

**From:** [New Trier News](#)  
**To:** [REDACTED]; [Savage-Williams, Patricia](#); [REDACTED]; [New Trier News](#)  
**Subject:** NTN Editors & Equity Liaisons

---

This meeting is for editors and the New Trier Equity Liaisons. If you are an Advanced Journalism student/staff writer/staff artist, you may receive this invite, but you are not required to attend this meeting.

Editors - in advance of the meeting, please read the letter and watch the "Rewriting Racist Headlines" video and this video <<https://x.com/ajplus/status/1736788412621885494?s=20>> . We will read and watch these videos in class before the meeting, but in case you are absent or have to interview someone during that time, please make time to review these materials independently.

----

Updated Letter:

Dear New Trier News Editorial Board,

We appreciate the staff editorial <<https://newtriernews.org/staff-editorial/staff-editorials/2023/11/29/we-must-educate-ourselves-about-the-israel-amas-war-using-unbiased-facts/>> that was published in the New Trier News about the Israel-Hamas war. As a newspaper staff, you responded to this on-going conflict with sensitivity and journalistic integrity by engaging your readership in a thoughtful discussion about media literacy. It is critical for readers to understand the dangers of social media and the value of evaluating sources for bias and credibility as our communities grapple with an alarming spike in antisemitism and Islamophobia due to disinformation.

The proliferation of antisemitism and Islamophobia on social media is deeply troubling. A Pew Research Center poll <<https://www.pewresearch.org/journalism/fact-sheet/social-media-and-news-fact-sheet/>> I found that 50% of respondents sometimes or often get their news from social media sites. Social media has become home for those, some with very large followings, who spread antisemitic and Islamophobic stereotypes and conspiracy theories. That has a real impact on violence directed toward these communities. The people who committed the worst antisemitic terrorist attack in US history at the L'Simcha Congregation in Pittsburg and the worst Islamophobic mass shooting during Friday congregational prayers at Noor Mosque in Christchurch, New Zealand regularly posted on social media sites that supported their hateful views.

As you direct readers to trusted news sources such as The Wall Street Journal and The New York Times, it is important to acknowledge the history of media complicity in the stigmatization and dehumanization of Muslims and Arabs. For context, we recommend viewing the New Yorker video "Rewriting Racist Headlines" <<https://www.newyorker.com/video/watch/rewriting-racist-headlines>> " featuring the work of artist and media critic Alexandra Bell. Bell specifically chooses The New York Times for her project examining racial bias in news media because it is "one of the most respected institutions that prides itself on getting it right". Bell's critique can be seen on a pervasive level over decades of American mainstream news coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

In a five-part series in Mother Jones, experts in the field of media, technology, and communications offer critical advice on media literacy during the Israel-Hamas war. Media analyst and deputy director of Arab Center Washington D.C. Tamara Kharroub <<https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2023/11/israel-palestine-media-gaza-journalism-bias/>> identifies three categories of bias prevalent in reporting about Palestinians: terminology and framing; dehumanizing language and double standard; and source credibility and representation. When one group of people is "killed" while another group "dies"; when certain structures are "attacked" while others "explode"; or some minors are referred to as "children" while others are "persons under 18," the humanity of a group of people is elevated or diminished. This dehumanizing language contributes to Islamophobic rhetoric and hate crimes such as the murder of six-year-old Wade al-Fayoum and the shooting of three Palestinian college students this past Thanksgiving weekend in Vermont.

It is also important to acknowledge the challenges and risks that journalists face when reporting about Palestinians <<https://www.npr.org/2023/11/11/1212467226/why-its-so-hard-for-journalists-to-report-from-gaza#:~:text=Israel%2C%20which%20is%20bombing%20Gaza,those%20trying%20to%20report%20it.>> . While major news organizations are embedded with the IDF in Israel, international journalists are banned from entering Gaza. Additionally, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ <<https://cpj.org/2023/12/journalist-casualties-in-the-israel-gaza-conflict/>> ), last month was "the deadliest in recorded history for journalists" with 64 journalists killed (57 Palestinian, 4 Israeli, and 3 Lebanese), 13 injured, 19 arrested, and 3 reported missing. A number of prominent western journalists have been fired or sidelined.

In her oft-cited TED Talk "The Danger of the Single Story" <[https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda\\_ngozi\\_adichie\\_the\\_danger\\_of\\_a\\_single\\_story?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_ngozi_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story?language=en)> , Nigerian writer Chimamanda Adichie explains, "Like our economic and political worlds, stories too are defined by [power]. How they are told, who tells them, when they're told, how many stories are told, are really dependent on power...Power is the ability not just to tell the story of another person, but to make it the definitive story of that person. The Palestinian poet Mourid Barghouti writes that if you want to dispossess a people, the simplest way to do it is to tell their story, and to start with, 'secondly.' Start the story with the arrows of the Native Americans, and not with the arrival of the British, and you have an entirely different story. Start the story with the failure of the African state, and not with the colonial creation of the African state, and you have an entirely different story."

Returning to the title of your editorial, educating ourselves about the Israel-Hamas war requires recognizing that bias will always be present in the reporting of facts. We encourage students to read critically while seeking out a more diverse range of sources. Adding to your list of American news sources, consider British newspaper The Guardian, Israeli newspaper Haaretz, Arab news Al Jazeera English. We also recommend following independent journalistic sources such as +972 Magazine and Democracy Now both of which are offering extensive coverage of the war.

We propose using multiple sources to construct a conversation between dominant and marginalized perspectives at an imaginary "dinner table". As you identify missing voices, continue "adding seats to the table" examining how each perspective enters the existing conversation and how it engages with the other sources with the goal of arriving at a deeper, more nuanced understanding of a complex issue. At a dinner table conversation about the Israel-Hamas war, identify credible individuals representing Israelis and Palestinians — historians, academics, humanitarians, faith leaders, politicians, medical workers, military personnel, psychologists, environmentalists, social justice activists, writers, and artists – who offer a variety of perspectives.

A true understanding of this conflict requires examining diverse perspectives with the intellectual humility, empathy, and critical thinking required to challenge our own biases and foster respectful dialogue.

----

---

Microsoft Teams meeting

Join on your computer, mobile app or room device

Click here to join the meeting <<https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3aqrkBL9ZxC9z4S4KtqiZW4p2r8sMcPnQNAmnF8MHFgEc1%40thread.tacv2/1705514678918?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%22fea9e02d-7dd1-41d2-a8df-de3d06e48467%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22de9add3c-3b27-4925-b210-487358332adf%22%7d>>

Meeting ID: 228 476 889 42

Passcode: HQVSCC

Download Teams <<https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/microsoft-teams/download-app>> | Join on the web <<https://www.microsoft.com/microsoft-teams/join-a-meeting>>

Learn More <<https://aka.ms/JoinTeamsMeeting>> | Meeting options <[https://teams.microsoft.com/meetingOptions/?organizerId=de9add3c-3b27-4925-b210-487358332adf&tenantId=fea9e02d-7dd1-41d2-a8df-de3d06e48467&threadId=19\\_qrkBL9ZxC9z4S4KtqiZW4p2r8sMcPnQNAmnF8MHFgEc1@thread.tacv2&messageId=1705514678918&language=en-US](https://teams.microsoft.com/meetingOptions/?organizerId=de9add3c-3b27-4925-b210-487358332adf&tenantId=fea9e02d-7dd1-41d2-a8df-de3d06e48467&threadId=19_qrkBL9ZxC9z4S4KtqiZW4p2r8sMcPnQNAmnF8MHFgEc1@thread.tacv2&messageId=1705514678918&language=en-US)>

---