

Al Jazeera: From Media Power To Laughing Stock

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Al Jazeera. Many know it as a news station that has quality news coverage, especially with the Middle East, doing in-depth reporting and representing alternative views on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in which there is so much pro-Israel propaganda in the West. However, in recent weeks Al Jazeera has proven itself to be a biased news organization that is quickly moving from reputable source to laughing stock.

The decline of Al Jazeera initially started in March, when it was reported that Al Jazeera Arabic's Beirut correspondent, Ali Hashem, resigned "weeks after pro-Assad hackers leaked emails that revealed the dismay among Al Jazeera's staff over its 'biased and unprofessional' coverage of the Syrian uprising. [1] In an interview with The Real News, Hashem stated specifically what had bothered him:

One of those conversations was between me and one of the Arabic channel's presenters. And then we were just, you know, talking about the coverage and points regarding this coverage. We had some problems. You know. As for me, late in—before, in May, I had a problem with the channel when I—you know, we were on the borders with Syria and there were a lot of armed men, militants, tens of guns, and they were with weapons and just moving along the border from Lebanon to Syria.

At that time, you know, everyone was talking about the revolution in Syria, **that it's [a] peaceful revolution, it's not using arms.** But, you know, what we saw, it was really interesting and kind of—if it was any other channel, this should be a breaking news, it should be a big story. **But, actually, Al Jazeera, let me say, the policy and the channel itself, maybe the journalists inside, you know, they went back to, maybe, the owners, and then it was kind of—it's not allowed, and I was asked to go back to Beirut, and those footage weren't ever aired on Al Jazeera.** (emphasis added) [2]

In addition to this, Al Jazeera exercised double standards, by providing a heavily biased and incomplete coverage of the protest movements in both Saudi Arabia and Bahrain which resulted in countless civilian deaths. How can a news organization boast of having excellent coverage, especially for a specific region, if they refuse to report important happenings?

Al Jazeera slipped further when the Syrian government gained a hold of a video that showed an Al Jazeera reporter before he was on air "and the demeanor is drastically different from the demeanor on the air and they even show contrived sounds of explosions timed for broadcast time" and the "staging of events of calling a civilian an 'officer' in the Syrian army, of faking injuries and feeding statements to people before airtime, etc."

Yet, the most damning evidence was the revelation that "Ahmad Ibrahim, who is in charge

of the channel's Syria coverage, is the brother of Anas al-Abdeh, a leading member of the opposition Syrian National Council." [3] Thus, not only was Al Jazeera spouting lies and propaganda, but they had someone in charge of their Syrian coverage who would be at most completely biased in their reporting or, at the least, have a major conflict of interest.

Yet it has recently come to light that "Al Jazeera has supplied Syrian rebels with satellite communication tools to ensure telephone and Internet connection" and that they "paid \$50,000 for smuggling phones and other tools across the Syrian border to ensure they would get an inside picture." [4] Thus, not only were they spewing deceit, but they were also allowing the opposition to have access to communications. These phones, while used to aid Al Jazeera, could also potentially have been used to commit attacks against the Syrian military as well as civilians.

Al Jazeera has descended from media power to laughing stock.

Notes

1 :

<http://english.al-akhbar.com/content/al-jazeera-reporter-resigns-over-biased-syria-coverage>

2 :

http://therealnews.com/t2/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=31&Itemid=74&jumival=8106

3: <http://www.counterpunch.org/2012/03/05/in-syria-al-jazeeras-credibility-implodes>

4: <http://rt.com/news/al-jazeera-rebels-phones-lebanon-281/>

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