www.honestreporting.com





#### A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIRMAN



Dear Friends,

Israel continues to come under assault in the media. One of the reasons I accepted the chairmanship of HonestReporting was the recognition that all of us can play a role in fighting this anti-Israel media bias.

While HonestReporting relies on the thousands of its readers to take action, I'm constantly amazed at just how much the organization produces and achieves with such a small yet dedicated team.

While many organizations have cut back during this difficult economic period, HonestReporting, through creative thinking and strategic planning, has managed to continue expanding the scope of its activities. A completely redesigned website, professionally produced videos, educational materials and, of course, the regular media alerts have ensured substantial growth in the number of people viewing HR content.

Like many supporters of Israel, I'm concerned at the lack of knowledge and ability within our own communities to stand up for Israel. I believe that HonestReporting fulfils a vital educational role in addition to holding the media to account. It is a source of great encouragement that HR is demonstrably reaching beyond the choir, making inroads on the majority of the public that have previously not known or not cared about Israel and the Middle East conflict.

I'm sure we all wish for a time when HonestReporting will no longer be needed. In the meantime, I hope that this brief overview of 2011's activities will enhance your commitment to HonestReporting's future endeavors.

David A. Barish, Ph.D. Chairman, HonestReporting

# HonestReporting BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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#### A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO



2011 witnessed dramatic changes, not only in Israel's immediate neighborhood, but in the Media Landscape that our work focuses on day to day. The speed of Social Media's growth and impact continues unabated, adding to the volume of coverage we undertake, and the need to develop tools for you, our readers — to keep you engaged and effective wherever Media Bias occurs. I'm delighted to share this Year in Review with you — our grassroots community and support base who continue to multiply the incredible power of 'one'. I hope you'll take as much pride as I do in the success stories, increased readership and impact,

and the measurable reach 'beyond the choir' reflected in these pages. The achievements are all yours – and I congratulate you. With thanks in advance for your continued partnership in making a real difference for Israel.

Joe Hyams
CEO, HonestReporting



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This publication contains <u>underlined hyperlinks</u>. Clicking them from this PDF will open a related web page. If you're reading a printed version, <a href="http://www.honestreporting.com/2011-media-bias-review/">http://www.honestreporting.com/2011-media-bias-review/</a> has the links and resources. The Table of Contents above is linked to interior pages.

#### 

#### IN MEMORIAM: DICK SCHERER

This annual review is dedicated in memory of Dick Scherer – *Itzhak ben Moishe* – in recognition of his life-long support and commitment to Israel. Dick's support over the years has played an important role, ensuring the continued work of HonestReporting.

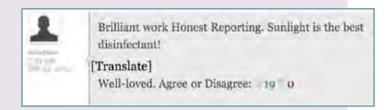
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#### **HIGHLIGHTS - In 2011, HonestReporting:**

- Generated numerous apologies and retractions from some of the world's largest media organizations.
- Posted over 100 media critiques covering some of the worst instances of anti-Israel bias.

Over 1 Million Visits in 2011 to HonestReporting.com!

- Published Shattered Lens a major study exposing photo bias from the three main wire services.
- Ran our 15th Advocacy Mission to Israel a week of training and exploration with leading experts.



- Launched our brand new website complete with social media and interactive features. Activity on Facebook increased from 3,000 monthly users at mid-year to over 24,000 by November.
- Lectured to dozens of communities and student groups across the U.S.A. and Australia.

#### **Achieving Results**

When *The Guardian*'s Deborah Orr used the anti-Semitic trope of the "Chosen People" in a particularly <u>nasty opinion piece</u> on the Gilad Shalit prisoner exchange, HR's subscribers mobilized, bombarding *The Guardian* with letters to the editor.

This prompted Orr to write an equally <u>disgusting excuse for an</u>

<u>"apology"</u> that caused further outrage. Having received some 500 letters from HR subscribers, *The Guardian's* readers' editor was forced to address the issue, stating:

# The readers' editor on... averting accusations of antisemitism

Guardian reporters, writers and editors must be more vigilant about the language they use when writing about Jews or Israel



Chris Elliott guardian.co.uk, Sunday 6 November 2011 19.00 GMT Article history

"Guardian reporters,
writers and editors must
be more vigilant about the
language they use when
writing about Jews or
Israel."

# 'Guardian' columnist apologizes for 'anti-Semitic slur'

By JONNY PAUL, JERUSALEM POST CORRESPONDENT 10/27/2011 04:17

Jerusalem-based media monitors Honest Reporting said: "That Deborah Orr is prepared to descend to the depths of anti- Semitism to claim that Israel is motivated by racism says much about her own warped values."

"That the Guardian was prepared to publish such an obscene commentary merely confirms the publication's vicious anti- Israel bent."

HonestReporting was quoted in the *Jerusalem Post*'s coverage of Orr's article and subsequent apology (see left).



In addition to subscribers' letters being published in major media outlets, we achieved a result following a campaign against the *BBC*'s **publication of a false story** alleging the stoning of a dog by rabbinical authorities.

The BBC issued an apology:

"We failed to make the right checks. We should never have written the article and apologise for any offence caused."

We know that the media is aware of HonestReporting. Aside from being caught out for bad reporting, journalists also appreciate receiving our approval.

We gave a <u>thumbs up</u> to BBC technology reporter Katia Moskvitch for a series of positive features on Israeli high-tech success. She responded on Facebook and Twitter.



#### Upgrading HonestReporting's Look and Feel

January 2011 saw the long-awaited launch of **HonestReporting's new website**. The new site is designed to give the community of HonestReporting readers and supporters more opportunities to **make their voices heard**.



Every article on the site has a comments section underneath so readers can **let us know what they think** directly on the site. Readers can also indicate whether or not they agree with comments posted by other members of the community. At the end of every article, there is also a list of related articles to provide context and **deepen their understanding** of the issues we are addressing.

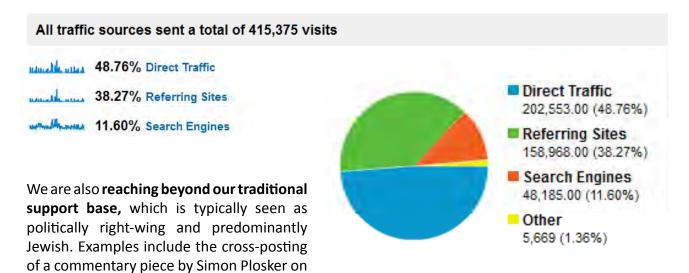
While comments sections are common on many websites, our readers have used the section as a forum for conversations about the media bias issues discussed in the articles. Readers have taken advantage of the forum to respond to one another and turn our site into a hub for the community of people who want to see Israel portrayed fairly in the media.

With the launch of the new website, HonestReporting also added a **dedicated graphic designer** to the team allowing us to produce original images that have improved the overall look of the site. Attractive graphics and stimulating imagery have contributed to the number of people accessing HR material.



#### Reaching Beyond the Choir

While in the past our primary means of reaching our audience was through our large mailing list and therefore our core supporters and subscribers, the new website has witnessed a **dramatic expansion** of HonestReporting's reach. The statistics now show that over half of visits to the website are coming from search engines, referring sites and other sources "beyond the choir".



the influential politically center-left <u>Harry's Place</u> blog and the quoting of a <u>YNet News</u> op-ed by Simon Plosker in the <u>Christian Science Monitor</u>.





#### Slideshow

With our recent slideshow, <u>"Defending Israel Against Claims of Excessive Force"</u>, HonestReporting proved that quality content with a strong emphasis on design – regardless of format – **can reach a substantial audience among the general public.** 

The slideshow was created to engage viewers through **sharp** writing and first-rate visuals. Within hours of its release, the slideshow was promoted to a **featured place on the homepage of Slideshare.net** – one of the 200 largest websites on the Internet.

Even though the slideshow had an explicitly pro-Israel message, the vast majority of its views came from people outside HonestReporting's readership. Some 75,000 people who had no connection to HonestReporting watched the slideshow, helping HR spread its message well beyond Israel's natural supporters.

One week after its release, the slideshow earned the **top spot** in **Slideshare's most popular ranking for the week**, proving that pro-Israel content can reach a large audience if the content is engaging and visually stimulating.











Hey HonestReporting.

Congratulations!

Your presentation Defending Israel Against Claims of Excessive Force has been featured on SlideShare's homepage.

Kudos from our editorial team for your effort. Your presentation was chosen from the thousands uploaded to SlideShare everyday from across the world.

- The SlideShare Team



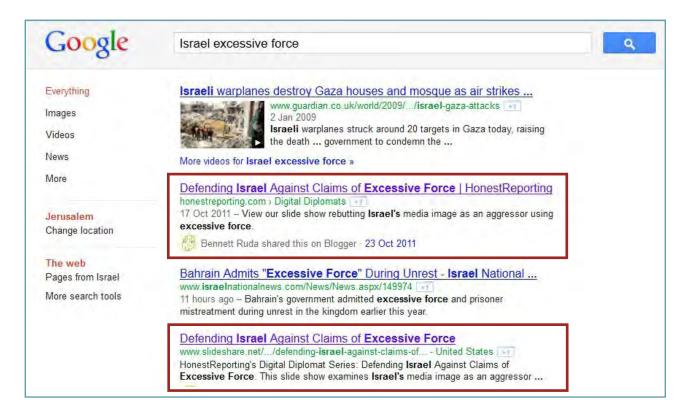








The slideshow's impact, however, reaches even beyond the group of people who watched it already. Because of its popularity, its pages on the HonestReporting website and on Slideshare now occupy the second and fourth spots on Google search results for the term "Israel excessive force." Instead of seeing the usual litany of accusations against Israel, searchers now see a **detailed defense of Israel's actions**.





YouTube is an extremely effective way of advocating for Israel, providing a platform to reach many unaffiliated viewers. HR has released three major videos this year, all of them professionally produced and addressing some of the major Israel advocacy issues of the year:





- "What Has Israel Ever Done For Peace?"
- "Don't Be Misled Israel Wants Peace"
- "Jerusalem The Media Myth of Two Cities"

These videos have totaled some 105,000 views so far.







#### Digital Advocacy – Facebook

For HonestReporting, Facebook is more than a social network. It is also the place where many of our Internet-based fans come to find our content and to share it with their friends. Other than Google, no site brought more people to our own website than Facebook. In 2011, it **brought 68,000 people to our site and accounted for well over 100,000 views of our material.** 

The popularity of our videos, particularly the spoof on Monty Python, also helped propel our Facebook page to new heights. Within days of posting "What Has Israel Ever Done For Peace?" on our

Facebook page at the end of August, activity on the page exploded, leading to much more attention to all of our other content.

The impact of the video on our Facebook community and our traffic in general proved that our multichannel approach to contentand marketing is extremely effective.



By providing different types of content to different platforms and different audiences, we are able to bring them all together on our site and **expose more people than ever.** 

In addition, we experimented with smaller communities outside of HR's main page. We created a community called <u>"The History of Jerusalem Did Not Start in 1967"</u> to give people a place to post views about Israel's commitment to Jerusalem. **The community is up to nearly 1,000 members.** 



#### **Twitter**

HonestReporting put a new emphasis on Twitter in 2011, **doubling the number of people following HR's tweets** and using the platform to engage other Twitter users more directly.

HR also used Twitter to "break" the news about Facebook's removal of a controversial group promoting a Third Intifada. HR was the first to report that the group had been removed, posting the news on its Backspin blog then tweeting it to its followers. The news spread like lightning, with most people referring to HR as the source of the information.

The story was **Google's top link for the day** for the search term "Facebook Third Intifada". It was also **shared more than 10,000 times on Facebook.** 

#### **Continuing Growth**

Better marketing, better targeting of material of special interest to our audience, and a commitment to giving our readers everything they need to know about how the media covers Israel contributed to an increase in the number of pages each visitor viewed when he or she came to the site. In addition, our new website greatly improved how our material was displayed, making it a more inviting place to visit and return to often. The all-around improvements led to HR recording an all-time best 1,496,552 pages viewed in 2011.

#### **Shattered Lens and Photo Bias**

The final three parts of our **groundbreaking Shattered Lens study** of photo bias in the wire services were published. This marked the first time a study had been commissioned to examine the imagery produced by the wire services to see whether there are any identifiable trends that may indicate bias.



The study was carried out by David Katz, a professional photographer with 25 years experience working at the highest levels in the media together with HonestReporting. Over three months, some 13,500 photos from Israel and the Palestinian territories were reviewed.

The study revealed a **pattern of double standards and bias** that has become a norm in coverage of the region, particularly in regard to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

In a revealing video, Italian freelance photojournalist Ruben Salvadori blew the lid on the dynamics between photojournalists and Palestinian stone throwers.

Salvadori gave HonestReporting an <u>exclusive interview</u> giving his views on ethical photojournalism, the role of photojournalists in the Mideast conflict and the effects on the industry.

#### **Fresh Directions and Content**

**HR Comment:** In addition to our regular critiques, we have also started to publish more commentary-style pieces giving a more personalized editorial on some of the key issues of the day.

**HR Europe:** With a view to expanding our reach beyond English-language media, we have started working with organizations in Europe to produce content on anti-Israel bias in those countries.



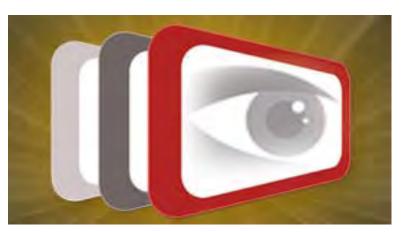




Media Summary: A daily roundup of Mideast coverage delivered in a bite sized portion has gained a regular following, particularly through Facebook and Twitter, enabling us to further increase the amount of content, web views and utilization of

the Backspin blog.

**Media Psychology 101:** Understanding the deeper psychology of how journalists view the Middle East conflict goes some way towards explaining anti-Israel media bias. That's why we have invited academics to publish guest articles looking at this aspect of the media's reporting.

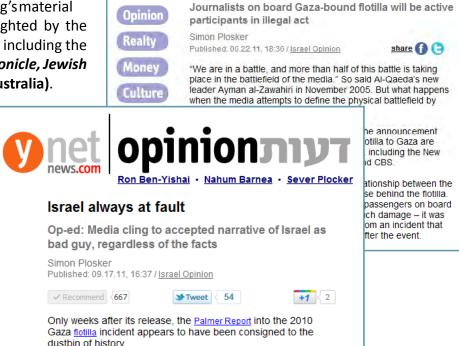


#### HonestReporting in the Media

Two op-eds, <u>"Israel always at fault"</u> and <u>"Media crossing the line"</u> by Simon Plosker have been **published by** YNet News.

Inaddition, HonestReporting's material has been quoted or highlighted by the media on several occasions including the *Jerusalem Post, Jewish Chronicle, Jewish News* (U.K.) and *J-Wire* (Australia).

Simon Plosker has also appeared on **RustyMike Radio** on five occasions while Special Projects Director Yarden Frankl appeared on **Israel National Radio**.



#### **International Lectures**



#### Gary Kenzer, U.S.A. Director

HR's U.S.A. National Director held 55 events in the course of the year **reaching a total of approximately 4,000 people**.

"I wanted to
thank you again
for speaking with our Israel
Advocacy Club last night.
I thought your presentation
was fantastic. I know that we all
learned a lot and I look forward
to sharing more information from
HonestReporting with them
in our upcoming
sessions."

Chris Herman Youth Director Beth Hillel Congregation Bnai Emunah

Shira Ozery
Israel Aliyah Center, Midwest Division
Jewish Agency for Israel





"Everyone told me as they left how they so greatly appreciated your tremendous knowledge, insights, and expertise. We also especially admire your expert ability to present and discuss these complex topics with such objectivity, thoughtfulness, and good nature. Our global community is so fortunate to benefit from your many skills and extraordinary dedication!"







#### Joe Hyams Down Under

Joe Hyams had the opportunity to connect with community leaders, pro-Israel activists and high school as well as university students – in a **Sydney lecture tour reaching several hundred supporters**. Joe offered advocacy training and briefed audiences on the most pressing issues surrounding the delegitimization campaign against Israel.

With over 4,000 monthly visits to the HonestReporting website from Australia, Joe

was overwhelmed by the support and interest for HonestReporting and looks forward to continued relationship building Down Under.



#### Joe Hyams Addresses FONSI Conference

Joe was invited to lecture to a 300+ audience of notfor-profit and related industry professionals, on the need to "act like a business to succeed as a charity". HonestReporting has built a reputation for credibility and integrity, and this Tel Aviv symposium was a closeto-home opportunity to give back, and inspire others to develop their grass roots efforts to maximum effect for Israel.



#### **Global Forum for Combating Anti-Semitism**

Managing Editor Simon Plosker and Social Media Editor Alex Margolin participated in and presented to a two-day meeting of a Working Group on Online Anti-Semitism at the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



The Working Group is an important component of the Global Forum for Combating Anti-Semitism, an active and worldwide alliance of statesmen, parliamentarians, diplomats, journalists, legal experts, NGO's and scholars whose goal is to fight the growing expressions of anti-Semitism and other forms of racism as they manifest themselves around the world.

Plosker and Margolin led discussions to a select group that included former Canadian Justice Minister Irwin Cotler.

#### MediaCentral in 2011

MediaCentral continues to meet and assist journalists from prestigious American, European and Asian media outlets, helping them to use objective terminology rather than accepted propagandistic language. As just one example, new housing in the Jerusalem neighborhood of Gilo was referred to by AP as "East Jerusalem", and by AFP as a "massive"

settlement project," adding, "The homes will be built in the settlement of Gilo, near Bethlehem." In stark contrast, shortly after MediaCentral met with the CNN bureau chief as part of its ongoing efforts to build relationships with the foreign media, and discussed this very topic, CNN's reporter described Gilo accurately and fairly as "... a large Jewish community on the southern outskirts of the city."

**MediaCentral** 

www.m-central.org

The news cycle never let up during 2011. The existential threat of **Iran**'s nuclear ambitions; the return of **IDF Sergeant Gilad Shalit** to Israel after more than five years in Hamas captivity; the failed Palestinian Authority unilateral quest for **statehood at the UN**; and of course **regional upheaval** kept journalists and MediaCentral busy during the last twelve months tracking and reporting on the changing Middle East.

Our activities have focused on these developments as well as analysis and context for breaking news from Israel, the Palestinian Authority and the Middle East. In the past year, MediaCentral provided services to, among others: CNN, AP, NY Times, NPR, Le Monde, Time Magazine, Fox News, BBC, Washington Post, LA Times, The Guardian, CBC, RAI Italian TV, AFP, The Economist, Frankfurter Allgemeine, The Independent, Financial Times Deutschland, Daily Mail, Xinhua, Sunday Times, Nikkei, Mainichi, Radio Canada, EFE Spanish news agency, DPA German news agency, Vesty, NTD China News, The Australian, and many others who have used our services or participated in briefings or tours.

In the summer, the groundswell of **social protests around Israel** against escalating housing prices and an ever-spiraling cost of living brought people out into the streets, pitching tents on the

main boulevards of Tel Aviv and parks of

other cities. MediaCentral brought some of the social protest movement's leadership to the office and we were there

in the protest parks to help journalists meet and interview the leadership of the nationwide initiative.

been extremely helpful and enabled me to file my story on time and with many added elements."

"Thanks so much. You've

Christoph Schult, Der Spiegel





Danny Ayalon addresses members of the foreign press in Israel at MediaCentral, May 2011. un

When Palestinian Authority leader Mahmoud Abbas went to the U.N. in September looking for **unilateral statehood**, simultaneous **Israeli protests** took place in Hebron-Kiryat Arba,

Itamar and Ofra. MediaCentral transported journalists to the Kiryat Arba protest where we were thanked by many of these top-tier news agencies such as **FOX** and **CNN** who had not known about the rallies. Their coverage demonstrated their understanding of the difference



between Israel opposing Palestinian *statehood*, and opposing *unilateralism*.

In what was probably the most compelling human-interest story of the year, most of the Israeli public rejoiced when **IDF Sergeant Gilad Shalit** came home in October; but there were also voices who questioned the wisdom of releasing over 1,000 Palestinian security prisoners. MC staffers accompanied the foreign press – and translated for many – to the Tel Nof base to attend Shalit's



landing and the government press conference; and **Roni Shaked**, a senior military affairs correspondent and author of a book on Hamas, briefed journalists at MC on the impact of the prisoner exchange on the **Fatah-Hamas** relationship and how the release of prisoners will affect Israel's security in years to come. (As pointed out to the attending reporters, research shows that some half of released Palestinian security prisoners returned to terror in the past.)

In November, the Palestinian Authority was accepted as a member of the United Nations Education, Science and Culture Organization (UNESCO). One of its first objectives is to gain 'World Heritage Site' status for many so-called *Muslim* holy places – including the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron. This effort to undermine the Jewish nature, history and identity of places sacred to Judaism and to Israel led to MediaCentral's exclusive December visit to Hebron, which included both Israeli and Palestinian speakers.

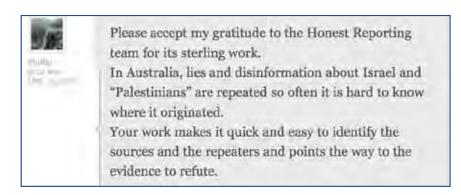


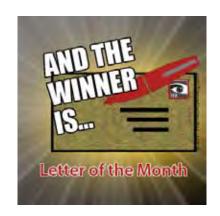
At the close of 2011, MediaCentral commissioned a comprehensive survey of the foreign press stationed in Israel, which will gauge the impact and effectiveness of MediaCentral (and other organizations) which work with and provide information to correspondents. The results will help us sharpen our focus and redouble our efforts.

#### **Education and Action**

HonestReporting has encouraged our readers to become more involved by recognizing the efforts of individuals who take the time to write to media outlets advocating Israel's case.

Our new Letter of the Month feature has highlighted letters that have been published independently of HR action items, showing how our readers are active 24/7 on behalf of Israel.



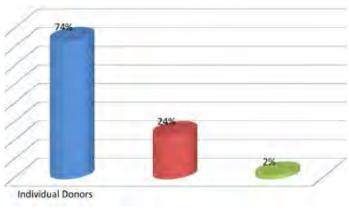


# HONESTREPORTING FINANCIALS 2011

#### Expenses Broken Down into Programs

# Learning Seminars 5% Subscriber Drive 2% International Lectures 8% Global Expenses 22% Fundraising Campaigns 5% MediaCentral 31%

#### Revenue Sources 2011



74% Individual Donors

24% Federations and Private Foundations

2% Other (includes bank interest and advertising revenue)

# In Recognition of HonestReporting



Jerusalem, 18 August 2011

#### Dear Joe,

As Israel continues to face enormous challenges in the field of public diplomacy, I would like to express my gratitude for your contribution and cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs during these challenging times.

Recent events such as the attempt by a second flotilla to illegally break the blockade of Gaza have demonstrated the need for intensive public diplomacy, not only in the traditional media but also in the new battleground of social media.

HonestReporting is a vital weapon in Israel's online armory, holding the media to account and playing a leading role in fighting back the assault on Israel's legitimacy through technology and Internet platforms that the MFA has identified as a priority for our public diplomacy campaigns.

I would like to thank you, your staff and your organization's supporters and activists once again for dedicating their time and talents on Israel's behalf.

Sincerely,

Danny Ayalon

Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs

# HonestReporting Guiding Principles and Values

We believe Israel is entitled to fair treatment by the world press according to the same standards applied to any other country.

We believe that public opinion is significantly shaped by media coverage.

We believe that biased coverage of Israel distorts the public's understanding of Israel and its motives and creates an obstacle to a peaceful resolution to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

We believe people have as much right to criticize Israel as any other state. However, when criticism turns to demonization or delegitimization, it is no longer legitimate criticism.

We support the working definition of anti-Semitism provided by the European Union's Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC). We note the fact that this definition stipulates that anti-Semitism "could also target the state of Israel, conceived as a Jewish collectivity."

# Principles of Fair Coverage

We believe that the media must be accurate, balanced, transparent, and ethical. Journalists, editors, and publishers must be held accountable for slanted coverage of Israel.

We believe that the media must take Israel's official position into account when reporting on the region.

When errors occur, the media is responsible for correcting the record in a timely manner. Corrections must ensure that the average reader is properly informed about the issue.

We believe that reporters working in areas that suppress freedom of expression must indicate the limitations placed on their reports, including a qualification on the reliability of eye-witness accounts in oppressive areas.

We believe news organizations must ensure that all employees are free of connections to terror groups or security services.

# Media Distortions that Constitute Bias

We believe that failure to provide proper context distorts an understanding of motives behind the actions described in the news.

We believe that news articles that quote sources that criticize Israel without also quoting sources that defend Israel are inherently biased.

We believe that Israel should be subject to the same professional standards of reporting that are applied in any other country. Placing greater emphasis on Israeli actions that are ignored by the media in other places constitutes bias.

We believe that the inversion of chronology skews coverage of the conflict. Headlines that focus on Israel's retaliation for an attack, and not the attack itself, give the impression that Israel is the aggressor, thereby distorting the perception of the events.

We believe the use of photos must not distort the situation in the eye of the average reader or falsely evoke an emotional response through staging or selective cropping.





# Register Now! Please visit www.honestreporting.com/mission/application.html



See More Comments and Photos Online



Itinerary Schedule

Details on our website

Join HonestReporting's **16th MISSION "Inside Israel" May 30th - June 5th, 2012** 

Having been to Israel over 100 times, the HonestReporting Mission was one of the best planned, substantive, highlevel and upscale Missions which I have been on. The program was great, with outstanding and knowledgeable speakers. HonestReporting deserves enormous credit for providing a Mission that was first rate in every respect.

Norman Lipoff, Past Chairman UJA www.honestreporting.com/mission/

- Learn how to inspire others and change opinions
- Explore the history and centrality that Jerusalem holds for the Jewish People
- Tour Syrian and Jordanian borders with the IDF
- Discover the real Middle East in "closed door" briefings with military and media experts
- Receive pro advocacy training by Israel's mavens
- Meet Jews, Arabs, and Christians all living and working in Israel
- Brainstorm in sessions on how to create change



- Accommodation at the five-star Inbal Hotel, within minutes' walk of Jerusalem's Old City and city center
- Free cell phone rental for all participants
- \$3195 per person, based on double occupancy, excluding airfare



#### www.honestreporting.com/mission/

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

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# HonestReporting Gets Results

"We failed to make the right checks.
We should never have written the article and apologise for any offence caused."

 Nathalie Malinarich, world editor of the BBC News website "Guardian reporters, writers and editors must be more vigilant about the language they use when writing about Jews or Israel."

Chris Elliott, The Guardian
 Readers' Editor

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Our ID# is 06-1611-859.