

ADDRESSING DESENSITISATION TOWARDS THE WAR ON GAZA

Mohamed Buheji

Founder- Socioeconomic Institute for Advanced Studies (SIAS)- Rwanda

Email: buhejim@gmail.com

Abstract

The War on Gaza 2023/2024 has led to widespread desensitisation, particularly among those who initially empathised with the conflict. This phenomenon poses significant challenges to sustaining long-term activism, including Boycott movements. As individuals become desensitised, their emotional engagement wanes, leading to reduced participation in advocacy, lower public pressure, and diminished financial support for related causes.

This paper explores the mechanisms of desensitisation, and its impact on commitment to Gaza and Palestine-related activism, and targets to propose strategies to re-engage this affected population group. Through a literature review and analysis, the author identifies innovative storytelling, community involvement, and educational programs as critical tools for countering desensitisation. The proposed three-stages framework aims to revive interest, direct emotional engagement, and optimise inspiration, ensuring continued support for the people of Gaza. This study highlights the importance of sustained empathy and creative outreach in mitigating the effects of desensitisation and maintaining global awareness of the conditions of Gaza and the coming challenges that we started to experience in the rest of the occupied Palestinian land.

Keywords: Desensitization, War on Gaza, Empathy, Compassion Fatigue, Community Involvement, Emotional Engagement and Involvement.

1.0 Introduction

Addressing the challenge of desensitisation requires ensuring the continued telling of stories from Gaza conflict zones and fostering community involvement. Innovative storytelling methods, building resilience, engaging external audiences, and implementing educational programs, make it possible to re-engage desensitised individuals and keep their stories alive. Buheji et al. (2024b)

The Gaza War has brought about profound emotional and psychological impacts on individuals and communities worldwide. As the conflict persists, a growing phenomenon of desensitisation has emerged, particularly among those who initially empathised deeply with the suffering in Gaza. Desensitisation, a psychological response characterised by emotional numbing and disengagement, poses a significant threat to sustained activism and advocacy efforts, including movements like Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS). Understanding and addressing this desensitisation is crucial for maintaining global support and ensuring that the voices and stories from Gaza continue to resonate with the broader public.

This paper explores the complex nature of desensitisation, starting with a clear definition and understanding of how repeated exposure to traumatic events can lead to emotional disengagement. The literature review highlights the risks posed by increasing desensitisation, such as reduced participation in activism, weakened boycott efforts, and the potential erosion of public pressure necessary to influence change. To counter these challenges, the paper proposes a series of strategies aimed at re-engaging desensitised populations. These include innovative storytelling methods, community involvement through participatory projects, and building resilience and hope. By employing these strategies, it is possible to reconnect individuals with the emotional and human aspects of the conflict, renewing their commitment to advocacy and support for Gaza.

The paper also delves into the psychological mechanisms that contribute to desensitisation during prolonged wars and the social and cultural factors that exacerbate this issue. Understanding these mechanisms provides the foundation for a proposed three-stages framework designed to mitigate desensitisation and sustain long-term engagement. Through a strategic combination of storytelling, community engagement, and educational initiatives, it is possible to overcome the challenges posed by desensitisation and ensure that the stories and struggles of the people of Gaza remain at the forefront of global consciousness.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Definition of the Sensitized and the Desensitized

Batool (2020) defined sensitisation as a feeling that urges support among the audience towards an event, while desensitisation does the opposite and decreases people's interest in certain ideas or news. Regardless of the huge differences in their impact, repetition of news and ideas has been highlighted as the popular and common cause that can result in either.

2.2 Understanding desensitisation

Repeated exposure to traumatic events can lead to emotional numbing, where individuals become less responsive to emotional stimuli. Due to this repeated exposure, every human has a coping mechanism to handle the overwhelming stress and trauma of ongoing conflict like the war on Gaza by becoming desensitised. It is a mechanism that helps us deal with loss and cope with unprecedented exposure to an issue that took a long time of our close empathetic engagement and impacted even our emotional feelings and livelihood. Buheji (2024b)

Dealing with the desensitised population and ensuring the continued telling of their stories, especially in conflict zones like Gaza, is a significant challenge. Desensitisation can occur due to prolonged exposure to violence, trauma, and hardship, leading to emotional numbness and disengagement.

Desensitised individuals may be less likely to engage in storytelling or advocacy efforts. Conveying the urgency and gravity of the situation to a wider audience becomes difficult. Buheji and Khunji (2023)

2.3 Risks of the Increase of the Desensitised from the War on Gaza

The risks of the increase in desensitisation to the Gaza War might affect the commitment of people to related issues like boycotts, divestment, sanctions (BDS), and other forms of activism. As individuals become desensitised, the emotional impact of the conflict diminishes, which can lead to a decreased sense of urgency to take action. This reduction in emotional drive can result in lower participation in activism, such as boycotts or protests. Buheji and Ahmed (2023)

Movements like BDS rely on sustained public interest and commitment. Desensitised individuals may be less likely to stay engaged with these movements over the long term, potentially weakening the movement's effectiveness. Suppose people feel less emotionally connected to the plight of those affected by the Gaza conflict. In that case, they may be less inclined to participate in or support economic boycotts against companies or countries associated with the conflict. This decline in participation could weaken the financial and symbolic impact of such boycotts. Buheji and Ahmed (2023)

Boycotts and sanctions often rely on public pressure to influence corporate and governmental policies. As desensitisation spreads, the public pressure exerted through these methods may decrease, reducing their overall effectiveness in bringing about change, due to erosion of public pressure.

Desensitised individuals may shift their focus to other causes or issues that they perceive as more pressing or emotionally engaging. This shift in focus could result in less attention and resources being directed toward activism related to the Gaza conflict. As attention is diverted, the collective efforts around the Gaza War may become diluted, with fewer people committed to sustaining campaigns like BDS. This could lead to a fragmentation of the activist base and a loss of momentum.

Desensitisation can lead to a decline in financial contributions to organisations that support Gaza-related activism, such as those involved in BDS campaigns. This reduction in funding can hamper the ability of these organisations to operate effectively and sustain long-term campaigns. Even activist organisations may struggle to recruit and retain volunteers if desensitisation leads to apathy or a lack of motivation. A decrease in volunteer support can limit the reach and impact of campaigns.

As desensitisation increases, there may be a growing acceptance of the status quo, where individuals feel that their actions (such as boycotts or protests) have little impact. This acceptance

can lead to inaction and a sense of resignation, further diminishing the effectiveness of activist efforts. Desensitised individuals might morally disengage from the conflict, rationalising inaction by believing that the situation is too complex or that their participation in boycotts or other forms of activism will not make a difference.

In some cases, desensitisation can lead to a backlash against activism, where people perceive efforts like boycotts as unnecessary or even counterproductive. This backlash can undermine solidarity and create divisions within activist communities. Desensitisation can contribute to activism fatigue, where individuals become cynical about the effectiveness of their actions. This cynicism can spread, leading to a broader decline in participation and support for Gaza-related causes. Buheji and Ahmed (2023)

The success of movements like BDS often hinges on sustained, widespread participation. As desensitisation grows, the likelihood of achieving significant policy changes or influencing public opinion decreases, potentially leading to stagnation in efforts to address the root causes of the conflict. Once desensitisation has taken hold, it can be challenging to rekindle the level of commitment and passion needed to drive impactful activism. Rebuilding momentum for those who become desensitised may require significant efforts, and even new creative strategies, or emerging crises that reawaken public concern.

3.0 Strategies to Re-engage the Desensitized Population

3.1 Community Involvement through Participatory Projects

Involve the community in participatory projects where they can contribute their stories and experiences in a supportive environment. Then, empower individuals by giving them agency in how their stories are told, ensuring they feel valued and heard. Foster personal connections and trust with individuals to encourage them to open up and share their stories. Then, create safe spaces for storytelling where individuals feel secure and supported. Buheji and Khunji (2023)

Batool (2020) discussed how the different ways in which the mainstream media cover an event or idea affect the audience and in turn causes them to be sensitised or desensitised.

3.2 Innovative Storytelling Methods

Use art, photography, and other visual mediums to tell stories in a compelling and accessible way. For example, the community can be more engaged with issues of the War on Gaza through theatre and drama projects that allow them to express their experiences creatively. Then, utilise social media platforms to share stories widely and engage a broader audience. Storytelling can help produce documentaries and films that highlight personal stories and the human impact of the conflict. Buheji and Khunji (2023)

3.3 Building Resilience and Hope

Focus on stories of resilience, hope, and survival to counteract the sense of helplessness and despair. Highlight efforts towards peace, rebuilding, and the future to inspire and motivate the community. This should be supported with mental health support to help people process trauma and reduce emotional numbing. Moreover, peer support groups can help share their experiences and support each other. Migdad and Buheji (2024a)

Launch global advocacy campaigns to raise awareness about the situation in Gaza and the stories of its people. Partner with NGOs and international organisations to amplify the voices of those affected. Therefore, journalists should be trained in sensitive and ethical reporting to ensure accurate and respectful storytelling. Collaborate with media outlets to secure coverage and keep the stories in the public eye. Migdad and Buheji (2024a)

3.0 How People become Desensitised during long wars

Desensitisation during long wars is a complex psychological process that involves gradual changes in people's emotional responses and attitudes towards violence and suffering.

3.1 Repeated Exposure to Violence and Psychological Defense Mechanisms

Constant exposure to violent events and traumatic scenes makes such experiences seem normal. Over time, individuals become less emotionally affected by them. To cope with ongoing stress and trauma, people may unconsciously suppress their emotional responses, leading to a general numbing of feelings.

To protect themselves from the psychological impact of war, people may deny the severity of the situation or dissociate from their feelings and surroundings. Individuals may justify the violence and suffering as necessary or inevitable, reducing the emotional burden.

3.2 Social and Cultural Factors that Raise the Survival Instincts

Media can desensitise audiences by repeatedly showing graphic images and reports, leading to a diminished emotional response over time. In war-torn areas, community attitudes and behaviours can reinforce desensitisation. Seeing others appear unaffected by violence can make such reactions seem appropriate.

During prolonged conflicts, survival instincts take precedence. People may prioritise securing food, shelter, and safety over processing emotional trauma. To function in a war environment, individuals adapt by becoming less sensitive to the constant threat and reality of violence.

Those living in conflict zones may become desensitised as a coping mechanism to manage the continuous stress and threat to their lives. Prolonged exposure to combat, as in the case of the War on Gaza that passed more than 11 months now, can further speeden or worsen this desensitisation.

4.0 Methodology

The methodology of this paper centres on a structured literature review, which involves identifying, evaluating, and synthesising scholarly sources related to desensitisation, media exposure, emotional engagement, and activism. The goal is to develop a cohesive understanding of how desensitisation occurs, its implications for activism, and the strategies that have been proposed or implemented to counteract its effects.

The author still experiences a lack of in-depth study about sensitisation and desensitisation, which is not relevant to their possible causes and consequences for the audience. Batool (2020) seen the possible factors other than repetition of news that are causing sensitisation or desensitisation.

Sources for this research were selected based on relevance to the topic, including studies that focus on the psychological and emotional effects of repeated exposure to violent scene exposure, the impact of desensitisation on public engagement and activism, the case studies or theoretical discussions related to mitigating the risks of War on Gaza.

5.0 Application & Analysis

Addressing compassion fatigue in Gaza requires a strategic, empathetic, and multifaceted approach that combines effective storytelling, education, engagement, and actionable opportunities for support. By implementing these strategies, it's possible to rejuvenate global empathy and maintain sustained support for the people of Gaza, ensuring their stories and needs continue to receive the attention and action they deserve, Buheji and Ahmed (2024).

Dealing with the desensitised in Gaza, requires reviving their interest and empathy capacity, which requires a thoughtful, holistic approach that the following pathways can reach:

5.1 Reviving the Interest of the Desensitized

5.1.1 Building Personal Narratives

By highlighting the individual stories of Gazan during the war affected by the conflict. Personal stories can create a strong emotional connection and make the situation more relatable. These stories, if supported by photos, videos, and other media that focus on the human aspect of the conflict, might bring more realisation of the importance of continuously engaging with Gaza. Seeing faces, hearing voices, and understanding personal losses can bring a breakthrough in the desensitisation cycle. Migdad and Buheji (2024b)

5.1.2 Continue to Provide Context

Offer clear and concise information about the history and current status of the conflict. Helping people understand the roots of the situation can foster a deeper interest. Therefore, pro-Palestine advocates and leaders should focus on aspects of the conflict that aren't covered in mainstream media, showing people the broader impact of the war.

5.1.3 Engage through Art and Culture

Work of art, poetry, or literature from or about Gaza can evoke emotions and provide new perspectives that purely factual reporting might not. Promote documentaries or films that portray the realities of life in Gaza. Visual storytelling can be a powerful tool to renew empathy. For example, Buheji and Hamza (2024) suggested branding resilience by shaping Gaza's global identity through narrative, solidarity, and advocacy.

5.1.4 Renew Community Dialogue and Action Campaigns

Create spaces for open dialogue where people can express their thoughts and feelings about the situation. This can be in the form of discussion groups, forums, or online platforms. Social media platforms can help to encourage people to share and engage with content that humanises the issue.

Get people involved in campaigns to donate for this humanitarian crisis, or participate in protests and advocacy for Gaza. Active involvement can help people feel more connected to the cause. To enhance the outreach, partnering with influencers, celebrities, or public figures can be a good idea. Their presence might help to reach a broad audience and help spread awareness in a way that resonates with their followers. Buheji and Hasan (2024a)

5.2 Reviving the Empathy Capacity of the Desensitized

5.2.1 Addressing 'Compassion Fatigue' about Sympathising with Gaza

Compassion fatigue occurs when people become desensitised or overwhelmed by continuous exposure to distressing news, leading to decreased empathy and engagement, Buheji et al. (2024b). Recognising that desensitisation is not an easy task. Often it needs to come from realising the 'emotional overload' or 'feeling powerless'. Addressing this can help people reconnect with their empathy. This can start by focusing on stories of hope, resilience, and positive change. Showing that efforts can make a difference may re-engage those who feel helpless.

Addressing compassion fatigue for Gaza is essential to maintain global awareness, empathy, and support for the ongoing humanitarian situation. Those worried about 'compassion fatigue' towards Gaza should be educated on how to recognise signs of and the importance of self-care. They should create support systems for activists and those heavily involved in humanitarian efforts to prevent burnout and promote practices that help individuals process emotions healthily while staying engaged.

This fatigue can be achieved through collaboration between international NGOs, governments, and institutions that amplify efforts and share resources. This needs more launching of international awareness campaigns that emphasise the universal importance of human rights and dignity.

5.2.2 Diversify Storytelling Approaches

Share compelling and relatable stories of individuals and families from Gaza to humanise the situation and create emotional connections. Present accounts of resilience and survival to inspire and re-engage audiences. Incorporate photography, paintings, and illustrations that depict life in Gaza, offering a different medium for understanding and empathy. Produce and promote high-quality documentaries that provide in-depth insights into the lives of Gazans. Use cultural expressions to convey emotions and experiences, making the situation relatable to different audiences.

Audio and live-streaming formats can be used to reach diverse audiences with in-depth content. Short-form content on platforms like Instagram and TikTok should be utilised to engage younger audiences. Also, diverse media representation and voices should be used to thrive the visualisation of what is happening in Gaza.

5.2.3 Engage Through Interactive Content

Develop interactive content. Virtual Reality (VR) content allows people to experience the realities of Gaza virtually, fostering deeper understanding. Create interactive campaigns encouraging people to participate, share, and discuss Gaza-related issues.

Use the interaction to clearly explain the historical events leading to the current situation to enhance understanding. It can provide timely and factual updates without sensationalism to keep people informed without causing overwhelm. Also, this empathetic roadmap can be approached by organising online and offline forums where people can discuss and learn about Gaza in a supportive environment. Host discussions with experts, activists, and individuals from Gaza to provide diverse perspectives.

Avoidance of compassion fatigue requires more initiatives that publicly recognise and thank those who contribute to aiding Gaza to reinforce positive engagement. Regularly report on how contributions and efforts are making tangible differences in Gaza. Therefore, we need to create platforms where people can learn, interact, and contribute to Gaza-related causes. Apps can be utilised to provide updates, educational materials, and avenues for engagement.

Complex information should be represented through easy-to-understand visuals to maintain interest and comprehension. The desensitised should be introduced to tools that help people dynamically explore and understand the situation.

5.2.4 Focus on Positive Developments that Maintain Empathy

Share stories of positive change, such as successful humanitarian efforts, to instil hope and counteract despair. Initiatives aimed at community peacebuilding, education, and healthcare improvements in Gaza should be given priority in the development efforts. Trustworthy organisations and people who can support such initiatives should be identified. These efforts should raise the opportunity for local and remote volunteering, besides encouraging involvement in advocacy efforts, petitions, and policy change initiatives.

Balance the frequency and intensity of news reporting to prevent overwhelming the audience. Select and present the most impactful stories thoughtfully to maintain positive engagement. These stories can be supported by arrangement of cultural events showcasing Gazan art, music, and literature to foster connection and understanding. Schools and universities also can be encouraged to develop programs that teach about Gaza's culture and history. These efforts can be amplified through collaboration with respected figures who can amplify the message and reach wider audiences. Even using storytellers and content creators can help produce further engaging and empathetic content about Gaza.

5.2.5 Enhance the Role of the Palestinian Diaspora Communities

In order to mitigate the risk of those being desensitised by the lengthy, devastating war on Gaza, Palestinian diaspora communities need to enhance their authentic experiences and share more stories that foster understanding in their respective villages and cities during the war.

The Palestinian diaspora should trigger excitement about the amount of ignorance about the history of Palestine's struggle towards freedom and why it is important to know. This means that the diaspora can provide reading lists for those interested in learning more about Gaza's history and current situation. This can be extended to physically and electronically establishing a library about Palestine.

5.3 Realising the meaning of involvement with a specific issue

Involvement refers to the act of participating or taking part in an activity or cause. It typically implies a more passive or surface-level participation, where individuals may be doing something because they feel obligated or because it's expected of them as humans, or as being part of the society, but without a deep personal connection or commitment. For example, Buheji et al. (2024a) suggested that showing the level of the Sacrifice given by Pro-Palestine protesting students can a source of involvement that might change the world. In relevance to the keeping people involved even after the war stops on Gaza, Buheji and Marouf (2024) called for more involvement in mapping the reconstruction of GAZA to overcome donors' fatigue.

5.3.1 Characteristics of Involvement

Involvement often centers around completing specific tasks, such as donating money, signing a petition, or attending an event or a demonstration during specific occasions. Hence, in this level of attachment, people may be involved for a brief period or for the duration of a particular campaign or event.

Hence, when people are involved with a cause like Palestine or War on Gaza, they would be willing to give a limited emotional investment. This means that their involvement may not necessarily build a deep emotional connection to the issue. Such people might participate out of duty or social pressure rather than genuine concern. It is more like a feeling of want, not need, i.e., wanting to check off a box to a sense of temporary relief, or doing something because it's the right thing to do for that moment, rather than out of a strong personal conviction to the issue.

Putting this in the context of Gaza can be like getting involved by donating to a relief fund for Gaza or signing a petition calling for peace. While these actions are helpful and needed for urgency, they don't necessarily indicate a deep, ongoing commitment to the cause.

5.3.2 Characteristics of Engagement

Engagement goes beyond mere participation and involves a deeper, more sustained commitment to an issue. When people are engaged, they are emotionally invested, actively interested, and often take initiative in learning about and advocating for the cause.

Engagement is typically fuelled by a personal connection to the cause, leading to a deeper understanding and commitment. Engaged individuals are likely to remain active over a longer period, continuously seeking ways to contribute and make a difference. They have the capacity to be more proactive and reflective about the cause they are fighting for. Therefore, this level of engagement involves thinking critically about the issue, seeking out information, and being proactive in taking action, whether through advocacy, education, or other means.

Engagement can change the way people see the world, influencing their values, beliefs, and behaviours. It often leads to a more sustained and impactful contribution. Once people are engaged with the War on Gaza, they might not only donate to Gaza or Palestine in the area of relief efforts but also regularly educate themselves about the history and current situation in Gaza and Palestine, participate in advocacy work, raise awareness through social media or community events, and consistently look for ways to support the people of Gaza in the long term. Al-Muhannadi and Buheji (2024)

Engagement is crucial for maintaining long-term support for issues like Gaza. Involvement might peak during crises but fade quickly, whereas engagement ensures that the issue remains a priority for individuals over time. Engaged individuals are more likely to make a significant and lasting

impact because they are deeply committed to the cause. Their actions are often more informed, consistent, and sustained than those merely involved. Therefore, it is time to build FreePalestine as a social movement, where individuals are more likely to inspire each other due to diverse engagement activities and where they would contribute creatively, and build momentum that can lead to meaningful, sustained impact and change.

5.3.3 Consistent Engagement

To keep people engaged with the issues of Gaza and Palestine, we need to share updates and new perspectives regularly to keep the issue at the forefront of people's minds. Consistent engagement can prevent the issue from fading into the background. Reviving empathy and interest in a conflict as prolonged and complex as Gaza's is challenging, but by making the situation more personal, accessible, and actionable, you can help overcome desensitisation. For example, Gazans can focus on engaging people in capitalising on the 'social capital' that would accelerate the collective wealth of Gaza. Buheji and Hasan (2024b).

5.3.4 If you can't See, you can Read

People feeling fatigued with social media or watching the mainstream news can read the diaries of those living inside Gaza. This storytelling, like cases, papers, or stories can overcome the feelings of not wanting to see more blood and goes deeper in realising that an empathetic journey must continue supporting such a human crisis.

5.3.5 Realising the Demographics of the Potential Desensitised from the War on Gaza

Desensitisation to devastating violence like the ongoing war on Gaza that started in October 2023 can vary significantly depending on several factors, including the age, exposure to media, and personal or cultural background of different generations.

The high exposure to digital media and social platforms by the younger generations, especially Gen-Z and the millennials, which often include graphic images, videos, and real-time updates of the war on Gaza makes them the most vulnerable generation to be desensitised. Their constant exposure to such deep news that comes from those on the ground can lead them to their desensitisation over time, as they might become accustomed to seeing violence and suffering regularly. While younger people, especially the Gen-Z, may be more empathetic due to their access to diverse perspectives, the sheer volume of disturbing content can also lead to numbness or helplessness, resulting in desensitisation, Buheji (2024c). Despite potential desensitisation, many in these generations are more likely to be actively involved in social and political causes, which can counterbalance desensitisation by fostering a sense of agency and responsibility.

Meanwhile, older generations, such as Gen-X, Baby Boomers, and Silent Generation typically grew up with traditional media like newspapers, radio, and television, which often filter graphic content. This could mean less direct exposure to the brutal realities of war, potentially leading to

less desensitisation in comparison to younger people. This generation has lived through or has a closer connection to past conflicts (e.g., Cold War, Vietnam War), which could influence their perception and sensitivity to current events. Their desensitisation might be influenced by these earlier experiences and the ways in which those events were reported.

5.3.6 Vulnerability of Being Desensitised Based on Level of Exposure

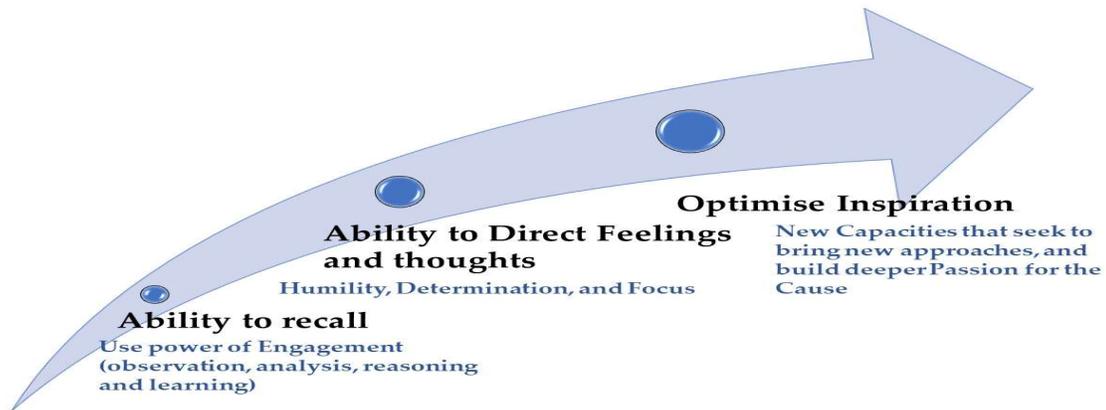
Individuals who live in or have close ties to Gaza or Palestine or in areas influenced by this devastating 2023/2024 War on Gaza, regardless of their generation, may become more desensitised due to their direct exposure to violence. Conversely, they might also be more sensitive due to personal connections to the conflict. Also, cultural narratives and educational systems play a significant role in shaping the attitudes toward war on Gaza. Generations that have been exposed to narratives justifying the Palestinian resistance or resilience or steadfastness during the war on Gaza also vulnerable to be more desensitised.

As people across the world's different regions and generations are more likely to be exposed to the same images and narratives, which can lead to a more uniform desensitisation across age groups. For people in or near conflict zones, desensitisation might manifest differently than those distant from the conflict. The local impact can either deepen empathy or contribute to a hardened emotional response.

6.0 Proposed Framework for Mitigating the Spread of Desensitisation from the War on Gaza

Based on the literature review and the application of dealing with the desensitised, a three-stage framework is proposed to mitigate this status. The framework suggests that we start by raising the ability to recall and the individual's capacity to be sensitised. The second stage focuses on raising the ability to direct feelings and thoughts, leading to the third stage, which focuses on optimising inspiration among those going through desentization.

Figure (1) illustrates these three stages and details what it requires to transform from one stage to the other.



7.0 Discussion and Conclusion

The ongoing Gaza War has not only inflicted severe physical and emotional trauma on those directly affected but has also led to widespread desensitisation among global audiences. This desensitisation threatens to undermine crucial activism efforts, such as the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement, which rely on sustained public engagement and emotional investment. As people become increasingly numb to the violence and suffering, the urgency to act diminishes, leading to a decline in participation, weakened advocacy, and a potential erosion of public pressure necessary to effect meaningful change.

Involvement in the War on Gaza issue might mean participating in certain actions or events without a deep emotional commitment, while engagement signifies a sustained, passionate commitment to understanding, advocating for, and supporting the people of Gaza over the long term. For lasting impact, fostering engagement rather than just involvement is key.

This paper has explored the psychological underpinnings of desensitisation, emphasising how repeated exposure to traumatic events can lead to emotional disengagement. By analysing the risks posed by this phenomenon, particularly in the context of the Gaza conflict, it becomes clear that innovative strategies are needed to re-engage those who have become desensitised.

The author shows how the younger generations might be more desensitised due to their higher exposure to unfiltered, graphic content on digital platforms. However, this does not mean they are less empathetic or aware; it could simply reflect the overwhelming nature of modern media consumption. With more filtered media experiences, older generations might be less desensitised and less exposed to the brutal realities of modern conflicts.

The paper proposes strategies— from innovative storytelling and community involvement to building resilience and hope—offering a pathway to reviving empathy and renewing commitment to Gaza-related activism. These strategies are supported by a three-stage framework designed to rekindle interest, guide emotional responses, and inspire sustained action.

The framework proposed shows that combating desensitisation is essential for maintaining the momentum of global movements advocating for justice and human rights in Gaza. By reconnecting individuals to the human stories behind the conflict and fostering deeper emotional engagement, sustaining and even strengthening the support needed to bring about lasting change is possible. The continued effort to keep Gaza's stories alive in the global consciousness is not just a moral imperative but also a strategic necessity for long-term advocacy and activism success.

The increase of the desensitised from the war on Gaza may cause lots of challenges to the sustenance of the momentum of pro-Palestine movements all over the world. Once the movement leading generations, starting with Gen-Z, get desensitised, they would have a reduced sense of urgency, would have lower engagement in movements, weakening of boycott and sanction efforts and a clear decline in support for economic boycotts.

Desensitisation can create a shift in Gaza and Palestine empathisers' focus away from the devastating war and create a diversion of focus to other issues. This could dilute activism and impact organisational support, eventually leading to - acceptance of the status quo, moral disengagement, and reduced donations and funding.

The limitation of this study is that it used a literature review-based methodology, including the reliance on existing research, which may not cover all aspects of the phenomenon or may be subject to publication bias. Additionally, the findings depend on the quality and scope of the available literature, which might not fully capture emerging trends or new data.

I believe that the desensitisation would have the potential for counterproductive effects, such as backlash against activism, fatigue, and cynicism. Thus, desensitisation would be one of the most challenging aspects of rebuilding momentum. The increasing desensitisation among those who initially empathise with the Gaza war can lead to a decline in commitment to related activism, such as boycotts and sanctions. This decline can weaken the overall impact of these efforts, reduce public pressure for change, and make it more difficult to sustain long-term movements aimed at addressing the conflict and its consequences.

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