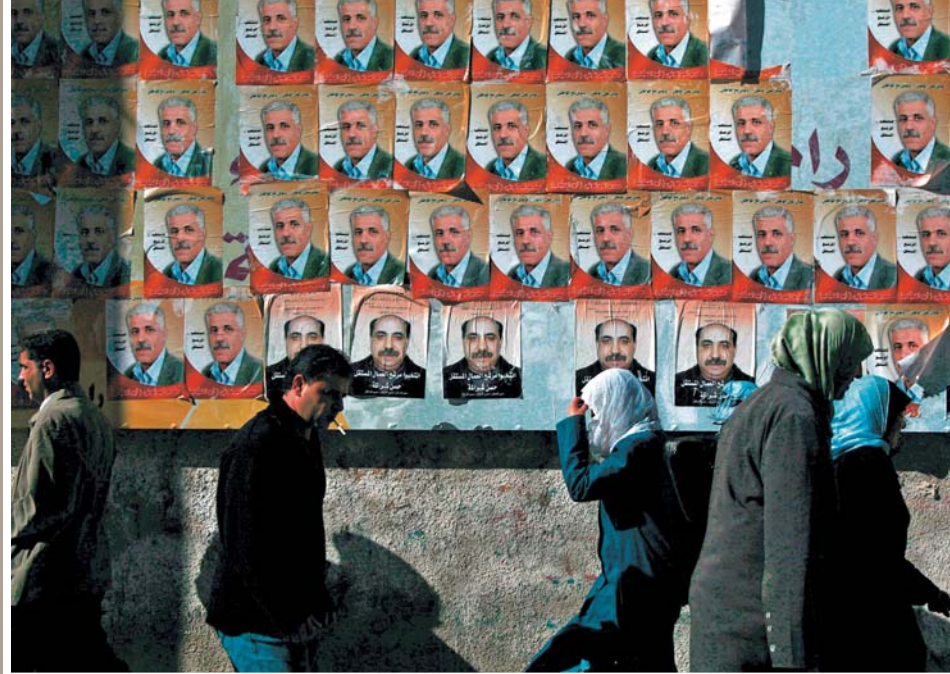




The 2006 Palestinian legislative council election: Evaluating the media

REPORT

Final report

Published by International Media Support in cooperation with Filastiniyat

July 2007

© International Media Support

**International Media Support**

Nørregade 18, 2 + 3 floor
DK-1165 Copenhagen K
Tel: +45 8832 7000
Fax: +45 3312 0099
www.i-m-s.dk

**Filastiniyat**

Al-Irsal Street, Jasser Bldg., 2nd floor,
Ramallah, Palestine,
Tel: +972 22 97 31 22
www.filastiniyat.org

**Memo98**

Martinengova 8
811 02 Bratislava
Slovakia
Tel: +421 (0)2 6280 1199
www.memo98.sk

Coverphoto by Emilio Morenatti / Polfoto.

Palestinians walk past election campaign posters in the West Bank town of Ramallah
Tuesday Jan. 3, 2006.

Contents

1	Introduction	3
2	Media Monitoring Methodology	4
3	Executive Summary	6
4	Background to the elections	7
5	Media environment	7
6	The legal framework for media and elections	8
7	Election law and the media	9
8	Regulatory organs	9
9	Media Monitoring Findings	10
10	Conclusion	13
11	Recommendations	14
12	Annex	16

1 Introduction

Filastiniyat, an independent, non-partisan Palestinian NGO conducted its 2006 Parliamentary Election Media Monitoring Project to systematically monitor the media coverage of the 25 January Legislative Council Elections. Local monitors conducted monitoring of selected media outlets during the official campaign period from 3 January to 23 January 2005 in Ramallah. This project was conducted with the support of the International Media Support (www.i-m-s.dk), an international organization headquartered in Copenhagen, promoting media development worldwide. In the framework of this support, Rasto Kuzel of MEMO 98 (www.memo98.sk) provided trainings and consultancy to help Filastiniyat in conducting its media and elections focused project and to analyze the broadcast and print media

Filastiniyat sought to evaluate the mass media's performance in providing objective and balanced coverage of the candidates and their platforms so the citizens of Palestine can make well-informed choices at the ballot box. There was a specific focus on the coverage of the media against normative principles including the right of access, allocation of coverage and balance in the media. The project's findings were determined through a well-defined and rigorous methodology and were not intended to support any one candidate or political party, but the integrity of the media environment as a whole during the campaign period.

Sample:

Filastiniyat selected its sample based on the following:

- Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation (PBC) based on its defined role and responsibility in accordance with the 2005 Election Law.
- The three daily newspapers based on circulation and geographical coverage.
- The most watched two pan-Arab channels as trusted source of information as shown in the different public opinion polls.
- The selection of the two local stations was based on an unpublished public opinion poll by the Ma'an Network.¹

¹ Conducted by Birzeit Development Studies Center in July 2005

Table 1: Newspapers monitored

Title	Ownership	Period
Al Quds	Private	3.1.06-23.1.06
Al Ayyam	Private	3.1.06-23.1.06
Al Hayat Al Jadida	Partially Owned by PA	3.1.06-23.1.06

Table 2: Broadcasters monitored

Channel	Ownership	Hours monitored	Period
Palestine Television	Official	18.00 – 00.00	3.1.06-23.1.06
Watan	Private- Ramallah	18.00 – 00.00	3.1.06-23.1.06
Al Jazeera	Private- (Pan-Arab)	18.00 – 00.00	3.1.06-23.1.06
Al Arabiya	Private- (Pan-Arab)	18.00 – 00.00	3.1.06-23.1.06
Al Amal	Private- Hebron	18.00 – 00.00	3.1.06-23.1.06
Voice of Palestine	Official	7:00-10:00 and 12:00-14:00	3.1.06-23.1.06

2 Methodology

The monitoring team observed media coverage of elections in order to assess:

- whether political parties and candidates were granted fair access to the media; and if the coverage of the candidate's campaigns was done in an unbiased and equitable manner
- whether the media and authorities abided by the rules and regulations governing their conduct during the campaign both in terms of national legislation and international standards
- whether the mass media provided objective and balanced coverage of the candidates and their platforms to enable the citizens of Palestine to make well-informed choices at the ballot box.

In addition, the project was supposed to:

- enhance the capacity of the civil and academic communities in conducting the advanced media researches
- put public pressure on journalists, editors and media owners to provide information that is more accurate, impartial and fair
- advocate for new laws to protect freedom of the press; citizens' rights to information; and political contestants' rights to political expression
- provide information to other domestic NGOs and international organizations on how the media behaviour affects the pre-election environment
- enhance skills that can be used to promote fair media practices beyond the elections and develop capacity of Filastiniyat to become familiar with monitoring of the media coverage (with special focus on covering an election) so that it can embody "know-how" skills for future media related programs
- liaise and cooperate with other domestic and international groups and organizations with similar aims and intentions

On 3 January, Filastiniyat commenced the monitoring of five TV channels (publicly funded *Palestine TV*, four private TV stations *Al Jazeera*, *Al Arabiya*, *Watan TV* and *Al Amal*), one radio (*Voice of Palestine*) and three daily newspapers (*Al Hayat Al Jadida*, *Al Quds* and *Al Ayyam*) using qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis.

The monitoring of the electronic media focused on the prime time (18.00 – 24.00)², including news, current affairs programs, free and paid campaign advertising. The monitoring of the print media included all political and election related articles apart from paid advertising.

Quantitative analysis measured the total amount of time and space devoted to political and elections related coverage, including 11 registered party lists and individual district candidates, on the monitored media outlets. The qualitative analysis evaluated whether the information about candidates is positive, negative, or neutral in its content. The tone of the content is important to ascertain the nature of the coverage of a candidate/party standing for the election.

This is the final report which covers three weeks of media monitoring (from 3-23 January 2006).

² The rationale for selecting prime time is that it represents the period when most people watch television;

3 Executive summary

- The Palestinian media, taken as a whole, generally offered voters a variety of views concerning the campaign.
- Respect of legal provisions for free airtime on the public TV and radio, as well as televised debates and talk shows, permitted parties and candidates to convey messages to the electorate.
- Outside the free time, however, *Palestine TV* and *Voice of Palestine*, through news coverage, favoured the incumbents and their candidates.
- In contrast to the news coverage by public media, the two popular pan-Arab networks monitored by Filastiniyat, *Al Jazeera* and *Al Arabiya*, provided more balanced coverage, with a greater diversity of views.
- In its news programmes, *Watan TV* clearly favoured Mustafa Barghouthi and his party list Independent Palestine. The time granted on *Watan*, *Al Arabiya* and *Al Jazeera* for all the contesting parties, was a positive public service by the three private broadcasters.
- The print media provided a plurality of views, generally with coverage of Fatah being most dominant.
- The legal framework regulating media coverage during the election campaign remains inadequate.
- Majority of interlocutors placed restrictions to the freedom of movement for journalists at the forefront of concerns in Palestine.

4 Background to the elections

The 2006 Legislative Council Elections followed the 2005 election of the President of PA and a series of local elections that took place since 2004. The last elections for the PLC were held in January 1996. The next elections were originally supposed to take place in 2000, but were several times delayed. One of the most important shortcomings of the overall election process is the continued conflict and occupation by Israeli security forces in the regions which continues to severely restrict the rights and freedoms of the Palestinian people, most notably the freedom of movement.

Parties and lists registered for the elections:

FATAH
CHANGE AND REFORM (HAMAS)
3RD WAY
INDEPENDENT PALESTINE
MARTYR ABY ALI MUSTAFA
THE ALTERNATIVE
MARTYR ABU AL ABBAS
FREEDOM & SOCIAL JUSTICE
JUSTICE AND DEMOCRACY
FREEDOM & INDEPENDENCE
PALESTINIAN JUSTICE

5 Media environment

Palestine has a pluralistic media environment, with some 33 TV and 24 radio stations and three dailies of which the Jerusalem based *Al Quds* is the one with the largest readership. The other two daily newspapers are based in Ramallah – privately owned *Al-Ayyam* and *Al-Hayat al-Jadeeda*, which is partly owned by Palestinian Authority (PA).

Television is the most important and influential source of news and information. The official media, *Palestine TV*, *Palestine Satellite Channel*, *Radio Voice of Palestine* (VOP) and *Wafa News Agency* are all managed by the Public Broadcasting Corporation (PBC) under PA which appoints their management and provides financial support. The official *Palestine TV* and VOP exist on the PA subsidies and often represent the interests of the authorities. There are a number of local TV and radio stations with a localized coverage. Local broadcasters rarely produce their own news and information programmes. Instead, they often rebroadcast news and current affairs programmes of the pan-Arab channels, such as *Al Jazeera*, *Al Arabya*, *Abu Dhabi* and *Al Manar*, which are very popular.

Despite the pluralistic media environment, the Palestinian media still suffer from various influences or restrictions that prevent them from fully serving as a forum for the exchange of opinions, public debate, confrontation, investigation and commentary that would offer the public fully informed, analyzed and assessed views of persons and groups seeking elected office. These restrictions include:

- problems with the freedom of movement for journalists caused by the restrictions imposed by Israel and its occupation
- inadequate legal framework for the media
- the ruling party influence over the official media
- poor economic conditions caused, among other things, by very small advertising market; and
- lack of professionalism

Notwithstanding the problems, several media outlets try to work as “normal” businesses and achieve to succeed. However, given the conflict with Israel and the occupation, journalists invariably work under extremely difficult conditions which hamper their everyday work. Harassment and intimidation, including breaking and confiscating journalist's equipment, are commonplace.

A 2006 report by Reporters without Frontiers stated that “violence against journalists increased in 2005 in the Palestinian territories, with threats, physical attacks and kidnappings. The lawlessness and impunity, especially in the Gaza Strip, included kidnappings of foreigners (some of them journalists) by local gangs often aiming to weaken the authorities. The kidnappings were not seriously investigated by the authorities, who also took no steps to prevent their recurrence and see such crimes were punished.”

6 Legal framework for media and elections

The Basic Law in its Article 19 states that "every citizen in Palestine has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and expression." In addition, Article 4 of the Press Law³ (and Article 19 of the Basic Law) stipulates that citizens have a right to publish their opinion." Article 27 of the Basic Law prohibits censorship. This Article further establishes the fundamental principle that all citizens have the right to establish a newspaper or broadcaster on the basis that the law is supposed to guarantee that "freedom to print, publish, transmit, along with the freedom of individuals working in this field, is guaranteed." In addition, Article 2 of the Press Law guarantees citizens "the absolute right to express their opinions in a free manner either verbally, in writing, photography or drawing as different means of expression and information." Article 8 of the Press Law also stipulates obligations placed on the press:

- Respecting the rights of the individuals and their constitutional freedom, and non-interference in their private life.
- Presenting the press material in an objective, integrated, and balanced form
- Striving for accuracy, integrity, and objectivity in presenting news and main events.
- To refrain from publishing whatever may instigate violence, fanaticism, and hatred, or invites racism and sectarianism.
- Non-exploitation of the press material in commercial advertisements with the aim of upgrading or decreasing the value of a certain product

However, given the fact that the Press Law is vague and non-specific, it is unclear to what extent it covers the audiovisual media - if at all.

³ The Press Law was adopted in 1995

7 Election law and the media

The elections were held under new election law, adopted in June 2005, which introduced a mixed electoral system. Under the new system, an increased number of seats are contested under separate proportional and majoritarian contests. Election law is the primary law stipulating the responsibilities of PBC during election campaign.

Media legislation is characterized by an absence of specific regulations connected to media during the election period. Apart from a few articles in the election law, no other provisions regulate the issue. Article 59 states that "official media shall maintain an impartial position during all the phases of the election process." They shall not perform any electoral or campaigning activity that might be construed as favoring one candidate over another.

The lack of an effective instrument setting out the rights and obligations of the media during this period, as well as the lack of adequate broadcasting and print laws was perceived by the stakeholders to be a major systemic weakness in the development of norms and standards in the media sector. Interviews with the stakeholders also suggested that there was universal consensus as to the need to develop the media system and the legal framework to better serve the public a range of quality information.

According to the Article 60 of the election law, the electoral campaign starts 22 days prior to the polling day and ends 24 hours before that day. For this election, the campaign commenced on 3 January and ended on 23 January. The law sets limits on campaign contributions and expenditures by both party lists (one million USD and individual candidates (60,000 USD).

The Central Election Commission (CEC) gave strong professional leadership to the vast election administration, which functioned in an efficient and generally open manner in the pre-election period. In recognition of the exceptional scale of the operation, the CEC should be credited with having ensured that the election administration was generally efficient and well coordinated.

8 Regulatory organs

In terms of dealing with the media related issues, however, the CEC did not appoint any of its members to deal with these issues directly. Further, the CEC did not take a proactive role and only acted upon receiving complaints. Following the recommendations of the EU Election observation mission for the 2005 Presidential Election, the CEC hired a private company to conduct its own monitoring of the media coverage during the campaign. However, the CEC chair admitted not having an immediate use of the media monitoring. According to him, the media monitoring did not reveal any violations and as such, there was no action by the CEC.

Apart from this, the CEC reported receiving and adjudicating only a limited number of media and campaign related complaints. There was a complaint filed to the CEC against using of Abu Mazen's picture in the campaign (on Fatah posters). In another complaint filed by Fatah, the CEC was requested to clarify the usage of mosques for the propaganda which was in contradiction with Article 64.2 of the election law (against Change and Reform). Finally, the CEC also received a complaint about Abu Mazen's overbearing presence in the PBC news when he was shown in the news appealing to voters to come and vote.

A high ranking official of the Ministry of Information reported receiving no media related complaints⁴.

The results of the Filastiniyat media monitoring demonstrate that the newscasts of the official broadcasters failed to give equal access to the main political parties or lists. In so doing, the official broadcasters failed to meet their obligation under the election law. Neither the CEC nor the Ministry of Information took any action against this apparent violation of the law. While the CEC conducted its activity in an independent manner, it was not provided with sufficient legal powers to ensure compliance with the provisions on media coverage.

On the eve of the elections, Minister of Interior shut down the Gaza based Al-Aqsa TV, a privately owned TV stationed affiliated with Change and Reform, on the basis that it was broadcasting without a license.

⁴ Interview with Dr. Ahmed Soboh, Deputy Minister of Information

9 Media monitoring findings

Public media

Free Airtime and Debates

Article 63 of the election law stipulates that "the CEC, in association with the official Palestinian media, shall prepare a special program stating times and dates assigned as free and unpaid propaganda hours for all candidates in the elections." The free airtime should be distributed under equal conditions. According to the Memorandum of Understanding signed between PBC and Central Election Commission, PBC broadcast a one-hour long talk show for each national list, 10 minutes for national lists' campaign spots and 2 minutes for district candidates⁵ and a final three hour debate with representatives of all eleven lists⁶.

Palestine TV adhered to its legal requirement to grant free time to the eleven political parties and lists, including allocation of time for regular debates and talk shows. These debates provide a forum for an exchange of views, enabling voters to form opinions of the candidates. The allocation of free airtime on public TV and radio to parties and candidates was a very positive initiative enabling them to convey their messages to the electorate. However, the actual broadcasting of the free airtime programmes and campaign spots started on 14 January (only eight days before E-day) which was criticized by some interlocutors. In addition, while the content of the candidate and party's broadcasts was editorially independent, it was checked prior to broadcasting to ensure compliance with the provisions of the election code and the press law. The CEC reported receiving no official complaints concerning the distribution of free airtime.

In a positive development, the Central Election Commission (CEC) undertook an extensive voter education campaign broadcast on the public and private media.

News and Current Affairs Programmes

Between 3 and 23 January, there were discernable differences in news and current affairs programmes coverage of the candidates and parties on the monitored media outlets.

Outside the free time, *Palestine TV* devoted favourable and heavy coverage to the activities of the President and the government, thus benefiting candidates with a pro-government orientation. President Abu Mazen, who also chairs Fatah, refrained from conventional campaign discourse in support of his party, but on the official media, he still received coverage far beyond that which was reasonably proportionate to his role as incumbent president. This is likely to remain so until the Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation (PBC) is transformed into a genuinely independent public service media⁷.

The Filastiniyat's media monitoring results show that in the three weeks of the campaign, *Palestine TV* provided 99 percent of its political and election prime time news coverage to the activities of the incumbent President (56 percent), the government (37 percent), and Fatah (6 percent). This coverage

⁵ According to Abu Sumaya Basem, the PBC chair, the tapes with campaign spots and speeches submitted by some regional candidates were of a very poor quality

⁶ VOP broadcast the free airtime programmes and messages daily at 16:30 and PTV at 19:30. Both broadcasters then repeated the programmes once again the next day.

⁷ Interview with Dr. Ahmed Soboh, Deputy Minister of Information

was exclusively positive or neutral in tone. In contrast, the news programs of *Palestine TV* mainly ignored activities of other parties and lists. There was a clear lack of critical coverage of the elections in general by the channel and very little information was devoted to the campaign.

Similarly as *Palestine TV*, Public radio *Voice of Palestine* also complied with the legal provisions on free airtime allocation. However, its news and analytical coverage and other programmes overtly supported the ruling movement Fatah. In the three weeks preceding the elections, Fatah received 58 percent of political and election coverage on *Voice of Palestine*, all positive or neutral in tone. Conversely, the Change and Reform list (Hamas) received only 12 percent of such airtime, mostly negative or neutral in tone.

Private broadcasters

Satellite networks

In contrast to the news coverage by public media, the two popular pan-Arab networks monitored by Filastiniyat, *Al Jazeera* and *Al Arabiya*, provided more balanced coverage, with a greater diversity of views. For example, *Al Jazeera* devoted 34 percent of its political and election prime time news coverage to cover the activities of Abu Mazen. As for the coverage of the two main contesting political subjects, while the ruling movement Fatah (28 percent) received slightly more coverage than the Change and Reform list (18 percent), the coverage of both main rivals was largely neutral in tone. In their current affairs programmes, both *Al Jazeera* and *Al Arabiya*, through talk shows and debates, allowed even smaller parties and lists to convey their message to the electorate. Following the agreement with the PTV, *Al Arabiya* re-broadcast one hour talk show programmes of all 11 lists originally broadcast by PTV. As for *Al Jazeera*, it broadcast a 10 minute talk show programme with each leader of the party list and also two 2 hours long debates at participation of all the party lists

Local private TV channels

In its news and current affairs programmes, *Watan TV* clearly favoured Mustafa Barghouthi and his party list Independent Palestine. In the three weeks preceding elections, *Watan TV* devoted 69 percent of its political and election prime time news coverage to Independent Palestine. The coverage was overwhelmingly positive in tone. By comparison, the next most covered political subject Fatah received only 11 percent of such airtime. The time granted on *Watan*, *Al Arabiya* and *Al Jazeera* to all contesting parties, was a positive public service by both private broadcasters.

Another private TV channel, *Al Amal*, gave 38 percent of its prime time news coverage to Fatah. This coverage was mainly positive or neutral in tone. By comparison, Change and Order list received 22 percent of such coverage, which was mainly positive or neutral in tone. The next most covered political subject was Third way list, which accounted for 20 percent of mostly positive coverage.

Print media

The print media provided a plurality of views, generally with coverage of Fatah being most dominant. *Al Hayat al Jadida*, which is partially owned by the Palestinian authority, devoted 32 percent of its political and election coverage

to Fatah. This coverage was mainly positive or neutral in tone. By comparison, the Change and Reform list received 11 percent of such coverage, which was of positive or neutral slant.

The Jerusalem based *Al Quds*, which has the largest circulation, gave both Fatah (23 percent) and Change and Reform list (19 percent) roughly equal proportions of its political and election coverage, which was overtly positive or neutral in tone.

Privately owned *Al Ayyam* gave Fatah 37 percent of its political and election coverage, of an overwhelmingly positive or neutral tone. The Change and Reform list received 14 percent of such coverage, which was also mainly positive or neutral in tone.

Paid Advertising

Problems with paid advertising, identified during the previous elections, persisted. There were no standard rates established by the authorities for political advertising in the press and audiovisual media. A number of interlocutors suggested that the rates are unequal for the candidates depending on leanings and affiliations of the media outlets.

10 Conclusion

The Palestinian media, taken as a whole, generally offered voters a variety of views concerning the campaign. Respect of legal provisions for free airtime on the public TV and radio, as well as televised debates and talk shows, permitted parties and candidates to convey messages to the electorate. Outside the free time, however, the official media, through their news coverage, favoured the incumbents and their candidates. In contrast to the news coverage by public media, the two popular pan-Arab networks monitored by Filastiniyat, *Al Jazeera* and *Al Arabiya*, provided more balanced coverage, with a greater diversity of views. In addition, the time granted on *Watan*, *Al Arabiya* and *Al Jazeera* for all the contesting parties, was a positive public service by the three private broadcasters.

Despite the pluralistic media environment, the Palestinian media still suffer from various influences or restrictions that prevent them from fully serving as a forum for the exchange of opinions, public debate, confrontation, investigation and commentary that would offer the public fully informed, analyzed and assessed views of persons and groups seeking elected office. Another strong determining factor on the Palestinian media scene is the interaction between media and political elite showing on the part of the media especially by very openly expressed affections or disaffections (i.e. extensive politicization of the media) and on the part of the (potential and prospective) political (or power) elite in the open interference with the work of the media especially by building proprietary or cliental ties to individual media and insufficient willingness to build modern and liberal media legislature.

Another dormant danger for the Palestinian media consists in their very low resistance to misuse during the election campaigning. It is constituted by the fact that media are directly controlled by subjects vying for power in the election (e.g. *Watan TV*). The interaction of politicians and journalists is evident in all media outlets. Some media and journalists seem to have come to believe that their mission lies in active cooperation with politicians and, in fact, in participating in political life. It was alleged that some journalists are on constant payrolls of political parties.

Improving the quality of media discourse ultimately depends on the journalists. Apart from changing the system of educating journalists, it is equally important to create a suitable environment for their professional development and ensure their adequate remuneration. Such an environment could be both an independent and free public television as well as a financially stable private media. Advertising market is very small and thus each media outlet needs subsidies.

11 Recommendations

- The CEC, responsible for allocation of free airtime, should start with the free airtime distribution much earlier – not 8 days before the polling day. Consideration should also be given to distribution of free airtime for the district candidates via regional media. In this respect local media should be encouraged to invest in local programming that serves local needs and interests.
- Similarly as during the 2005 Presidential Election, Palestine Television and Radio in their news and current affairs programmes demonstrated clear bias in favour of Fatah. This is likely to remain so until the authorities move ahead and transform official broadcasters into an independent public service media that will develop a neutral, objective and informative editorial line and its reporting will be balanced including when covering government activities during an election period.
- Ministry of Information should be abolished
- Al-Hayat Al-Jadida, which is partly owned by PA, should be privatized
- The Election Law should be amended to require the publicly funded media and private broadcasters, to provide fair and balanced coverage of parties in the news and current affairs programmes. This is particularly important for candidates during election campaign periods. However, the right of the private media to editorial comment and to provide critical analysis should be respected
- The media-related provisions of the Election Law should be introduced to clearly distinguish between the official and private media. They should clearly stipulate the media coverage of election concerning the allocation of free time, paid time, news programs, etc.
- Regulations covering campaign finance issues should be introduced to improve the transparency of the funding of candidates' election campaigns, with data on candidates' campaign donations and expenditures made publicly available. Steps to improve the transparency of campaign spending should be legislated, and the independent election administration or other State body should have full responsibility to scrutinize campaign accounts. If a paid political advertising is allowed then it should be clearly marked as such and it should be offered at the same price for all the registered candidates or political parties.
- The Parliament should move ahead promptly and adopt new media legislation with adequate provisions both for the media in general and specifically in the media's coverage of the elections. This law should cover both the public and private media and should stipulate establishment of an independent regulatory bodies to oversee both the public and private media.
- At the moment, the government is in charge of issuing licenses. The Council should have a clear mandate and should be free to make independent decision in terms of licensing. It also should ensure respect for media related provisions including the equitability of broadcasters' campaign related coverage and to take prompt and effective action against serious legal violations. It should rule on complaints and enjoy effective powers to sanction violations and enforce its decisions.
- The CEC's own media monitoring during election campaign should be aimed at identifying unequal and biased coverage of the campaign and to take prompt and effective action against those violating the law

12 Annex

Methodology of monitoring broadcast and print media

Most voters gain general information on participants in political campaigns through the media. To have a free and fair election process, it is very important that the media adopt a fair and objective towards all political parties and candidates.

Media monitoring methodology

Monitoring tries to *quantify* and *qualify* time dedicated to candidates and political parties by the media. However, not all forms of the media coverage could be evaluated either quantitatively or qualitatively. Therefore, a special category was established for such events of manipulations and bias from the side of the media, which are called *media effects*. Results of quantitative and qualitative analysis and specific examples of media effects used by the media are important elements that serve for the general public as information on whether the information about political contestant by the media is fair and balanced.

Media monitors are specially trained to conduct qualitative and quantitative analysis of electronic and print media coverage to see whether it correlates with the basic rules of balanced and fair journalism. They fill out specially designed monitoring forms and consequently a data collector inputs all the monitored data into computer. All the recorded data and newspapers are stored in archives for any future checks or control if the results should be questioned by anyone. Data collector controls the monitored sheets and inputs them into a computer. Therefore, it is important that monitors write clearly and agree on any acronyms for the selected political subjects in advance to avoid misunderstanding or incomplete results.

Quantitative analysis

Quantitative analysis measures the total amount of space and time devoted for coverage of selected monitored subjects or topics (e.g. elections) by the media. In broadcast media, the monitors use stopwatches (or VCR timer) to measure the actual time of appearance of selected political subjects on camera as well as when they are mentioned or quoted by someone else. In newspapers, an area dedicated to the political entities is measured in cm². The monitoring also covers all the instances when varies relevant subjects are mentioned by someone else indirectly (e.g. by a news presenter or political opponent) and they receive so-called *reference or remark* (1 cm²) which are also included into both the quantitative and qualitative charts.

Qualitative analysis

Qualitative analysis evaluates whether the information about selected monitored subjects is positive, negative, or neutral in its content. An evaluation mark is also attached to all subjects, in addition to space and reference, which provides information on how was the subject portrayed. It

is attached to all monitored subjects to determine whether the subject was presented in negative, positive or neutral light. The evaluation scale consists of 5 grades. Grade 1/2 means that a certain political subject was presented in a very positive or positive light respectively and the news coverage was favourable. For example, it means that the subject was praised or admired and the presentation includes positive feeling and emotions. Grade 3 is a neutral mark. It means that the coverage of a political entity was matter-of-fact, without expressive or emotional charge. Coverage marked 4 or 5 means that a political entity was presented in a negative or very negative light respectively. Usually, it means that negative emotions, accusations or one-sided criticisms are dominating such item. The five-grade scale is designed to provide monitors with a larger scale of choice they are to make in evaluating the presentation of political entities. Balanced news coverage means that a media outlet attempts to cover events in a balanced, fair and objective manner by offering time or space to all subjects of a certain item to present their views. Such news item is purely informative and does not contain any one-sided evaluating standpoints or criticism.

Media effects is a special category used for those occasions, which are not possible to monitor neither quantitatively nor qualitatively, as they simply do not fall into any of these categories. Another words, these are all stories or items presented with a specific intent to manipulate or affect the public. The reason for creating this category was the obvious absence of basic journalistic principles and standards. Each story, which does not meet the basic requirements for a non-biased story falls into the category of media effects. The main criteria for such evaluation are set as those stories missing: relevance, exactness, transparency, matter-of-fact, balance, variety, timely and clarity.

Electronic media

The monitoring focuses on factual media presentations with respect to a balanced and fair presentation of the facts. The monitoring itself consists of TV programs that are watched and recorded on videotapes – so the recordings can be viewed several times by a monitor entering all relevant data into a TV Monitoring Form. The form for monitoring TV news coverage consists of three pages. The first page contains general information on the subject. The second page is for recording data from individual coverage and the last page is for media effects and other observations. The monitor records data of a general nature on the second page. Thus the page is divided into a general and recording section. The general section allows us to find a piece of information and also who monitored it.

In addition to the data already recorded on the front page, this page contains:

- Item number from headlines (if shown in headlines).
- The beginning and end of the item in seconds (or minutes) - to make it easier to find the actual recording later on (if needed)
- The total duration of item
- Summary of the main topic of the item – transcription of the item in words, phrases, points or full sentences - very important for description of the media effects.

The evaluation section of the second form includes:

- Name/affiliation - name and affiliation in a political party, Government, movement, organization, etc. It is very important to enter the position

of any persons who are in Government, as well as political parties (the person can represent various institutions).

- Picture and voice - we record when a person presented by a TV station is:
 - shown
 - heard
 - shown and heard
 - mentioned (reference)
- The exact time of appearance - please use a stop-watch or VCR timer to take an exact time of appearance.
- The evaluating mark. Each subject, whether it appeared on the screen or in the sound record, must be given an evaluating mark, which tells us how a political subject was presented (for details see the general part). This mark is entered at the end of the line for the measured time.

We record just the information related to the elections (or other selected issues) focusing only on the selected subjects of our monitoring (candidates, political parties, government and president) including the person providing the information. This data are shown in the pie or bar charts indicating the time dedicated to the political parties, candidates and the government in the relevant newscasts or current affairs programs.

Apart from the time, we also evaluate the tone of the coverage. The results of the qualitative analysis are shown in bar charts. In addition to the subjects which were given time by the media, we also monitor the subjects when mentioned, quoted or referred. We also try to evaluate the tone of these references.

The last page

This section is allocated for the "media effects" which are not measured either by the quantitative or qualitative evaluation.

Methodology of monitoring the print media

A reader actively seeks information in newspapers, which is different from the sort of passive reception of the news provided by the broadcast media. Therefore, we think that the front page is very important - the headlines, placement of photographs, cartoons and other illustrations.

The form used for entering data from monitoring of newspapers is enclosed. The articles are monitored page by page. Thus the order of monitored articles is kept in order for later checks or corrections.

The print media form consists of two pages. The front page contains space designed for the data each monitors enters while monitoring the relevant articles. The date is entered into the upper half of the second page. The third page is designed for media effects.

Each column is designed for entering data gathered from individual articles. We want to focus on; which political subject is presented, whether they were given space or whether they were merely mentioned. That is the subject, an evaluation mark and space. On the left hand side of the column a page number and the actual headline of the article is entered. On the right hand side there is room for the name of the political subject, space they were offered and an evaluating mark (1-5).

Subject

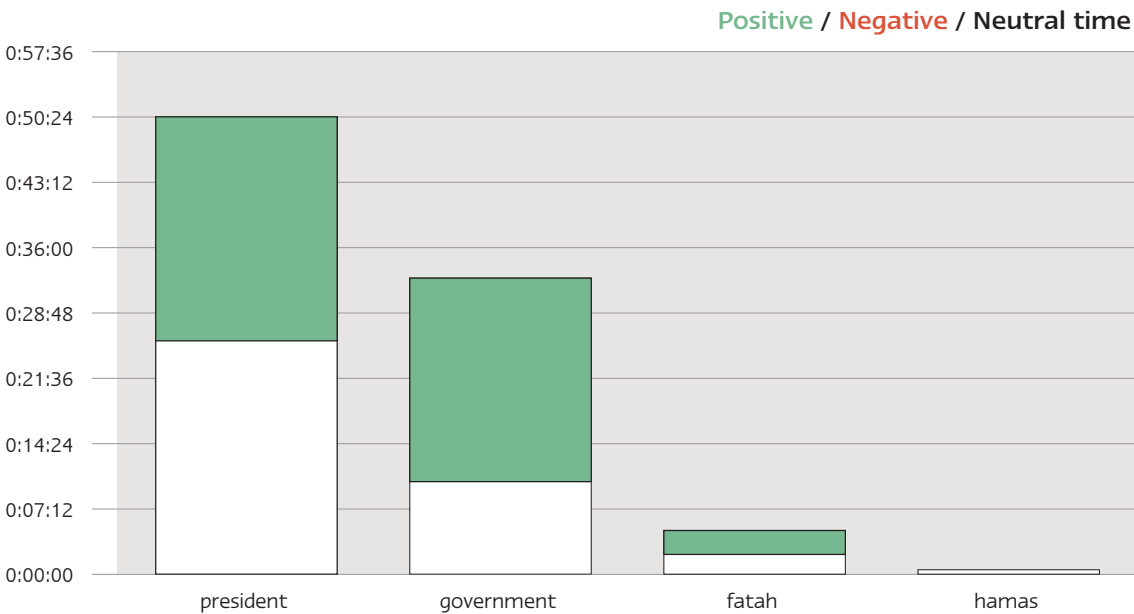
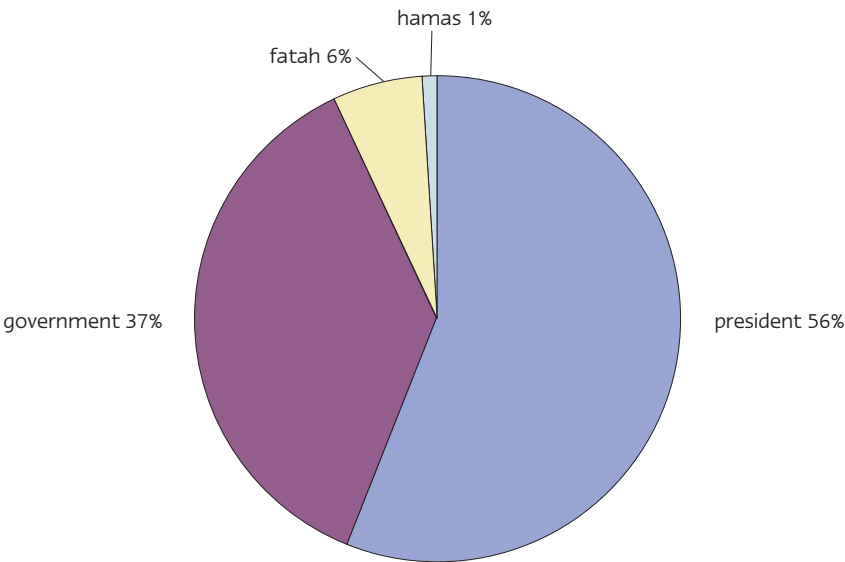
After reading a politically relevant article it is necessary to try to evaluate the main subject of the story (or the intention of the writer). Since the newspapers are more analytical in their approach (than the electronic media), it is inevitable to determine which political subject is the article about or whether one subject is a dominant topic and others are less important. However, if the article is clearly divided into certain segments, the monitor should not hesitate to allocate those segments to the monitored subjects both qualitatively and quantitatively. If one monitored subject clearly dominates the article, the monitor should then assign the whole space to him/her. Remarks about other subjects are monitored as *remarks*. These *remarks* are also given an evaluating mark. Remarks are measured as 1cm^2 .

A size of a political photograph, cartoon or joke is given cm^2 . The data is also recorded in the relevant column, but instead of headline we indicate that it is a picture/cartoon etc. The picture or cartoon is also evaluated for its positive, negative or neutral content and is also given a mark.

The size of a front-page headline is measured in cm^2 and indicated in the column right after the headline. It is also possible to create a chart from the amount of space dedicated to all the candidates on the front page or in the form of pictures in the entire newspaper or only from the pictures on the front page. It is obvious that a headline and picture on a front page attracts readers' attention (in a positive or negative way).

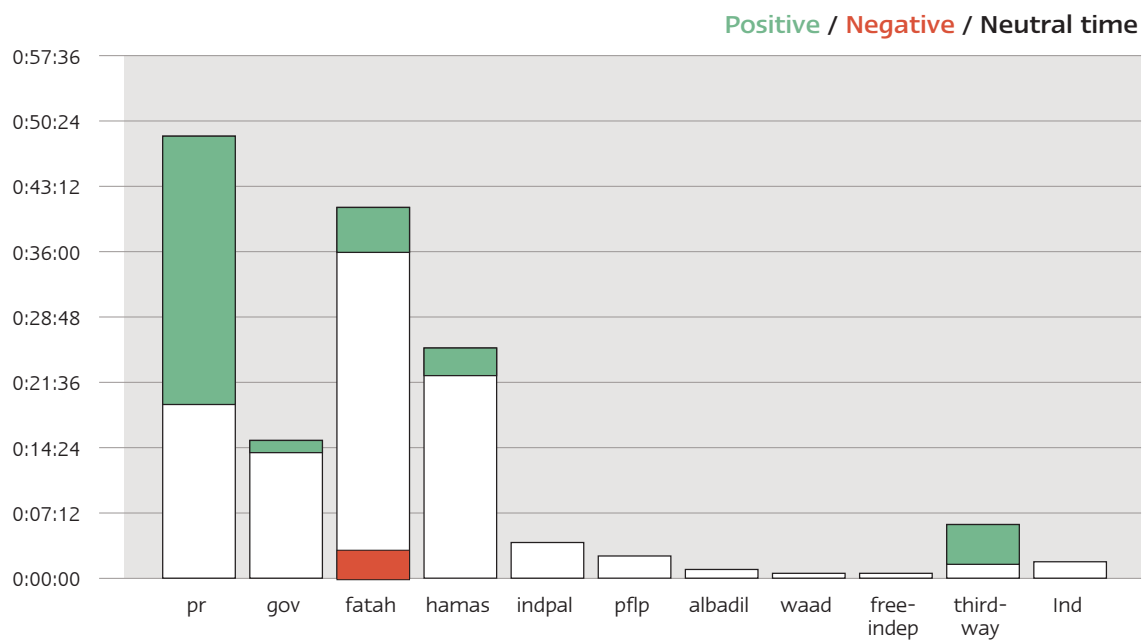
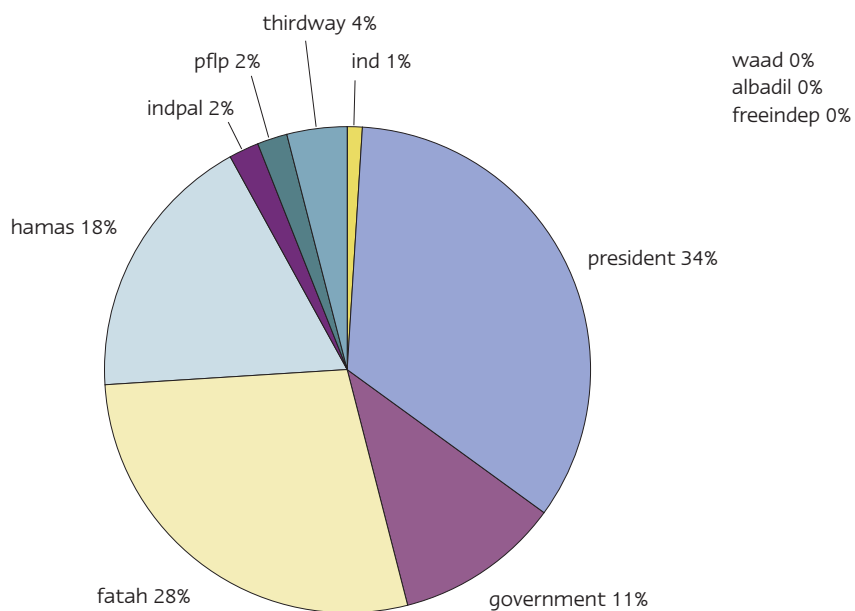
Palestinian legislative elections 2006

Palestinian TV – Prime Time News
03.01.06 - 23.01.06

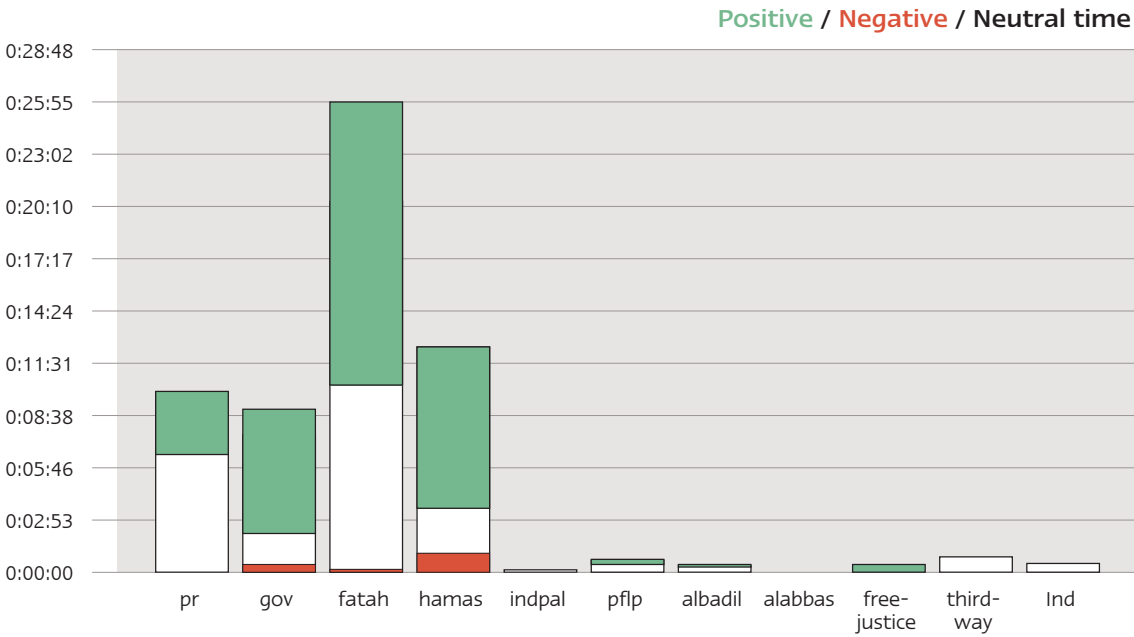
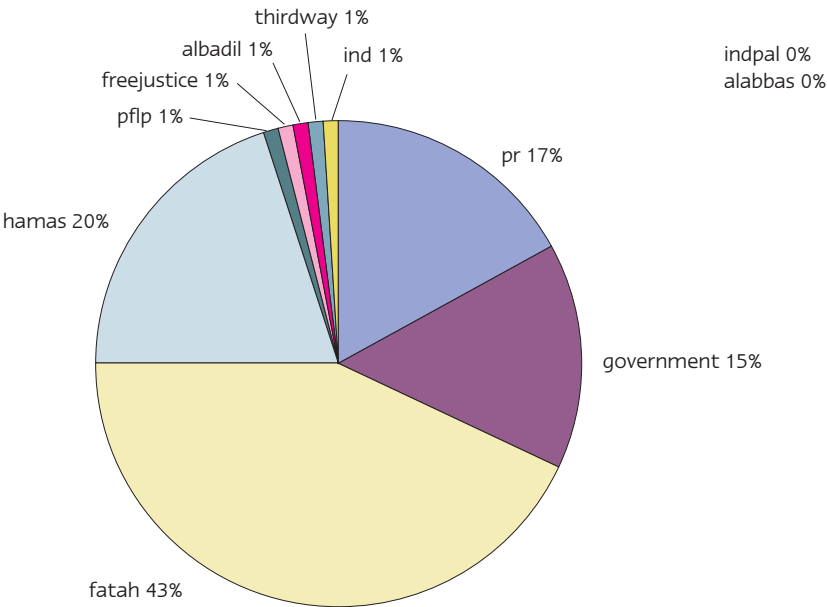


Al Jazeera - Prime Time News

03.01.06 - 23.01.06

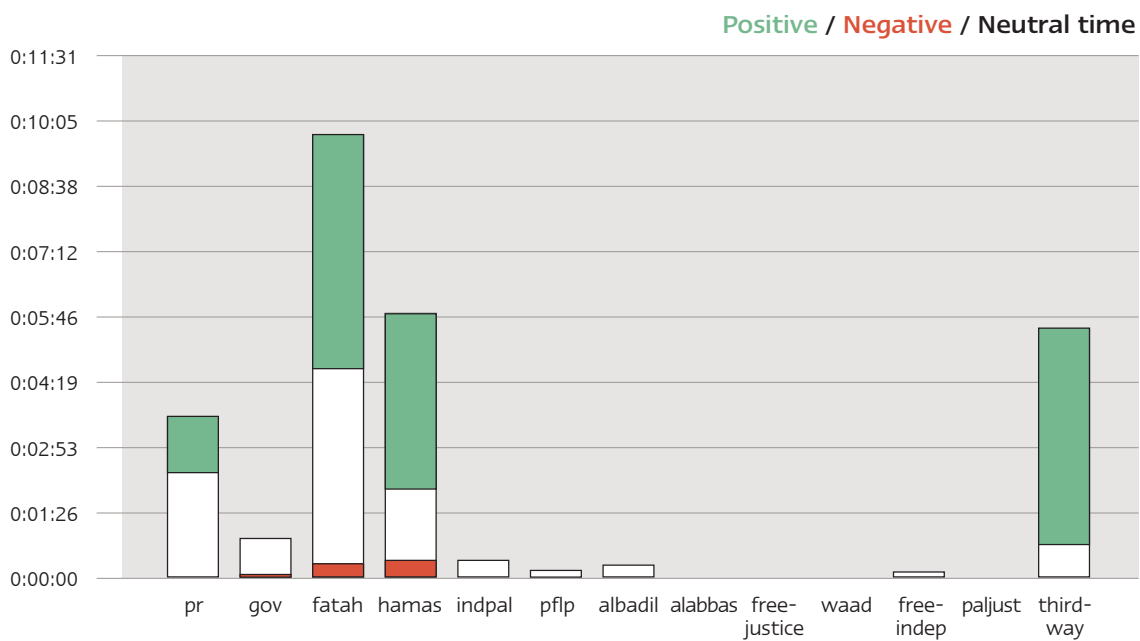
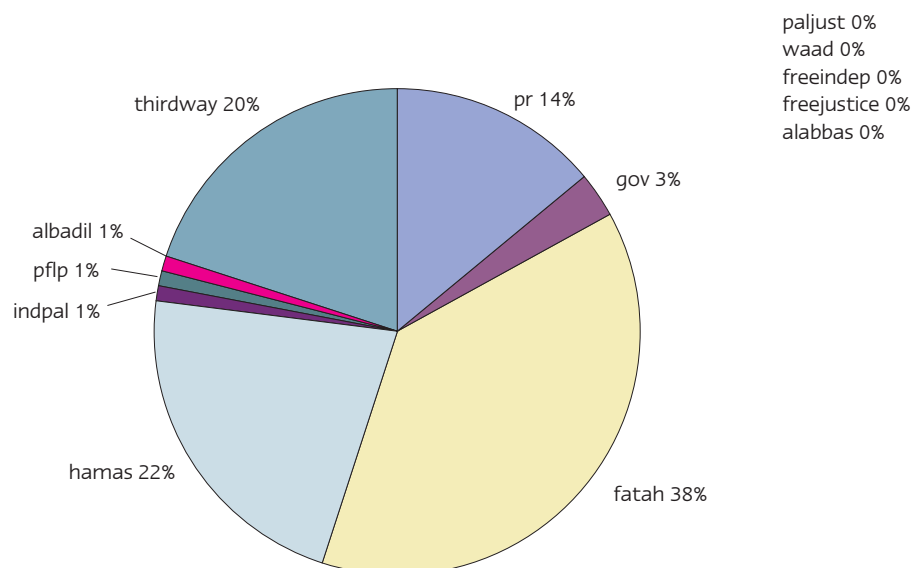


Al Arabiya – Prime Time News
03.01.06 - 23.01.06

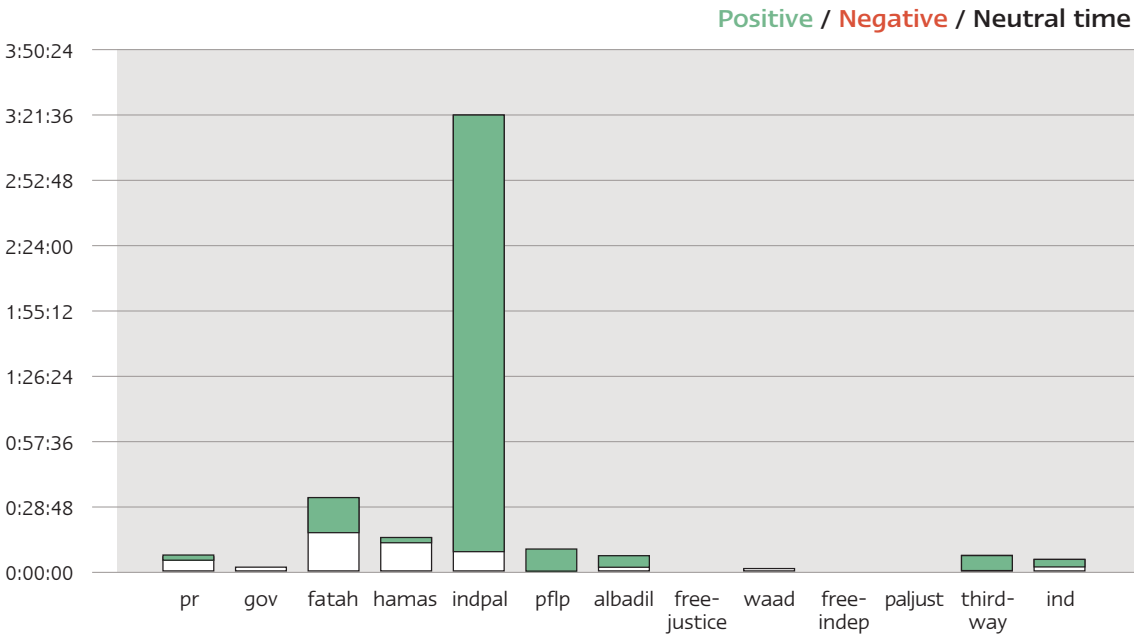
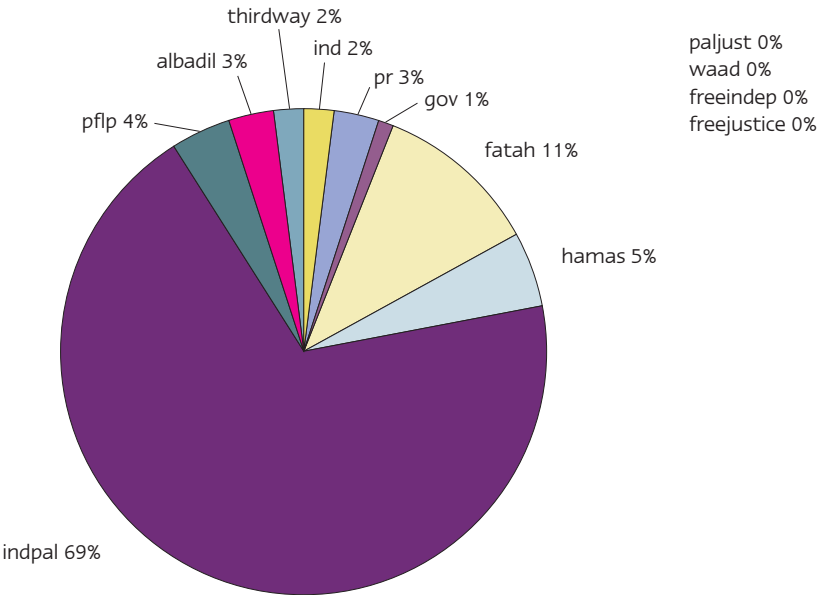


Al Amal TV – Prime Time News

03.01.06 - 13.03.06

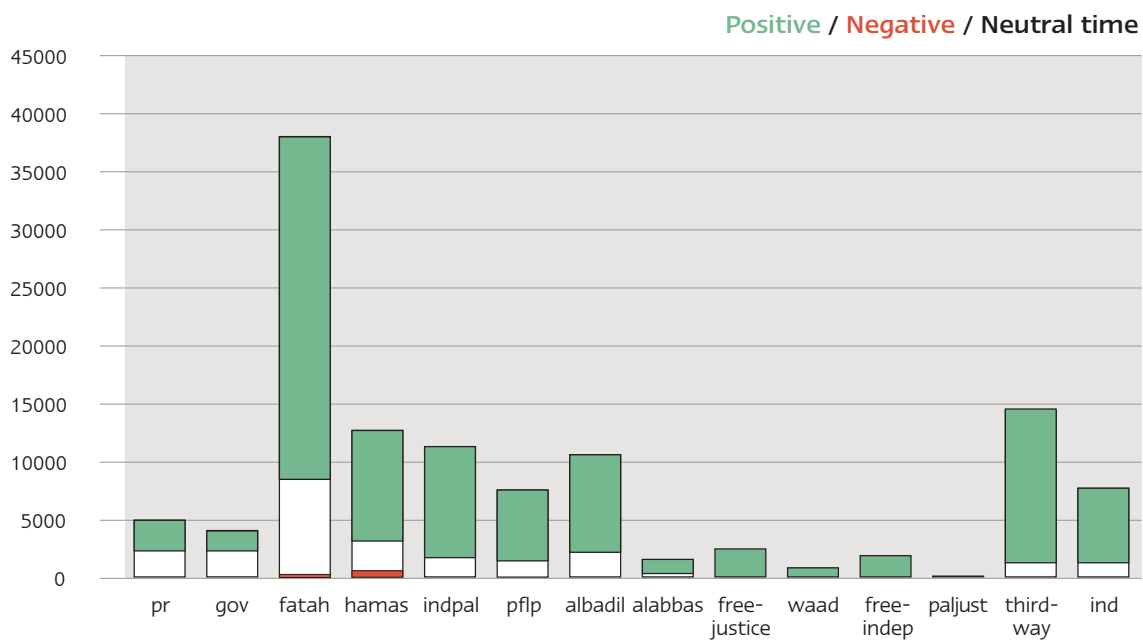
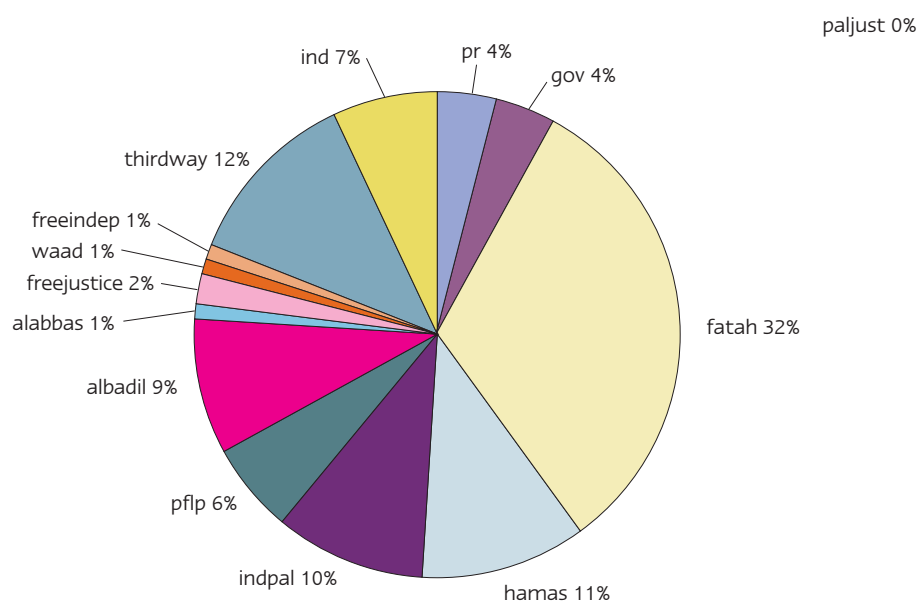


Watan TV - Prime Time News
03.01.06 - 23.01.06

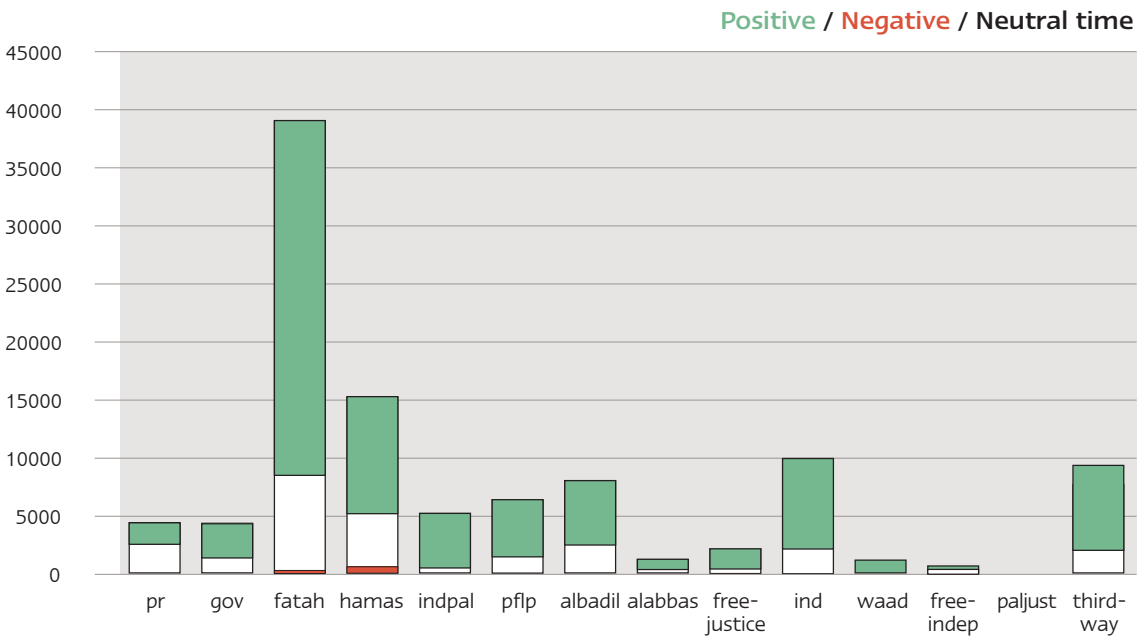
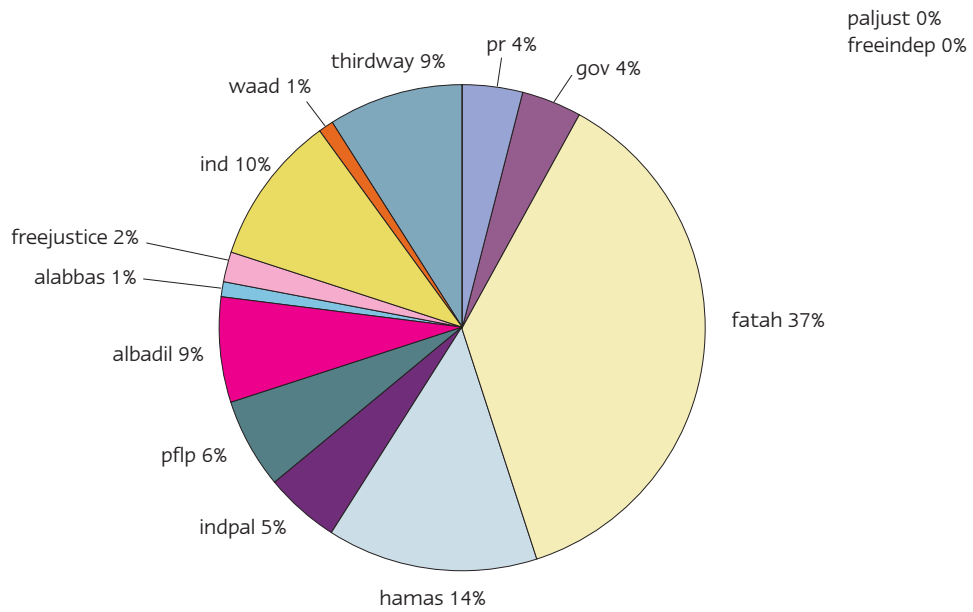


Al Hayat Al Jadida

03.01.06 - 23.01.06

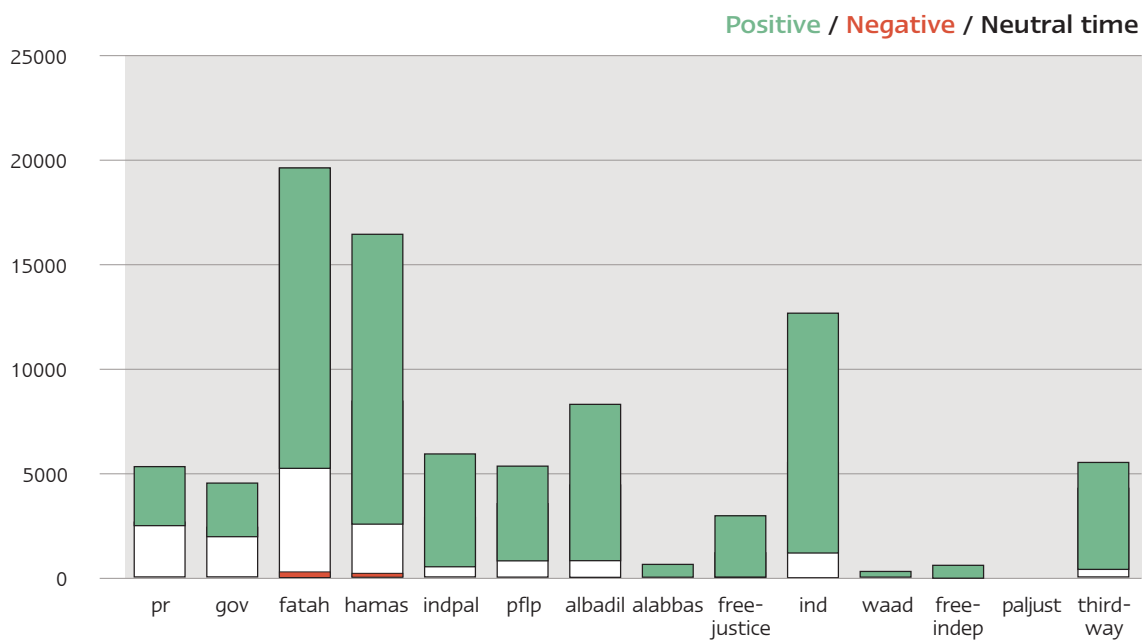
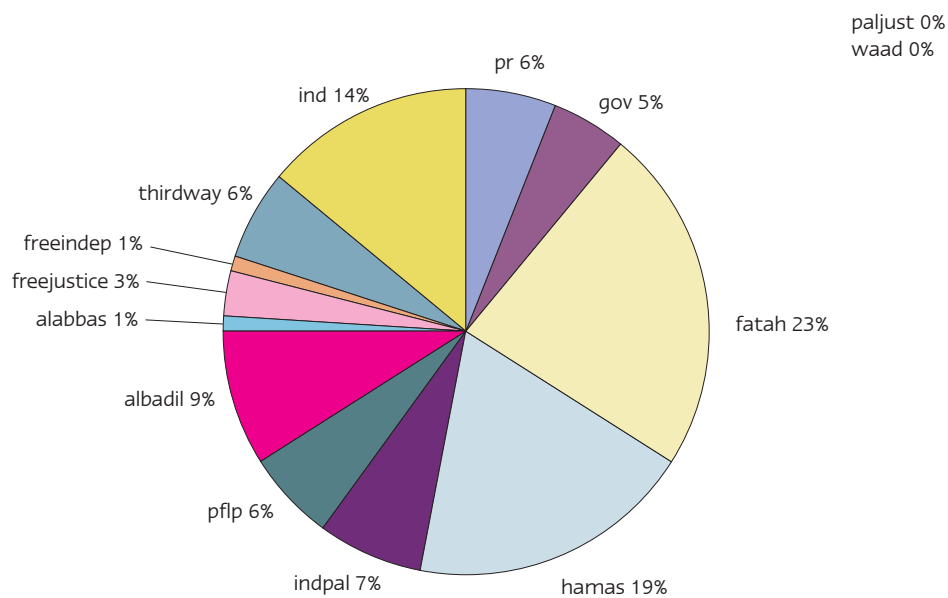


Al Ayyam
03.01.06 - 23.01.06



Al Quds

03.01.06 - 23.01.06



© International Media Support

Any reproduction, modification, publication, transmission, transfer, sale distribution, display or exploitation of this information, in any form or by any means, or its storage in a retrieval system, whether in whole or in part, without the express written permission of the individual copyright holder is prohibited.

Published in Denmark by IMS
First edition 2007

Design and production: Nanette Graphic Design
Print: De Facto A/S