sum conflict, and immediate events, while peace journalism seeks to broaden the narrative toward causes, consequences, multiple perspectives, nonviolent alternatives, and opportunities for resolution (Galtung 2006). The distinction is important because humanitarian reporting and peace journalism are not identical. A report may powerfully describe civilian suffering while still providing little explanation of the structural conditions that produced it. Conversely, a report may provide extensive geopolitical context without adequately humanizing the victims. A rights-sensitive approach therefore requires the

integration of humanitarian visibility with contextual and conflict-sensitive reporting.

Recent scholarship on Indonesian media confirms the relevance of these theoretical perspectives. Suwarno and Sahayu found that Indonesian and international media can construct Palestine and Israel through different representations of victimhood and responsibility (Suwarno and Sahayu 2020). Afiq similarly identifies recurring Indonesian frames of resistance, justice, victimhood, and international responsibility (Afiq 2024). Research on Indonesian online media following the October 2023 escalation demonstrates variation between structural-violence, humanitarian, geopolitical, and independence-oriented frames despite an overall pro-Palestinian orientation (Ibrahim et al. 2025). More recent research comparing Indonesian outlets through a peace-journalism framework shows that differences in contextualization, humanitarian reporting, and attention to nonviolent solutions remain significant even where outlets share sympathy for Palestinians (Nuraini et al. 2025). These studies indicate that the analytical problem is not simply ideological bias but the interaction between political orientation and journalistic practice.

## Methods

This study uses a qualitative comparative content-analysis approach supported by normative media analysis. The research does not attempt to measure audience attitudes statistically; rather, it examines how journalistic texts and audiovisual narratives construct meanings about Palestine. The analytical corpus is informed by Indonesian reporting on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, particularly coverage surrounding major escalations since October 2023, and by empirical studies examining Indonesian television and online news portals during the same period. The approach is deliberately comparative because the objective is to identify recurring patterns across media formats rather than to determine whether one particular outlet is objectively neutral.

The analysis applies four principal dimensions derived from framing and conflict-journalism scholarship. The first is problem definition, concerning whether Palestine is presented primarily as a humanitarian crisis, military conflict, political dispute, occupation, geopolitical confrontation, or question of self-determination. The second is causal attribution, examining which actors and structural conditions are presented as responsible for violence and humanitarian consequences. The third is moral and human-interest representation, including the personalization of victims, use of emotionally charged language, visual imagery, and references to international law or humanitarian principles. The fourth is remedy and contextualization, assessing whether reporting provides diplomatic, legal, humanitarian, or peace-oriented alternatives rather than limiting the narrative to cycles of violence.

The comparison between television and online media is interpreted through the characteristics of each medium. Television reporting is examined in terms of

visual immediacy, sequencing, sound, interviews, official statements, and limited broadcast time. Online reporting is examined through headline structure, article development, hyperlinks, updates, multimedia integration, source plurality, and the possibility of extended contextual explanation. The analysis also considers source hierarchy because journalists' reliance on government officials, military representatives, humanitarian organizations, academics, eyewitnesses, or affected civilians can substantially influence the narrative. The purpose is not to assume that one source category is inherently neutral but to evaluate whether reporting provides sufficient diversity for audiences to understand contested claims.

Because the study relies partly on existing empirical research, its findings are presented as an analytical synthesis rather than as a claim of a newly coded statistical dataset. This methodological choice avoids overstating empirical precision while allowing the article to identify convergent patterns across studies. Existing Indonesian research provides useful comparative evidence: studies have examined framing in Kompas.com, CNN Indonesia, Republika, Detik, and other outlets, while recent research has also analyzed national online media through critical discourse and peace-journalism approaches (Maulana and Febriana 2024; Saraswati and Pramiyanti 2025; Ibrahim et al. 2025). The present study builds upon those findings by interpreting them through the relationship between media form, framing practice, and humanitarian communication.

## Results and Discussion

### A. Humanitarian Framing and the Construction of Civilian Suffering

The most persistent feature of Indonesian reporting on Palestine is the prominence of humanitarian framing. Civilian deaths, displacement, destruction of homes, shortages of food and medicine, damaged hospitals, and the experiences of children frequently provide the emotional entry point through which audiences encounter the conflict. This pattern is consistent with research showing that Indonesian media frequently emphasize Palestinian victimhood and humanitarian consequences (Afik 2024; Fauzi and Fianamalia 2024). Humanitarian framing has an important democratic function because it prevents armed conflict from being reduced to abstract geopolitical competition. By placing civilians at the center of the story, journalism can make visible the human consequences of political and military decisions.

Nevertheless, humanitarian framing is not inherently sufficient. The personalization of suffering may produce emotional recognition without adequate causal explanation. A report showing injured children or destroyed buildings can generate sympathy, but audiences may remain unable to understand why the event occurred, which actors exercised power, what legal standards apply, or what political processes could prevent repetition. Semetko and Valkenburg's distinction between human-interest and responsibility frames is useful here because the two frames perform different communicative functions (Semetko and Valkenburg 2000). Human-interest reporting answers the question of who suffers; responsibility

reporting addresses why the suffering occurred and who has the authority or obligation to respond.

This distinction is particularly important for television. Audiovisual media possess a strong capacity to make distant suffering immediate. Images of funerals, injured civilians, destroyed neighborhoods, and humanitarian distribution can create a powerful sense of proximity. Yet the same visual immediacy can compress complex historical and legal questions into short segments. The television format therefore creates a structural tension between emotional visibility and contextual depth. A visually compelling report may be highly effective at communicating urgency while leaving insufficient space for historical background, competing claims, or legal analysis.

Online news portals have greater capacity to overcome this limitation because articles can be updated, linked to previous reports, supplemented with maps, timelines, interviews, documents, and explanatory materials. However, greater capacity does not automatically produce better journalism. Online media also operate under speed, competition for attention, search-engine optimization, and audience metrics. Headlines may therefore prioritize immediacy and emotional salience. Studies comparing Indonesian online outlets show that differences in titles, images, and narrative organization can significantly affect the implied meaning of conflict reporting (Maulana and Febriana 2024). The analytical conclusion is that humanitarian framing should not be rejected; rather, it should be connected systematically to causation, context, verification, and accountability.

## **B. Responsibility, Terminology, and the Politics of Attribution**

The second major finding concerns the allocation of responsibility. Conflict reporting inevitably requires journalists to identify actors, describe actions, and explain consequences. Yet terminology can subtly establish causal and moral relationships. Words such as “attack,” “retaliation,” “operation,” “resistance,” “occupation,” “militant,” or “civilian” carry different interpretive implications. Entman's framework explains why such choices matter: framing selects particular aspects of reality and makes them more salient, thereby influencing problem definition and moral evaluation (Entman 1993). The terminology of conflict is consequently not a superficial linguistic matter but part of the politics of representation.

Indonesian reporting generally demonstrates a relatively strong orientation toward Palestinian civilian suffering and Palestinian political claims. Recent studies nevertheless reveal meaningful variation. Ibrahim and colleagues found that Indonesian online outlets differed in whether they emphasized structural violence, humanitarian tragedy, geopolitical maneuvering, or Palestinian independence, despite a broadly sympathetic orientation toward Palestine (Ibrahim et al. 2025). This finding is analytically important because it challenges the simplistic assumption that a common political position necessarily produces identical

journalism. Media organizations can share sympathy for Palestinian civilians while differing substantially in how they construct responsibility and causation.

The problem becomes more complex when reporting on Hamas and Israeli military actions. Journalistic responsibility requires that civilian suffering and alleged violations be reported with accurate attribution and evidentiary caution. Ambiguous terminology can blur the distinction between verified facts, allegations, political claims, and journalistic interpretation. Recent analysis of Indonesian media coverage of the October 2023 escalation found variation in how outlets described Hamas and framed the broader conflict, while diplomatic solutions remained present within their narratives (Ibrahim et al. 2025). Such findings suggest that the central journalistic challenge is not to manufacture artificial symmetry but to distinguish clearly between competing claims and verified evidence.

A responsibility-oriented frame is especially valuable when dealing with international law and humanitarian norms. Reporting can improve public understanding by identifying relevant legal institutions, distinguishing allegations from adjudicated findings, and explaining the obligations of parties to an armed conflict. Research examining Indonesian media coverage of the International Court of Justice's 2024 advisory opinion found that major online outlets constructed narratives emphasizing the illegality of the occupation and Indonesian support for Palestine (Nuraini et al. 2025). Such reporting demonstrates that international legal developments can become an important bridge between humanitarian emotion and institutional accountability. The media's role is therefore not simply to reproduce political solidarity but to translate complex legal and diplomatic developments into verifiable public knowledge.

### **C. Television, Online Portals, and the Different Logics of Visibility**

The comparison between television and online media reveals that medium-specific characteristics significantly influence framing. Television operates through limited airtime, audiovisual sequencing, presenter narration, interviews, and visual evidence. These characteristics encourage concise narratives in which the most visually compelling elements receive priority. In conflict coverage, this can strengthen human-interest and event-centered frames. Online portals, by contrast, can publish continuous updates and develop multiple versions of the same story as new information becomes available. They can also connect breaking news to background articles, interviews, legal documents, data visualizations, and archival material.

This distinction should not be interpreted as a simple hierarchy in which online media are necessarily more comprehensive than television. The digital environment has its own pressures. The speed of publication can encourage premature reporting, while competition for clicks can favor dramatic headlines and emotionally powerful images. Online stories can therefore reproduce the same episodic logic found in television even when they have greater technical capacity for contextualization. Pan and Kosicki's framework is useful here because it

demonstrates that framing occurs through the organization of the entire news discourse, not merely through the amount of information provided (Pan and Kosicki 1993).

Indonesian comparative studies support this interpretation. Research on CNN Indonesia and Kompas.com identified similarities as well as differences in titles, images, and narrative structures, demonstrating that apparently similar events can acquire different meanings through presentation (Maulana and Febriana 2024). Critical discourse research has similarly shown that Indonesian media vary in their thematic and rhetorical treatment of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict (Saraswati and Pramiyanti 2025). These differences indicate that the digital environment has not eliminated editorial framing; instead, it has multiplied the number of points at which framing can occur, from headlines and thumbnails to hyperlinks, push notifications, video clips, and comment-oriented content.

The implications for audiences are substantial. Framing research has demonstrated that news frames can influence how individuals think about issues and what aspects they subsequently recall (Valkenburg, Semetko, and de Vreese 1999). This does not mean that audiences passively absorb media messages. Audiences interpret news through prior beliefs, religious identities, political orientations, and social networks. Nevertheless, repeated exposure to particular frames can establish a dominant vocabulary through which a conflict is understood. If Palestine is consistently presented as humanitarian tragedy without sufficient historical or political explanation, audiences may develop strong sympathy without corresponding structural understanding. Conversely, if reporting focuses overwhelmingly on geopolitical strategy, civilian suffering may become abstract. Responsible journalism must therefore combine affective accessibility with analytical depth.

#### **D. From Conflict Journalism to Contextual and Peace-Oriented Reporting**

The final finding concerns the tension between conflict journalism and peace journalism. Indonesian media's strong humanitarian concern for Palestinians constitutes an important foundation for ethical reporting, but humanitarian solidarity alone does not guarantee comprehensive conflict journalism. Galtung's peace-journalism perspective emphasizes the importance of explaining conflict roots, identifying multiple actors, recognizing civilian experiences, and exploring nonviolent possibilities (Galtung 2006). In this framework, journalism should not merely describe violence as a sequence of events; it should help audiences understand the structures and relationships that sustain it.

Recent comparative research on Indonesian media indicates substantial differences in their implementation of peace-journalism principles. Kompas has been found to place relatively greater emphasis on conflict roots, humanitarian consequences, and nonviolent solutions, whereas other outlets place greater emphasis on immediate consequences or political solidarity (Nuraini et al. 2025).

This does not establish that one outlet is universally superior. Rather, it demonstrates that the same political conflict can be interpreted through different journalistic priorities. The implication is that media quality should be assessed through specific practices—contextualization, verification, source diversity, proportionality, and attention to peaceful alternatives—rather than broad ideological labels.

A more mature approach to Palestine reporting would therefore combine humanitarian and structural frames. Civilian suffering should remain visible, but stories should also explain the political and historical context in which that suffering occurs. Reports on military operations should identify verified facts and competing claims. Reports on diplomacy should explain the interests and legal positions of relevant actors. Reports concerning international law should distinguish judicial findings from political interpretations. Reports involving Hamas should distinguish the organization, its military actions, Palestinian civilians, and broader Palestinian political aspirations rather than collapsing them into a single category. Such distinctions are essential to avoid collective attribution and preserve analytical precision.

The challenge is particularly significant for Indonesian media because Palestine is simultaneously a humanitarian issue, a foreign-policy concern, a religiously resonant subject, and a symbol of anti-colonial solidarity. These dimensions explain why the issue generates exceptionally strong public attention. Afiq's research demonstrates that Indonesian media framing is connected to narratives of justice, resistance, and solidarity (Afiq 2024), while recent studies indicate that media discourse is influenced by the broader Indonesian political and social consensus supporting Palestine (Ibrahim et al. 2025). The appropriate journalistic response is not to suppress that social context in the name of artificial neutrality. Instead, media institutions should acknowledge the context while maintaining rigorous professional standards for evidence, attribution, terminology, and verification.

Ultimately, the strongest model of Palestine reporting is not one that eliminates moral judgment but one that separates moral concern from factual distortion. Journalism can recognize civilian suffering as morally significant while remaining disciplined about evidence. It can report Palestinian rights without reproducing unverified claims, and it can report Israeli civilian suffering without treating humanitarian concern as equivalent to endorsement of a particular government policy. This approach is consistent with the broader insight of framing theory: every news report necessarily emphasizes some aspects over others, but professional journalism can reduce misleading simplification by making its evidentiary basis, sources, and contextual assumptions more transparent.

## Conclusion

Indonesian news media play an important role in constructing public understanding of Palestine, and the analysis indicates a relatively strong

humanitarian orientation across television and online platforms. Civilian suffering, displacement, destruction, international solidarity, and Palestinian political claims receive substantial visibility. Nevertheless, shared sympathy does not produce uniform framing. Differences emerge in the attribution of responsibility, terminology, historical contextualization, source selection, visual emphasis, and presentation of political alternatives. Television's dependence on audiovisual immediacy tends to reinforce event-centered and human-interest narratives, while online portals provide greater opportunities for contextualization but remain influenced by speed, competition, and attention-driven digital practices. The principal analytical conclusion is therefore that media format interacts with editorial framing rather than determining it.

The article further argues that the quality of Palestine reporting should be assessed through a combination of humanitarian sensitivity and journalistic rigor. A rights-sensitive media framework should place civilian protection at the center while simultaneously explaining causation, historical context, international law, and competing political claims. Indonesian media can contribute more effectively to public understanding by strengthening source diversity, verification, contextual reporting, and peace-oriented journalism. Such an approach does not require abandoning solidarity with Palestinian civilians or adopting artificial equivalence between unequal political and military positions. Instead, it requires distinguishing solidarity from advocacy, verified facts from claims, and humanitarian concern from partisan simplification. By doing so, Indonesian journalism can transform public attention toward Palestine into a more informed, critical, and constructive form of international civic discourse.

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**Acknowledgment**

None

**Funding Information**

None

**Conflicting Interest Statement**

The authors state that there is no conflict of interest in the publication of this article.

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N/A