

Palestinian child in Gaza documentary holds BBC responsible for fate after persecution



Palestinian teenager Abdullah al-Yazuri

Gaza City, March 6 (RHC)-- A 13-year-old Palestinian from the Gaza Strip has found himself to be the target of online persecution after narrating a BBC documentary on the situation in the coastal sliver, with the broadcaster having taken no responsibility towards his fate amid the harassment.

Abdullah al-Yazuri said he had faced harassment and abuse online, leading to significant mental distress, saying he held the BBC responsible for his safety, the Middle East Eye (MEE) news and analysis website reported on Wednesday.

"I did not agree to the risk of me being targeted in any way before the documentary was broadcasted on the BBC. So [if] anything happens to me, the BBC is responsible for it," he added.

The production company, Hoyo Films, said a limited sum of money had been paid to the Yazuri family for the narration. However, Abdullah clarified that he had not received financial remuneration beyond expenses related to the documentary's production.

Sir Vincent Fean, a former British diplomat assigned to the occupied Palestinian territories, said the BBC had a duty to protect the dignity and wellbeing of an innocent 13-year-old boy, stating: "They have failed, he is receiving hate-mail, and his mental health is suffering."

The film "Gaza: How to Survive a Warzone," which depicts the experiences of children in the war-wrecked and besieged coastal sliver, was removed from the BBC's iPlayer platform amid pressure from pro-Israeli campaigners.

The broadcaster took the move after it was revealed that the father of the child, Dr. Ayman al-Yazuri, served as a deputy minister in the government in Gaza, which is run by the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas that is known for its dedicated anti-Israeli struggle.

The decision has sparked widespread criticism and raised concerns about the BBC's editorial processes.

Abdullah expressed disappointment over the documentary's removal, stating that he had hoped it would "spread the message of the suffering that children in Gaza witness." He, however, said he remained hopeful that the documentary would be restored and that the voices of Gaza's children would be heard.

Critics argue that the British broadcaster capitulated to external pressures, undermining its self-proclaimed commitment to impartial storytelling.

Over 1,000 media professionals have signed a letter organized by Artists for Palestine UK, a network of artists and cultural workers supporting Palestinians' liberation from Israeli occupation and aggression, concerning the matter, condemning the BBC's decision to withdraw the film and urging its reinstatement.

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