



Palestinian Self-Determination: RadComms #RadSession Takeaways

In November, the Radical Communicators Network (RadComms) convened social justice communications workers to hear from expert narrative practitioners for Palestinian liberation.

Here are some key learnings from the session:

What kinds of work are pro-Palestine, anti-Zionist organizations doing to respond to the ongoing genocide and build narrative power for Palestinian liberation?

- Intervening in American media coverage of Palestine by building connections between news outlets, journalists, and experts on the ground, course-correcting pervasive narratives, and producing original storytelling content.
- Providing legal advocacy and communications support to scholars, workers, artists, and more who are facing censorship and retaliation for speaking out for Palestinian rights.
- Organizing multi-faith allies in demanding political action in service of Palestinian liberation and shifting mainstream narratives around militarism, anti-Semitism vs. anti-Zionism, and Israeli occupation.
- Utilizing communications platforms, including social media, to provide historical context, demonstrate broad, worldwide support for Palestine, and counter Israeli government propaganda with the real stories of Palestinians in Gaza and the diaspora as well as allies.

What kinds of world and future should our narratives build towards?

- We can only count on the world being safe for ourselves and our communities if it is safe for everyone. We all have a role in creating a reality where we live with equal justice and rights.
- Our humanity is not bound to an abstract loyalty to certain principles or theory, but to a place of deep commitment to owing each other something as human beings and knowing that our freedom is intertwined.
- When people have access to safety, clean air, water, and food, when they can have agency and freedom of movement, when they can be together with their families and live on their own land without being forced out of their homes, we can see a future where everyone is safe.
- A truly democratic society shares our commonly-held values of free and open debate and expression without repressive backlash. Attacks on our right to dissent and speak up against atrocity are affronts to this vision.

What analysis of power do we need to hold onto as narrative practitioners working to dismantle oppressive systems?

- The campaign of repression and censorship leveled against those who speak up for Palestinian liberation shares roots with other efforts to consolidate corporate power, white supremacy, and other systems of hegemonic oppression. We can see similar narratives and tactics reflected in campaigns to ban LGBTQ books and Critical Race

Theory in our schools. Rightwing lobbying groups also use anti-BDS (Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions) clauses as model legislation for fortifying their interests. For example, Texas lawmakers copied an anti-BDS clause to develop legislation prohibiting boycotts of fossil fuel companies in an attack on the climate justice movement.

- Despite the cowardice of U.S. politicians, the world is with Palestine. There is international support for Palestinian self-determination and even in the U.S., over 60% of Americans support a ceasefire. Attempts to dismiss voices speaking out against Israeli oppression, including journalistic bias in mainstream media, run contrary to the truth of a global movement of solidarity with the Palestinian people. We must continue lifting up the stories of brave people speaking out in defiance of repression and elevate this collective and unbreakable spirit of resistance.
- Before October 7, the Israeli state had already been killing an average of one Palestinian per day in 2023. Since then, they have killed tens of thousands of Palestinians, with thousands more buried under rubble and starving to death. This is not a war. There is one nuclear-armed, superpower-funded nationalist state with one of the most lethal militaries on the planet collectively punishing an occupied population.

What are important narrative and communication pitfalls to be aware of and strategically combat as practitioners?

- The Israeli government and military has a long history of lying to the press and public about their actions and seeding disinformation. While it is important to push back on false narratives, we should not waste time repeating their claims even if we do so to refute them. Instead, we can refocus the conversation on what we know to be true: Israel is bombing hospitals, schools, and homes while starving millions of people.
- There is nothing in Judaism's history and tradition that requires allegiance or adherence to a nation state that prioritizes one set of people over another. Jewish history is bound up in the idea of social justice; Zionism, in advocating for a supremacy state where laws enforce inequality, goes against this.
- We need to be careful not to get stuck in whataboutisms and hold steadfast in calling for a ceasefire. Nothing can be said to justify the scale of violence being waged by the Israeli government and military, and baseless attempts to smear individuals for their support of Palestine are only used to distract from the actions of the Israeli government and military, who hold and wield real geopolitical power.