

Slacktivism and the Palestinian Cause: Analyzing Online Solidarity Campaigns

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Received: 26/09/2025

Accepted: 01/12/2025

Abstract:

Today, digital platforms have become central spaces for expressing solidarity with political causes, especially when it comes to the longest-running liberation struggle of the modern era: the Palestinian cause. This study explores the phenomenon of “slacktivism” a form of digital activism that does not require significant effort and its role in shaping online solidarity campaigns with Palestine. Through the questions posed, the study seeks to reveal the various ways in which individuals interact with the Palestinian cause online through actions such as using hashtags, sharing posts, changing profile pictures, and signing online petitions... All of these actions provide symbolic support, and this paper critically examines their impact, authenticity, and sustainability.

The results indicate that slacktivism contributes to increasing global awareness, but often lacks the depth of political engagement necessary to bring about tangible change. This article ultimately raises questions about the effectiveness and ethics of digital solidarity, especially when activism becomes more about performance than participation.

key words: *Slacktivism; Clicktivism; Digital activism; Online solidarity; Palestine*

Introduction

Digital platforms have become an integral part of contemporary social movements and solidarity campaigns, providing unique spaces for political discourse, particularly on highly sensitive issues such as the Palestinian cause. These platforms have radically changed how public opinion is formed and how information is disseminated. Understanding the changing dynamics of online activism is crucial in today's digital media landscape.

Among the dynamics brought about by digital technology and social media platforms is “slacktivism”, a term often used pejoratively to describe actions that require little effort online such as signing a digital petition or changing one's profile picture and are substitutes for forms of real political engagement offline. While critics argue that slacktivism has many benefits, such as raising awareness, building a global community, and even mobilizing people to take real action, others believe that it has a negative impact by oversimplifying complex issues and giving a false sense of accomplishment.

This debate is particularly important when it comes to the Palestinian cause, which is a long-standing and highly complex geopolitical conflict that has led to enormous solidarity online. Where solidarity campaigns for Palestine are widespread on platforms such as Instagram, X, and TikTok, using hashtags and sharing posts and graphic images to draw attention to what is happening in Palestine, especially given the marginalization of the issue in traditional media.

This study aims to analyze the role and impact of slacktivism in the context of the Palestinian cause. By examining the nature of online solidarity campaigns, the motivations of their participants, and the outcomes of their actions, we will explore the multifaceted debate surrounding slacktivism. We will examine whether these digital efforts are merely symbolic gestures or whether they contribute to meaningful change, such as influencing policy and strengthening a sense of collective identity. This analysis will also provide a nuanced understanding of the limitations and implications of online solidarity work for the Palestinian cause.

This research paper therefore begins by posing the main question:

- **Do online solidarity campaigns for Palestine contribute to real change, or are they limited to symbolic slacktivist gestures?**

And Sub-questions are:

- **What forms of slacktivist practices are used in online solidarity campaigns for Palestine?**
- **To what extent do these practices contribute to meaningful awareness or political engagement?**

- **What are the perceived effects and challenges of slacktivism related to the Palestinian cause?**

I. General introduction to slacktivism:

1. Definition of slacktivism:

Slacktivism originates from the words “slack” and “activism.” The term was first used in 1995 by Fred Clark during seminars held jointly with Dwight Ozard at Cornerstone Festival. As Clark and Ozard understood it, the term had positive overtones. It referred to grassroots efforts taken by young people to influence society by becoming active on a limited personal scale. (Żuchowska-Skiba, 2024)

The United Nations defines ‘slacktivism’ as ‘supporting a cause by performing simple measures ... while not being genuinely engaged or devoted to making a change’, whereas “liking,” “tweeting,” or “sharing” expresses minimal or superficial support for a cause, it does not fully express any real commitment to civic engagement or collective action that personal activism demonstrates. (Ralston, 2024). Christensen pointed out that slacktivism is synonymous with “armchair activism”; the term has now become synonymous with ineffective online political activism.

The term “slacktivism” refers to forms of online political participation that do not require much effort, such as signing an online petition, clicking “Like” on a Facebook page, or changing one's Twitter profile picture to support a cause. This creates the illusion that the user has tangible political influence, with potentially serious consequences for the power dynamics between political elites and the public. (Zohouri, Darvishi, & Sarfi, 2020)

Of the many definitions of slacktivism, the most significant is its original meaning as a portmanteau of “slacker” and “activism.” This term describes the perceived gap between awareness and action on social media, marking a shift from traditional activism which involves resource-intensive, collective actions like protests and boycotts.

Researcher Rodolfo Leyva offers a more neutral definition, characterizing slacktivism as a “risky and low-cost activity through social media” aimed at raising awareness or providing personal satisfaction. Despite this, the term is often viewed negatively and is frequently compared or linked to similar phenomena like clicktivism or hacktivism.

Common forms of slacktivism include tweeting, posting, sharing, liking, and creating memes. While these actions represent a higher level of engagement than mere online entertainment, the rapid evolution of the internet continually changes how we interact online. Consequently, slacktivism remains a complex and challenging field of study, as research struggles to keep pace with the speed of digital change.

2. Slacktivism and related terms :

There are many terms that have a meaning close or similar to slacktivism, so we decided to include this element to avoid any confusion in understanding these terms.

a) **Clicktivism** : It refers to a type of digital activism where people show their support for various causes through online actions like clicking, liking, or sharing. This approach can be an easy and accessible way for individuals to interact with social and political matters. However, it also has the downside of leading to slacktivism, which describes a superficial level of online engagement that rarely leads to real-world involvement. When individuals believe they have contributed simply by pressing a button, they may hesitate to take actual steps toward making a difference.

Consequently, this can hinder real progress and create a misleading feeling of achievement. Therefore, it is essential to recognize both the advantages and disadvantages of clicktivism, and to think about how it may be effectively employed to promote significant social and political change.

b) **Hacktivism** : A form of slacktivism that is used by a relatively small group of people but can have enormous immediate results is known as hacktivism. Hacktivism refers to the use of computers and technology to promote a political or social message, usually by exerting strong immediate pressure on the government or corporations. (Piat, 2019)

Hacktivism encompasses both illegal hacking and legal forms of digital activism, such as social media hijacking, which require minimal technical skills. Activities such as flooding comment sections on open forums allow for wider participation, even without advanced technical knowledge. While tactics requiring minimal skills can amplify issues, they are often most effective when combined with anonymous, high-risk hacking operations. However, this type of high-level cyber activity remains out of reach for non-experts, raising questions about fairness in digital activism and the issues that receive attention.

c) **Digital activism**: It includes all forms of political and social campaigns that rely on online networks. Activists commonly turn to social media and online platforms to recruit volunteers and share their motivational stories with audiences worldwide. Digital meditation, when considered in a broader ecological context, highlights the significance of fostering numerous interactions and communications between media and citizens through different aspects of collective action. Many digital initiatives contribute to this effort. (Herawati, Marom, & Widowati, 2023)

Digital activism is the employing of digital tools -including social media, websites, and mobile apps- for organizing, encouraging, or executing social or political change. Although the word is much used, there is no one, generally agreed definition, and its meaning might vary according to context and scholarly perspective.

3. The Root Causes of Slacktivism:

Slacktivism spreads due to a combination of psychological, social, and technological factors. The literature highlights several key drivers that encourage individuals to engage in slacktivist behaviors, such as:

a) Psychological and Social Motivations:

- **Desire for Group Belonging:** Many participate in slacktivism to satisfy group-enhancing goals, including a sense of community or backing the well-being of the ingroup. Low-threshold online activities, which are seen as significant contributions to group success, fulfill this need of belonging. (Schumann & Klein, 2015)

Slacktivism flourishes since it skillfully satisfies basic human needs for belonging, identity, and moral self-concept with little effort. Social Identity Theory explains this nicely: people derive great self-esteem from their membership in groups. Digital platforms provide an area where low-cost actions like sharing a hashtag or adding a profile frame act as powerful, instant markers of membership. These deeds enable users to publicly signal their support for a cause or community, strengthening their ingroup identity and sense of solidarity. Regardless of any practical outside effect, this performance of affiliation fosters a great sense of purpose and belonging, as the immediate positive feedback from an echo chamber of like-minded people -through likes, shares, and comments- validates their input and strengthens group ties.

- **Impression Management and Self-Image:** Individuals may participate in slacktivism to present themselves positively to others, boosting self-esteem and social standing. Public displays of support as sharing or liking content, it can satisfy self-enhancement needs, reducing the perceived need for further action. (Moussaoui, Blondé, Phung, Tschopp, & Desrichard, 2022)

The act of slacking frequently involves complicated identity performance and impression management within one's online social network, rather than actually making real progress toward a cause. According to Erving Goffman's theatrical theory, social media acts as a stage where individuals carefully create their frontstage persona, and supporting a well-known cause through an inexpensive activity is a powerful way to demonstrate certain values like compassion, awareness, and moral alignment to a peer audience. The fact that you can upload a profile photo with a ribbon filter creates a sophisticated, socially conscious identity without the need for the behind the- scenes work of in depth investigation, personal sacrifice, or risky behavior this act is a sort of social currency.

This signal is particularly powerful because it operates in an economy of attention where virtue is often perceived as visibility. Aligning oneself with a cause in public helps

one strengthen their desired role within their community, which in turn improves social connections with like-minded people and separates them from hostile groups. When the primary motivation shifts from promoting the cause to controlling one's image and seeking social validation through the network's endorsement (likes, shares, positive comments), this ritual of signaling might occasionally become an end in itself. As a result, the action is effectively divorced from its intended outcome, and its success is gauged by the improvement of one's social capital and the validation of one's self-concept as a moral, knowledgeable, and decent individual within the chosen reality of the digital environment, rather than by changes in policy or funds generated.

- **Moral Licensing:** The act of participating, even in a small way, can create a temporary feeling of doing something positive. This emotional satisfaction can be a reward in itself, leading people to believe they have contributed to meaningful change and feel they have fulfilled their moral duty, even if their action has no tangible impact. (Cagnard, 2022)

The phenomenon of moral licensing provides a critical psychological framework for understanding the inner mechanics and potential pitfalls of slacktivism. Fundamentally, moral licensing is a cognitive bias by which a preceding act of virtue or perceived virtue permits subsequent passivity, laziness, or even lavish behavior. Applied to digital advocacy, the basic acts of clicking 'like,' sharing a post, or including a profile frame serve as a physical, documented activity the person can point to as proof of their involvement. Although needing little effort, this little act sets off a covert psychological transaction: the brain sees the gesture as a good deed deposited in one's moral account. This deposit produces a strong sense of emotional fulfillment a quick dopamine burst related to having acted correctly which becomes a reward in itself.

The danger is that this reward is frequently misconstrued as closure instead of an opening; the brief sense of contribution is mistaken for the fulfillment of a moral obligation, hence allowing the person an unconscious permission slip to disengage from the topic more significantly. Therefore, the self-satisfaction gained from the symbolic gesture negates the need for more action such as donating, volunteering, intense education, or uncomfortable political lobbying thereby eliminating the first desire to support a cause. This generates a vicious spiral whereby the low-cost character of slacktivism is not only a characteristic but also the actual engine of its appeal, so it shields the individual from the cognitive dissonance of caring about a cause but doing nothing significant about it by offering the emotional reward of activism without the related costs, therefore ensuring that their involvement stays performative and without concrete effects.

b) Technological Factors:

- **Ease and Accessibility of Digital Platforms:** Social media and online tools make it simple and low-risk to participate in activism or show support for a cause. A single click, like, share, or retweet takes a matter of seconds and requires no physical effort or financial contribution. (Cabrera, Matias, & Montoya, 2017)

Modern digital platforms' architecture mostly seeks ease and accessibility, thereby building an environment in which social problems are given less attention. With their naturally designed “like,” “share,” and “retweet” buttons, social media interfaces turn sophisticated civil involvement into a series of quick, one click actions that take just a few seconds and call no physical, financial, or intellectual commitment. This great lowering of the entry hurdle democratizes expression by enabling anyone with a smartphone to become a participant, but simultaneously reinterprets engagement as a kind of low-risk, inexpensive consumption. These sites encourage a culture of ease where the act of showing support is easily incorporated into the limitless scrolling of daily digital life, making it as simple as liking a photo but more crucially forming a perception of participation that may meet the user's need to contribute thereby favoring the volume of involvement over the depth of its impact.

- **Mass Dissemination:** Social media and other online tools allow messages to spread rapidly and widely. This enables a small number of people to "amplify" a message to a massive audience without the need for traditional organizing. (fiveable, 2024)

The digital ecosystem has created a model of frictionless contagion whereby algorithmic currents carry ideas as viral payloads rather than through planned actions. This architecture bypasses conventional gatekeepers and lessens the need for top-down leadership by letting a single statement reach worldwide saturation. Sharing turns into a recursive, almost mindless gesture of amplification that uses networked individualism to produce enormous awareness at previously unheard-of speed. Still, this very efficiency produces a crucial contradiction: the system enabling disadvantaged voices also flattens debate into content, favoring virality above veracity and conflating algorithmic visibility with real influence.

- **Reduced Barriers:** The internet lowers the barriers to participation for people who may not have the time, physical ability, or willingness to engage in traditional activism like attending protests or volunteering.

The internet flattens the topography of activism by removing the spatial and temporal boundaries formerly restricted participation. By providing a low-friction entrance for those kept out from conventional means of mobilization whether because of disability, geography, obligation, or risk aversion it democratizes engagement. Still, this access changes the very nature of contribution: activity becomes disembodied, cut to digital gestures that demand little more than connection and intent. Though inclusive, this agency extension generates a vacuum of result whereby participation is so simple that it

Slacktivism and the Palestinian Cause: Analyzing Online Solidarity Campaigns——Hana Achour
risks becoming weightless, separating solidarity from sacrifice and conflating presence with influence.

II. The Palestinian Cause in the Digital Space:

1. Narrative Contestation and Polarization: The conflict over narratives and polarization Social media platforms are a battleground between competing narratives, with clear polarization between pro-Palestinian and pro-Zionist groups, reinforcing geopolitical divisions, all of this is evident in:

- **Citizen journalism:** Broadly defined as the involvement of average people in the processes of news collection, reporting, and distribution, citizen journalism has become a transforming force in Enabled by digital technologies and social media, citizen journalists have challenged the conventional monopoly of professional news agencies, providing different points of view, quick coverage of breaking events and more diversity of voices especially in underprivileged or marginalized neighborhoods. (Wall, 2015)

By disseminating information and challenging dominant narratives, citizen journalism in the Palestinian setting has a major influence that offers other points of view and real-time updates usually lacking in the traditional media. It raises Palestinian voices via social media, supports worldwide unity and involvement in times of need, and empowers communities by enhancing identity and agency especially among young people and the diaspora. This kind of journalism, however, has major limitations: its absence of professional standards causes it to wrestle with credibility and ethical issues, which can result in misleading information. It also stays vulnerable to complex gatekeeping, including political oppression and digital censorship, which restrict its scope and influence. Most crucially, citizen reporters face major security threats including surveillance, intimidation, and violence, especially in conflict areas, therefore highlighting the precarious circumstances in which they try to share their stories.

Overall, it can be said that citizen journalism has become an influential force in the Palestinian cause, especially given the restrictions, bias, and censorship faced by traditional media outlets. Through digital platforms and social media, ordinary Palestinians now document current events through live coverage, share counter-narratives, and mobilize local and global audiences, shaping perceptions of the conflict and amplifying voices that are often marginalized in mainstream media coverage.

- **Systematic hate speech:** It is the deliberate, recurrent, usually targeted employment of hateful language against particular groups often magnified by digital platforms. Particularly as it grows commonplace online, this phenomena is seen as a major threat to social cohesiveness, democratic principles, and the welfare of underprivileged groups. (Paz, Montero-Díaz, & Moreno-Delgado, 2020)

Spread of systemic hate speech, wherein times of increased conflict, like the 2023 Zionist entity-Hamas war, set off a simultaneous anti-Palestinian online activity. Legal and algorithmic systems that often display an unfair application of hate speech policies aggravate this environment. Lawsuits contend that while some of the big platforms let incitement, real campaigning for Palestinian rights is often mischaracterized as antisemitism, therefore leading to censorship and silence. of Palestinian stories especially in Western settings. This digital suppression reflects and facilitates offline institutional racism, as seen in Europe where state policies and news sources have been accused of criminalizing solidarity. redefining it as backing for terrorism among Palestinians. This confusion cools public discourse, stifles opposition, and reflects a larger trend wherein antiPalestinian rhetoric is institutionalized thereby stripping Palestinians of their political voice and rights. both online and in the real world.

2. Repression, Censorship, and Surveillance:

- **Algorithm control :** The phenomenon where algorithms, rather than humans, set rules, assign tasks, monitor performance, and enforce outcomes. This is especially prominent in digital platforms like Facebook and Instagram but is also spreading to traditional organizations. (Hirsch , Alizadeh, Wiener, & Cram, 2023)

Particularly those under Meta's control such Facebook and Instagram, the digital silencing of Palestinian voices on social media sites is a form of algorithmic censoring. that is consistently in line with more general geopolitical power dynamics. Empirical studies and monitoring by NGOs and journalistic syndicates confirm a constant pattern: the narratives of Palestinian journalists, campaigners, and news outlets are severely constrained. suspended, or prohibited, particularly during times of great battle. Under poorly defined platform rules against incitement or hate speech, these actions are often justified; in reality, they serve to suppress stories that question prevailing political interests. This phenomena spans several platforms, therefore reflecting a crossplatform content control ecology with comparable moderation biases seen on X and others. These platforms become instruments of digital erasure by constantly deleting Palestinian content and punishing its authors, thereby stifling journalistic freedom and political agency while obscuring The facts of occupation from the world's public forum.

- **Cutting off the Internet :** Internet shutdowns intentional disruptions of internet services are increasingly used by governments worldwide to control information, suppress dissent, and limit citizens' rights, especially during periods of conflict or political unrest. Internet shutdowns are often justified by authorities as necessary for national security, but they primarily serve to limit freedom of expression and access to information. (Ryng, Guicherd, Saman, Choudhury, & Kellett, 2022)

Telecommunications in the Gaza Strip have been seriously affected since the October 7, 2023 escalation of violence, with frequent neartotal communication blackouts happening. The failure of phone lines and a nearcomplete cutoff of electricity from The Zionist entity authorities aggravate the widespread devastation of internet and telecoms infrastructure that underlies these failures. Devices critical for communication mobile phones, computers, TVs, radios have been made inoperable without power and restricted generator gasoline, cutting Gaza off from the rest of the world.

III. The online solidarity campaigns for the Palestinian cause:

1. Hashtags: A hashtag is a label for content, created by placing the "#" symbol before a word or phrase (without spaces or special characters, though numbers are allowed if combined with letters). This tag helps users quickly find and aggregate content related to the same topic across social media platforms. A hashtag can be a single word, an acronym, or a series of words, and is used in posts on various social media sites to link discussions, events, feelings, or communities. (Shkvorchenko & Koltsova, 2019)

Hashtags have become a strong instrument for online solidarity efforts on several topics, especially the Palestinian cause, enabling campaigners and supporters to increase their message to mobilize a worldwide audience and fight current media stories. By greatly raising the visibility of their stories, hashtags act as a strong digital weapon for Palestinian advocacy, sometimes challenging prejudices or omissions in mainstream media coverage. This internet awareness motivates real activity by engaging a worldwide audience to support protests, boycotts, and charitable efforts. Moreover, these hashtags encourage a solid feeling of community and group identification among spread followers, therefore allowing them to effectively distribute information and work together to construct a one storyline that shapes global public perception of Palestinian rights.

It should be noted that many hashtags were used to keep up with developments in the Palestinian cause, and many of these hashtags had an impact. The most important of these hashtags will be discussed below:

Table 1: Most popular hashtags on Instagram

Hashtag :	Number of shared posts with hashtag:
#GazaUnderAttack	2.9 M
#FreePalestine	2.7 M
#SaveSheikhJarrah	963 k
#PrayForGaza	548 K

Source: By the author, 30/08/2025

As shown in the table above, these are the most popular hashtags shared in Instagram posts, whether photos or videos, all documenting events in Palestine with the aim of conveying the truth to the world, hashtag campaigns help humanize Palestinians and counter negative stereotypes by sharing personal stories and cultural symbols.

#GazaUnderAttack points to a crisis with significant psychological, environmental, economic, and humanitarian effects. Dealing with these calls for aggressive global action, long-term recovery, and strong social and mental health support networks. The hashtag **#GazaUnderAttack** has been instrumental in raising international awareness of the situation and amplifying the voices of Palestinians. It has mobilized global Particularly on digital activism lets everyday people engage in political events, post real-time updates, and humanize the struggle through personal tales and inventive material. TikTok, X, and Instagram are platforms that have helped to record the extent of damage and human requirements, so raising global awareness of the disaster. (Cervi & Divon, 2023)

#SaveSheikhJarrah turned a small East Jerusalem eviction into a worldwide cause using the hashtag to link local conflicts with worldwide viewers. unprecedented international focus on the Palestinian cause and mobilizing solidarity demonstrations around. This digital campaign helped transnationalize the protest, enabling people from different countries to Participate and spread the message beyond international boundaries. (Daniele & Kelsch, 2024)

The **#SaveSheikhJarrah** hashtag campaigns led to mass participation online and tangible results in the real world, such as global demonstrations and increased media coverage, accompanied by a halt to the eviction of residents from their homes.

2. Change profile picture: Changing one's profile picture on social media is a common form of online solidarity, signaling support for the Palestinian cause and helping to spread awareness. Although largely symbolic, research shows that this action plays an important role in broader digital activism and solidarity movements.

Changing profile pictures on social media is a very easy but highly visible act, and it is a way for individuals to express their solidarity with Palestine. This simple action greatly contributes to raising awareness by keeping the issue prominent in cyberspace and informing the world about the latest developments and current events. Relying on a single profile picture creates a strong sense of community and collective identity.

Although changing your profile picture has a significant impact on visibility and community building, its limitation is that it has little effect or impact on the ground.

3. Boycott : Boycott movements mean to coordinate, educate, and mobilize worldwide action against corporations; boycotts are a notable kind of internet

Slacktivism and the Palestinian Cause: Analyzing Online Solidarity Campaigns——Hana Achour
solidarity with the Palestinian cause. and institutions thought to be assisting in the occupation or targeting of Palestinians.

Among participants, boycotts promote a sense of common identity and purpose that helps to strengthen solidarity and show dedication to justice for Palestinians. Social media helps to magnify this impact by connecting people and companies globally, hence making the movement clear and accessible. (Basir, Sultan, Johanis, & Ibrahim, 2024)

Boycott campaigns were organized against all companies and brands that finance or support Israel. Lists were prepared and shared on all social media platforms. To ensure the success of the campaign, the list included companies from various sectors. For example, in the food sector, the call was to boycott McDonald's, Starbucks, Pizza Hut, Burger King, and all Coca-Cola beverages (AGENCIES, 2024), in the fashion and clothing sector, the call was to boycott Zara, Puma. (Alqatan, 2025).In the technology sector, the companies targeted for boycott were HP, Intel, Google, and Amazon (Fasa, Sukono, & Salih, 2024).

Targeted companies have been shown by boycotting initiatives to suffer severe financial and reputational damage in the near term. The Starbucks example shows this clearly, as its greatest stock drop since its IPO followed boycott campaigns; this 11-day fall amounted to nearly \$12 billion in market value and a sales decline of \$862.3 million in Q1 2024. Like HP, Siemens, AXA, Puma, and Sabra, other big companies have similarly run into major reputational hazards and business changes. (Alqatan, 2025)

Studies show, meanwhile, that although trading volume and erratic returns can vary greatly in the near days after a boycott notice, these stock market consequences usually last for weeks to months and fade without having any long-term effect on pricing. Among the wider company repercussions are changed consumer attitudes, which might result in delayed growth or job losses, and a short rise in market volatility, despite profits. And after the first reaction period, trade volumes usually return to normal. (Avianuari & Hendranastiti, 2025)

4. Donations : It to support the Palestinian cause provides essential humanitarian relief, medical care, food, water, shelter, and education to those affected by the conflict in Gaza and the West Bank. Reputable international and regional organizations offer a variety of secure ways to make donations. These organizations are very active on social media in an effort to reach as many donors as possible.Donating through trusted humanitarian organizations is a powerful and effective way to support the Palestinian cause and Palestinians who are in dire need of this life-saving aid and help in building a future.

Normally sent via two major streams is assistance for Palestine. First are **financial** donations whereby groups accept Islamic charitable giving, like zakat, infaq, and sadaqah; these monies are next used to relieve immediate needs. Needs include food, medicine, and shelter (Abdi Ridha, Ibdalsyah, & Ayuniyyah, 2022). **Material** help is the second; it

Slacktivism and the Palestinian Cause: Analyzing Online Solidarity Campaigns——Hana Achour includes the contribution of basic necessities, including medicine, apparel, and food, frequently gathered through local campaigns and delivered through coordinated military or humanitarian logistics systems (Maghfuroh & Gusnadi, 2024).

Reliable channels and groups that guarantee openness and efficiency distribute donations for Palestine. Essential leading structured campaigns are undertaken by significant Islamic charitable organizations including Qudwah Indonesia, Human Initiative, Rumah Zakat, Dompot Dhuafa, DT Peduli, and BAZNAS. Humanitarian assistance includes medicine, food, infrastructure, and other forms. Through project excellence and straightforward communication, sites like Kitabisa.com draw sponsors and help with online fundraising (Ichsan, Gymnastiar, & Zehra, 2025), by March 2024, GoFundMe alone hosted over 12,000 Gaza-related campaigns, raising a reported \$77 million for evacuation, medical care, food, and other humanitarian relief (Schaer, 2024)

In **Algeria**, the most well-known international non-profit charity is Algerian Baraka Association, which is committed to providing humanitarian and social support to the most vulnerable groups in society through projects and initiatives focused on education, health, and sustainable development. Their activities in support of Palestine include the “Water Supply” and “Orphan Sponsorship” projects. “Food Distribution,” and “Cash Aid” (Association, 2025).

5. Electronic signatures :Many solidarity campaigns for the Palestinian cause include electronic signatures such as internet petitions and digital endorsements as a means to promote worldwide engagement and boost group activity. They offer affordable, expandable means of expressing support, organizing communities, and influencing governments or institutions.

Studies on online petitions supporting Palestine show that shared religious and moral identity and moral outrage against the atrocities of the occupation are the primary motivations behind these petitions calling for Palestinian independence. The credibility of the organizing organization is also a key driving force, underscoring the role that shared legitimacy plays in digital activism (Abdan Shadiqi , Muluk, & Milla, 2020).

These digital petitions provide an easy means of collective action for those who cannot participate in real-world demonstrations, helping to foster global solidarity. They give marginalized voices a louder voice, facilitate public consensus on the issue, and build systems for pressuring organizations. Furthermore, e-petitions support more general digital activism including online protests and social media campaigns by helping to generate sustained momentum and engagement around the Palestinian cause rather than acting in isolation.

IV. Discussion :

After discussing various aspects of digital solidarity with the Palestinian cause, we will attempt to examine the reality of this solidarity by demonstrating the extent to which Slacktivism is effective in changing reality.

Online solidarity campaigns supporting the Palestinian cause are diverse, constantly evolving, and keep pace with developments in the cause. One example is hashtags, with a new hashtag being launched for every new development in the Palestinian cause. The same applies to profile pictures, with a wave of profile pictures being changed to show solidarity with the cause. There are also permanent solidarity campaigns, such as calls to boycott international companies that support the Zionist entity. All of these campaigns, and others mentioned above, have **positive effects**, such as:

- **Creating symbolic international pressure** : directly raising Palestinian voices helps these initiatives to avoid conventional media barriers. Platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and X (Twitter) enable journalists, activists, and regular people living in Gaza and the West Bank to share their reality in real time, unfiltered by editorial bias. This fosters authentic connection and challenges state-sponsored propaganda by letting worldwide audiences hear stories straight from the source, therefore creating a participatory witnessing. This power change is encapsulated in the slogan, “Palestinians are telling us what is happening; we are being asked to listen”.

In turn, this enhancement helps to frame political and media agendas on a global scale. It becomes impossible for mainstream news channels to overlook a subject that is trending worldwide for weeks and produces millions of posts. Often presenting the news from the perspective of the great public anger they are seeing online, they are compelled to cover it. This forces political leaders to face the problem by shifting it from the edge to the center of public debate. The great amount of internet activity indicates that the subject has caught global interest, therefore it warrants fair diplomatic attention internationally.

- **Increasing global awareness of the Palestinian cause** : online solidarity campaigns with the Palestinian cause and various content available on social media help engage diasporic communities and their allies. Infographics, explanatory articles, and short films help clarify difficult topics, such as international law or colonialism, so that viewers around the world can understand and defend them more effectively. As well as being a forum for expression, social media also serves as a tool for political education, empowering individuals to combat misinformation and engage meaningfully in their communities.

Equally important are the emotional and symbolic aspects of these campaigns. Images of bombed-out homes, trapped children, and acts of resistance the visual narrative humanize Palestinians in ways that dispel stereotypes and encourage empathy. This emotional impact motivates more people to show solidarity. By magnifying local voices, bringing people together via viral visibility, educating audiences, and symbolically

pressuring decision-makers, online solidarity efforts overall raise worldwide awareness of the Palestinian cause. They turn digital channels into venues of resistance and solidarity where knowledge is not only spread but also linked to actual acts including protests, petitions, and boycotts.

- **Psychological support for Palestinians:** online solidarity movements offer powerful psychological therapy. Seeing their narratives and symbols, such as the keffiyeh and flags carried by millions everywhere, helps Palestinians overcome the terrible feeling of invisibility and gain a strong sense of psychological recognition that their suffering is acknowledged. Images of large global demonstrations convey a vital message “you are not alone” which helps reduce political isolation by fostering a sense of shared experience. People are a shield against the psychological warfare used by invaders. Furthermore, the ability of Palestinians to record their reality using sites such as TikTok and Instagram transforms them from helpless victims into active agents in their own story. By breaking down the barriers of traditional media, this participatory agency provides a powerful remedy for powerlessness by empowering people through highlighting their reality.

In addition, following various hashtags and spreading them to inform the world about the latest developments in the cause reinforces Palestinians' sense that they are not forgotten. Changing profile pictures also provides them with psychological support, showing them that their cause is a priority for others. All of this increases their hope that their bitter reality will one day change with continued pressure on governments and policies through these solidarity campaigns.

Despite some positive effects resulting from online campaigns in solidarity with the Palestinian cause, unfortunately this solidarity has had limited impact on the ground. Below, we outline **the negative aspects** of this solidarity on several levels.

- **The illusion of change :** Support and solidarity with the Palestinian cause via social media is easy, immediate, and very visible, but it is often limited to actions that require little effort and can be done without deep commitment or sacrifice. These actions include liking, sharing, or signing petitions. Although these actions contribute to raising awareness, they can replace more substantive and effective participation, making participants feel that they have contributed meaningfully. Unfortunately, even when the results in the real world are limited, individuals feel that their activity on social media is “enough.”

This creates an “illusion of change,” meaning that people feel they have made significant progress toward the Palestinian cause, given that the issue receives a lot of attention, is popular, and is discussed enthusiastically on various social media sites. However, the reality is quite different, as killing, destruction, and starvation continue, and there is no tangible change.

- **Short-term interest :** Campaigns in solidarity with the Palestinian cause appear on social media when major events occur, such as escalations in Gaza, high-profile attacks, or controversial political statements. We see hashtags spreading, petitions being signed, and millions participating in sharing supportive content. This immediate attention increases visibility, provides moral support, and attracts international media coverage, raising public awareness of the Palestinian cause.

However, social media is notoriously fickle. Once a particular crisis subsides, online attention often moves on to the next big event. This leads to a decline in interest in the Palestinian cause, making it difficult to maintain pressure on governments and companies in the long term. Consequently, periodic attention can make activism appear reactive rather than strategic and long-term.

- **Limited impact on governments and policies :**

Digital activism informs the international public about developments in the Palestinian cause with the aim of effectively mobilizing it. Solidarity campaigns can spark debate, raise issues from a human rights perspective, and generate global mass protests. However, these efforts rarely translate into sustainable political reforms. This is because most governments seek to maintain diplomatic relations and prioritize security. The pressure generated by digital solidarity for the Palestinian cause cannot be denied, especially in terms of political discourse, which creates symbolic pressure, but changing policy remains difficult to achieve.

As conclusion, online solidarity often produces moral visibility but not political leverage. The risk is that millions of shares and hashtags may create an illusion of massive influence, while policymakers perceive little tangible cost to ignoring these voices.

- **Over-simplification of events in Palestine :**

Online solidarity campaigns supporting the Palestinian cause often contribute to simplifying events in Palestine, making them more accessible and engaging to audiences around the world. Hashtags such as #FreePalestine or #SaveGaza condense decades of political and historical struggle into quick, emotionally charged slogans. While these terms are good at grabbing the public's attention, they overlook many of the complexities surrounding issues such as occupation and settlement expansion or the legal systems of international law.

Relying on dramatic images is another form of simplification. Viral posts often feature striking images of destruction, wounded people, and children who have fallen victim to violence. While these images elicit sympathy and outrage, they highlight immediate crises rather than the long-term systemic realities of the Palestinian struggle, such as daily life under systemic displacement, economic restrictions, or checkpoints. This event-driven

Slackivism and the Palestinian Cause: Analyzing Online Solidarity Campaigns——Hana Achour
framing gives the impression that Palestine only suffers during periods of high visibility, obscuring ongoing oppression.

Campaigns often adopt binary narratives such as “victims versus oppressors” or “good versus evil.” While this moral clarity connects with audiences everywhere, it typically ignores internal Palestinian dynamics, regional politics, or the role played by international organizations. By condensing complex historical and legal ideas into simple, visually appealing materials, infographics and memes further reinforce this simplification. While these tools are useful for mass communication, they carry the risk of distorting or omitting important context.

Finally, the very structure of social media platforms promotes simplicity. Because algorithms favor concise, visual, and emotional material that can spread quickly, activists and supporters are forced to compress complex facts into easily digestible formats. This highlights a paradox: to reach millions online, the struggle is communicated through symbols. Moreover, it makes the Palestinian cause highly visible in global discussions. Emotions rather than thorough investigation.

CONCLUSION

Through this study, we seek to explore the effectiveness of online solidarity campaigns with the Palestinian cause, a dynamic referred to as passive activism. After analyzing many manifestations of this digital solidarity, we have concluded that some solidarity campaigns have been successful in amplifying Palestinian voices by mobilizing global public opinion, which in turn has exerted symbolic pressure on governments and institutions. The most important solidarity campaigns with the Palestinian cause on social media sites have been the large participation in numerous hashtags expressing the current events in Palestine. Thanks to these hashtags, global awareness has increased, accompanied by recognition of the injustice being practiced, as well as increased moral and, in some cases, material support for the Palestinian cause. We find that online activity has played an important role in reshaping global narratives about Palestine and challenging prevailing media representations.

On the other hand, through this analysis, we have noted the limitations of virtual activity. The ease of participation, such as sharing a post, liking a video, or retweeting a hashtag, gives a sense of satisfaction and that this is enough, and thus the impact remains symbolic and fails to bring about change in policies on the ground. Furthermore, the repetitive cycle of online mobilization is followed by a rapid decline in interest and a high likelihood of fake news being spread.

Despite these challenges, virtual activism cannot be completely ruled out, as its symbolic value lies in keeping the Palestinian cause present in global consciousness and promoting a sense of global community. The challenge now is to find the right approach

Slacktivism and the Palestinian Cause: Analyzing Online Solidarity Campaigns——Hana Achour
to bridge the gap between symbolic online actions and concrete offline initiatives, with the aim of translating symbolic solidarity into reality in order to bring about the necessary changes in policy.

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