**Al Jazeera**

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*This article is about the TV network and channel. For the English-language channel, see* [*Al Jazeera English*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al_Jazeera_English)*. For the unrelated magazine, see* [*Aljazeera Publishing*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aljazeera_Publishing) *and* [*aljazeera.com*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aljazeera.com)*. For other uses, see* [*Jazira*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jazira_%28disambiguation%29)*.*

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| Al Jazeera |
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| **Type** | [Satellite](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Satellite_television) [television network](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Television_network) |
| **Country** | [Qatar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qatar) |
| **First air date** | 1 November 1996 |
| **Availability** | Worldwide |
| **Headquarters** | [Doha](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Doha), [Qatar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qatar) |
| **Owner** | [Sheikh](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sheikh) [Hamad bin Thamer Al Thani](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hamad_bin_Thamer_Al_Thani) ([Qatar Media Corporation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qatar_Media_Corporation))  |
| **Key people** | Sheikh [Hamad bin Thamer Al Thani](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hamad_bin_Thamer_Al_Thani), ChairmanSheikh Ahmad bin Jassim al-Thani, Director-GeneralMustafa Souag, Arabic Channel's Director of the News (Editor-in-chief) |
| **Established** | 1 November 1996 |
| **Launch date** | 1 November 1996 |
| **Official website** | [www.aljazeera.net](http://www.aljazeera.net/) |

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| **Aljazeera Satellite Channel** |
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| **Launched** | 1 November 1996 |
| **Owned by** | Al Jazeera |
| **Country** | [Qatar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qatar) |
| **Broadcast area** | [Qatar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qatar) |
| **Headquarters** | [Doha](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Doha), [Qatar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qatar) |

**Al Jazeera** ([Arabic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabic_language): الجزيرة‎ *al-ǧazīrah* IPA: [[æl dʒæˈziːrɐ]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3AIPA_for_Arabic), literally "The Island", abbreviating "[The [Arabian] Peninsula](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabian_Peninsula)") (also **Aljazeera** or **JSC** [Jazeera Satellite Channel]) is an independent broadcaster owned by the state of [Qatar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qatar) through the [Qatar Media Corporation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qatar_Media_Corporation) and [headquartered](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Headquarter) in [Doha](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Doha), [Qatar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qatar). Initially launched as an Arabic news and [current affairs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Current_affairs_%28news_format%29) [satellite TV](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Satellite_TV) channel, Al Jazeera has since expanded into a network with several outlets, including the Internet and [specialty](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Specialty_channel) [TV channels](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Television_channel) in multiple languages. Al Jazeera is accessible in several world regions.

The original Al Jazeera channel's willingness to broadcast dissenting views, for example on [call-in](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phone_in) shows, created controversies in the [Arab states of the Persian Gulf](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arab_states_of_the_Persian_Gulf). The station gained worldwide attention following the [September 11, 2001 attacks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/September_11%2C_2001_attacks), when it was the only channel to cover the [war in Afghanistan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War_in_Afghanistan_%282001%E2%80%93present%29) live from its office there. It has also recently been acclaimed for its in-depth coverage of the [Arab Spring](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arab_Spring) protests and revolutions.

**Etymology**

In [Arabic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabic_language), *al-ǧazīrah* literally means "the island". However, it refers hereto the "(Arabian) **peninsula**" which is **شبه الجزيرة** العربية ***šibh al-ğazīrah*** *al-ʿarabiyyah*, [Arabian Peninsula](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabian_Peninsula), abbreviated **الجزيرة** العربية ***al-ğazīrah*** *al-ʿarabiyyah*, literally means *the Arabian* ***island***, شبه *šibh* literally means "similarity/likeness".

**History**

**Launch**

Al Jazeera Satellite Channel was launched on 1 November 1996 following the closure of the BBC's [Arabic language](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabic_language) television station, a joint venture with Orbit Communications Corporation, owned by Saudi King Fahd's cousin, Prince Khaled. It had fallen apart after a year and a half when the Saudi government attempted to kill a documentary on executions under sharia law.

The [Emir of Qatar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_emirs_of_Qatar), [Sheikh](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sheikh) [Hamad bin Khalifa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hamad_bin_Khalifa), provided a loan of QAR 500 million ($137 million) to sustain Al Jazeera through its first five years, as Hugh Miles detailed in his book Al Jazeera *The Inside Story of the Arab News Channel That Is Challenging the West*. Shares were held by private investors as well as the [Qatar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qatar) government.

Prior to Al Jazeera, even before he deposed his father the previous year, the Emir had been contemplating a satellite channel. A free press complemented his vision of the emirate as a center of commercial development and progress.

[Sheikh](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sheikh) [Hamad bin Thamir Al Thani](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hamad_bin_Thamir_Al_Thani), previously Qatar's Deputy Minister of Information, was chairman of the enterprise, although Al Jazeera maintained [editorial independence](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Editorial_independence). It was hoped the channel would break even in five years through sales of advertising, news feeds and programs, as well as equipment rental. Much of the staff came from the 250 journalists displaced by the closure of [BBC Arabic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BBC_Arabic).

Al Jazeera's first day on the air was 1 November 1996. It offered [6-hours](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Six-hour_clock) of programming per day; this would increase to [12-hours](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/12-hour_clock) by the end of 1997. It was broadcast to the immediate neighborhood as a terrestrial signal, on cable, as well as through satellites (which was also free to users in the Arab world). Ironically [Qatar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qatar), like many other Arab countries, barred private individuals from having satellite dishes until 2001.

At the time of Al Jazeera's launch, [Arabsat](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabsat) was the only satellite broadcasting to the [Middle East](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middle_East), and for the first year could only offer Al Jazeera a weak [Ku-band](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ku-band) transponder that needed a large satellite dish for reception. A more powerful C-band transponder became available after its user, [Canal France International](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Canal_France_International&action=edit&redlink=1), accidentally beamed 30 minutes of pornography into ultraconservative [Saudi Arabia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saudi_Arabia).

Al Jazeera was not the first such broadcaster in the [Middle East](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middle_East); a number had appeared since the [Arabsat](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabsat) satellite, a [Saudi Arabia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saudi_Arabia)-based venture of 21 Arab governments, took orbit in 1985. The unfolding of [Operation Desert Storm](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Desert_Storm) on [CNN International](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/CNN_International) underscored the power of live television in current events. While other local broadcasters in the region would assiduously avoid material embarrassing to their home governments ([Qatar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qatar) had its own official TV station as well), Al Jazeera was pitched as an impartial news source and platform for discussing issues relating to the Arab world.

In presenting "The opinion and the other opinion" to which the [Arabic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabic_language) script in the network's logo refers, it did not take long for Al Jazeera to shock local viewers by presenting the [Israeli](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli_language) speaking [Hebrew](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hebrew_language) on [Arab TV](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arab_Radio_and_Television_Network) for the first time. Lively and far-ranging talk shows, particularly a popular, confrontational one called The Opposite Direction, were a constant source of controversy regarding issues of morality and religion. This prompted a torrent of criticism from the conservative voices among the region's press. It also led to official complaints and censures from neighboring governments. Some jammed Al Jazeera's terrestrial broadcast or booted its correspondents. In 1999, the Algerian government reportedly cut power to several major cities to censor one broadcast. There were also commercial repercussions; [Saudi Arabia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saudi_Arabia) reportedly pressured advertisers to avoid the channel, to great effect. Al Jazeera was also becoming a favorite sounding board for militant groups such as Hamas and Chechen separatists.

Al Jazeera was the only international news network to have correspondents in Iraq during the **Operation Desert Fox** bombing campaign in 1998. In a precursor of a pattern to follow, its exclusive video clips were highly prized by [Western](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_culture) media.

**Around the clock**

[Al Jazeera English](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al_Jazeera_English) newsroom

1 January 1999 was Al Jazeera's first day of [24-hour](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/24-hour_clock) broadcasting. Employment had more than tripled in one year to 500 employees, and the agency had bureaus at a dozen sites as far as [EU](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/EU) and [Russia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russia). Its annual budget was estimated at about $25 million at the time.

However controversial, Al Jazeera was rapidly becoming one of the most influential news agencies in the region. Eager for news beyond the official versions of events, Arabs became dedicated viewers. A 2000 estimate pegged nightly viewership at 35 million, ranking Al Jazeera first in the Arab world, over the [Saudi Arabia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saudi_Arabia)-sponsored [Middle East Broadcasting Centre](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middle_East_Broadcasting_Centre) (MBC) and [London](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London)'s [Arab News Network](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arab_News_Network) (ANN). There were about 70 satellite or terrestrial channels being broadcast to the [Middle East](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middle_East), most of them in [Arabic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabian_language). Al Jazeera launched a free [Arabic language](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabic_language) web site in January 2001. In addition, the TV feed was soon available in [United Kingdom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Kingdom) for the first time via [British Sky Broadcasting](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Sky_Broadcasting).

**Post-9/11**

Al Jazeera came to the attention of many in the West during the hunt for [Osama bin Laden](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Osama_bin_Laden) after the [11 September 2001](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/September_11%2C_2001_attacks) terrorist attacks on the [United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States). The station aired videos it received from [Osama bin Laden](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Osama_bin_Laden) and the [Taliban](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taliban), deeming new footage of the world's most wanted fugitives to be newsworthy. Some criticized the network, however, for giving a voice to terrorists. Al Jazeera's [Washington, D.C.](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Washington%2C_D.C.) bureau chief compared the situation to that of the [Unabomber](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unabomber)'s messages in [The New York Times](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_New_York_Times). The network said it had been given the tapes merely because it had a large Arab audience.

The rest of the world's television networks were eager to acquire the same footage. [CNN International](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/CNN_International) had exclusive rights for six hours before other networks could broadcast it (a provision that was broken by the others on at least one controversial occasion). Prime Minister [Tony Blair](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tony_Blair) soon appeared on an Al Jazeera talk show to state Britain's case for pursuing the [Taliban](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taliban) into [Afghanistan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afghanistan).

Al Jazeera's prominence was heightened during the war in Afghanistan since it had opened a bureau in [Kabul](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kabul) before [9/11](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/September_11_attacks). This gave it better video than the others scrambling to cover the invasion, clips that sold for as much as $250,000. The [Kabul](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kabul) office was destroyed, however, by [United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States) bombs in 2001. Looking to stay ahead of the future conflicts Al Jazeera then opened bureaus in other trouble spots.

The network remained dependent on government support in 2002, having a budget of $40 million and ad revenues of about $8 million. It also took in fees for sharing its news feed with other networks. It was estimated to have up to roughly 45 million viewers around the world. Al Jazeera soon had to contend with a new rival, Al-Arabiya, an offshoot of the MBC, set up in nearby Dubai with generous Saudi backing.

**2003 Iraq War**

Before and during the [United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States)-led invasion of [Iraq](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iraq), where Al Jazeera had a presence since 1997, the network's facilities and footage were again highly sought by international networks. The channel and its web site also were seeing unprecedented attention from viewers looking for alternatives to **Embedded** reporting and military press conferences.

Al Jazeera moved its sports coverage to a new, separate channel in 1 November 2003, allowing for more news and public affairs programming on the other one. An [English language](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_language) web site had launched earlier in the year. The channel had about 1,300 to 1,400 employees, its newsroom editor told [The New York Times](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_New_York_Times). There were 23 bureaus around the world and 70 foreign correspondents, with 450 journalists in all.

On 1 April 2003, a [United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States) plane fired on Al Jazeera's [Baghdad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baghdad) bureau, killing reporter Tareq Ayyoub. The attack was called a mistake.

**Al Jazeera English**

Al Jazeera launched an [English language](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_language) channel, originally called **Al Jazeera International**, in 2006. Among its staff were journalists hired from [ABC](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Broadcasting_Company)'s [Nightline](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nightline) and other top news outfits. Josh Rushing, a former media handler for Cent COMM during the [Iraq](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iraq) war, agreed to provide commentary; [Sir David Frost](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sir_David_Frost) was also on board. In an interesting technical feat, the broadcast of the new operation was handed off between bases in [Doha](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Doha), [London](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London), [Washington, D.C.](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Washington%2C_D.C.), and [Kuala Lumpur](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kuala_Lumpur) on a daily cycle.

The new [English language](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_language) venture faced considerable regulatory and commercial hurdles in the [North America](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_America) market for its perceived sympathy with extremist causes. At the same time, others felt Al Jazeera's competitive advantage lay in programming in the [Arabic language](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabic_language). There were hundreds of millions of potential viewers among the non-[Arabic language](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabic_language) speaking Muslims in [Europe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Europe) and [Asia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asia), however, and many others who might be interested in seeing news from the [Middle East](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middle_East) read by local voices. If the venture panned out, it would extend the influence of Al Jazeera, and tiny [Qatar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qatar), beyond even what had been achieved in the station's first decade. In an interesting twist of fate, the [BBC World Service](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BBC_World_Service) was preparing to launch its own [Arabic language](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabic_language) station in 2007.

**Organization**

The original Al Jazeera channel was started in 1 November 1996 by an [emiri decree](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Decree) with a loan of 500 million [Qatari riyals](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qatari_riyal) ([US$](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_dollar)137 million) from the [Emir of Qatar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_emirs_of_Qatar), [Sheikh](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sheikh) [Hamad bin Khalifa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hamad_bin_Khalifa). By its funding through loans or grants rather than direct government subsidies, the channel claims to maintain independent editorial policy. The channel began broadcasting in late 1996, with many staff joining from the [BBC World Service](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BBC_World_Service)'s [Saudi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saudi_Arabia)-co-owned [Arabic language](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabic_language) TV station, which had shut down in 1 April 1996 after two years of operation because of [censorship](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Censorship) demands by the [Saudi Arabian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saudi_Arabia) government.

Following the initial grant from the Emir of Qatar, Al Jazeera had aimed to become self-sufficient through advertising by 2001, but when this failed to occur, the Emir agreed to several consecutive loans on a year-by-year basis (US$30 million in 2004, according to [Arnaud de Borchgrave](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arnaud_de_Borchgrave)). Other major sources of income include advertising, cable subscription fees, broadcasting deals with other companies, and sale of footage. In 2000, advertising accounted for 40% of the station's revenue.

The Al Jazeera [logo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Logo) is a decorative representation of the network's name written using [Arabic calligraphy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_calligraphy). It was selected by the station's founder, Emir of Qatar Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa, as the winning entry in a design competition.

**Staff**

[Wadah Khanfar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wadah_Khanfar), Former Director General of the Al Jazeera Network

The Chairman of Al Jazeera is Sheikh [Hamad bin Thamer Al Thani](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hamad_bin_Thamer_Al_Thani), a distant cousin of [Qatari](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qatar) Emir Sheikh [Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hamad_bin_Khalifa).

Al Jazeera restructured its operations to form a Network that contains all their different channels. [Wadah Khanfar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wadah_Khanfar), then the managing director of the Arabic Channel, was appointed as the Director General of the Al Jazeera Network. He also acted as the Managing Director of the Arabic channel. Khanfar resigned on the 20th Sep 2011 proclaiming that he had achieved his original goals, and that 8 years was enough time for any leader of an organization, in an interview aired on Aljazeera English.

The Editor-in-Chief of the Arabic website is [Mustafa Soug](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Mustafa_Soug&action=edit&redlink=1) who replaced [Ahmed Sheikh](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ahmed_Sheikh). It has more than 100 editorial staff. The managing director of Al Jazeera English is Al Anstey. The Editor-in-Chief of the English-language site is [Mohamed Nanabhay](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Mohamed_Nanabhay&action=edit&redlink=1) who has run the site since 2009. Previous editors have included Beat Witschi and Russell Merryman.

Prominent on-air personalities include [Faisal al-Qassem](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Faisal_al-Qassem), host of the talk show *The Opposite Direction*, Ahmed Mansour, host of the show *Unlimited (bi-la hudud)* and Sami Haddad.

**Reach**

Many governments in the Middle East deploy state-run media or government censorship to impact local media coverage and public opinion, leading to international objections regarding press freedom and biased media coverage. Many people see Al Jazeera as a more trustworthy source of information than government and foreign channels. Some scholars and commentators use the notion of [*contextual objectivity*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Contextual_objectivity), which highlights the tension between objectivity and audience appeal, to describe the station's controversial yet popular news approach.

Increasingly, Al Jazeera's exclusive interviews and other footage are being rebroadcast in American, British, and other western media outlets such as [CNN](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/CNN) and the [BBC](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BBC). In January 2003, the BBC announced that it had signed an agreement with Al Jazeera for sharing facilities and information, including news footage.

Al Jazeera's availability (via satellite) throughout the Middle East changed the television landscape of the region. Prior to the arrival of Al Jazeera, many Middle Eastern citizens were unable to watch TV channels other than state-controlled national TV stations. Al Jazeera introduced a level of [freedom of speech](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freedom_of_speech) on TV that was previously unheard of in many of these countries. Al Jazeera presented controversial views regarding the governments of many Gulf Arab states, including [Saudi Arabia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saudi_Arabia), [Kuwait](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kuwait), [Bahrain](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bahrain) and Qatar; it also presented controversial views about [Syria](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syria)'s relationship with [Lebanon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lebanon), and the Egyptian judiciary. Critics accused Al Jazeera of sensationalism in order to increase its audience share.

Al Jazeera's broadcasts have sometimes resulted in drastic action: for example, when, on 27 January 1999, critics of the Algerian government appeared on the channel's live program *El-Itidjah el-Mouakass* ("The Opposite Direction"), the Algerian government cut the electricity supply to large parts of the capital Algiers (and allegedly also to large parts of the country), to prevent the program from being seen. At that time, Al Jazeera was not yet generally known in the [Western world](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_world), but where it was known, opinion was often favorable and Al Jazeera claimed to be the only [politically](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politics) independent television station in the [Middle East](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middle_East). However, it was not until late 2001 that Al Jazeera achieved worldwide recognition, when it broadcast video statements by [al-Qaeda](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Qaeda) leaders.

Some observers have argued that Al Jazeera has formidable authority as an opinion-maker. Noah Bonsey and Jeb Koogler, for example, writing in the [Columbia Journalism Review](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Columbia_Journalism_Review), argue that the way in which the station covers any future Israeli-Palestinian peace deal could well determine whether or not that deal is actually accepted by the Palestinian public.

The channel’s tremendous popularity has also, for better or worse, made it a shaper of public opinion. Its coverage often determines what becomes a story and what does not, as well as how Arab viewers think about issues. Whether in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, or Syria, the stories highlighted and the criticisms aired by guests on Al Jazeera’s news programs have often significantly affected the course of events in the region.

In Palestine, the station’s influence is particularly strong. Recent polling indicates that in the West Bank and Gaza, Al Jazeera is the primary news source for an astounding 53.4 percent of Palestinian viewers. The second and third most watched channels, Palestine TV and Al Arabiya, poll a distant 12.8 percent and 10 percent, respectively. The result of Al Jazeera’s market dominance is that it has itself become a mover and shaker in Palestinian politics, helping to craft public perceptions and influence the debate. This has obvious implications for the peace process: how Al Jazeera covers the deliberations and the outcome of any negotiated agreement with Israel will fundamentally shape how it is viewed—and, more importantly, whether it is accepted—by the Palestinian public.

Al Jazeera's broad availability in the Arab world "operating with less constraint than almost any other Arab outlet, and remaining the most popular channel in the region", has been perceived as playing a part in the [2010–2011 Middle East and North Africa protests](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2010%E2%80%932011_Middle_East_and_North_Africa_protests), including the [Tunisian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2010%E2%80%932011_Tunisian_revolution) and [Egyptian revolutions](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2011_Egyptian_revolution). The [*New York Times*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_York_Times) stated in January 2011: "The protests rocking the Arab world this week have one thread uniting them: Al Jazeera, whose aggressive coverage has helped propel insurgent emotions from one capital to the next". The newspaper quoted Marc Lynch, a professor of Middle East Studies at [George Washington University](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Washington_University): “They did not cause these events, but it’s almost impossible to imagine all this happening without Al Jazeera”.

**Expansion outside the Middle East**

Main article: [Al Jazeera English](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al_Jazeera_English)

In 2003, Al Jazeera hired its first English-language journalists, among whom was [Afshin Rattansi](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Afshin_Rattansi&action=edit&redlink=1), from the BBC's [Today Program](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Today_Programme).

In March 2003, it launched an English-language website (see [below](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al_Jazeera#On_the_Web#On_the_Web)).

On 4 July 2005 Al Jazeera officially announced plans to launch a new English-language satellite service to be called [Al Jazeera International](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al_Jazeera_International). The new channel started at 12h [GMT](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/GMT) on 15 November 2006 under the name [Al Jazeera English](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al_Jazeera_English) and has broadcast centers in [Doha](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Doha) (next to the original Al Jazeera headquarters and broadcast center), [London](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London), [Kuala Lumpur](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kuala_Lumpur) and [Washington D.C.](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Washington_D.C.) The channel is a 24-hour, 7-days-a-week news channel, with 12 hours broadcast from Doha, and four hours each from London, Kuala Lumpur, and [Washington D.C.](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Washington_D.C.)

With Al Jazeera's growing global outreach and influence, some scholars including [Adel Iskandar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adel_Iskandar) have described the station as a transformation of the very definition of "[alternative media](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alternative_media)."

As of 2007, the Arabic Al Jazeera channel rivals the BBC in worldwide audiences with an estimated 40 to 50 million viewers. [Al Jazeera English](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al_Jazeera_English) has an estimated reach of around 100 million households.

On 26 November 2009, Al Jazeera English received approval from the CRTC, which enables Al Jazeera English to broadcast via satellite in Canada.

On 22 September 2010, Al Jazeera purchased a broadcasting station in [Sarajevo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sarajevo), [Bosnia and Herzegovina](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bosnia_and_Herzegovina) and is set to begin broadcasting on November 1st 2011.

On 11 February 2011, the [Turkish](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turkey) government approved the sale of the TV channel "[Cine5](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cine5)" to Al-Jazeera. Cine5 television station has been administered by a government-run fund since its owner's business ran into economic trouble. Al-Jazeera paid USD$40.5 million for Cine5 TV channel in an auction. Al Jazeera said it planned to launch a news channel in Turkey.

**Availability**

The original Al Jazeera channel is available worldwide through various satellite and cable systems.

In the [United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States), Al Jazeera English is available through [free to air](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Free_to_air) [DVB-S](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/DVB-S) on the [Galaxy 19](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Galaxy_19) (and [Galaxy 23](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Galaxy_23) C-band) satellites. However, Al Jazeera English is unavailable to cable viewers in the US, with the exception of those in [Toledo, Ohio](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toledo%2C_Ohio); [Burlington, Vermont](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burlington%2C_Vermont); Washington State and [Washington, D.C.](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Washington%2C_D.C.). Many analysts consider this to be effectively a "black out". An Al Jazeera spokesperson confirmed a scheduled meeting with the large cable company Comcast, but as yet there has been no indication of the news network being made available to Comcast subscribers.

In contrast, in the [United Kingdom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Kingdom), Al Jazeera English is available on the [Sky](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sky_%28UK_%26_Ireland%29) and [Freesat](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freesat) satellite platforms, as well as the standard terrestrial service (branded [Freeview](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freeview_%28UK%29)), thus making it available to the vast majority of UK households.

Al Jazeera can also be freely viewed with a DVB-S receiver in Europe, [Northern Africa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northern_Africa) and the [Middle East](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middle_East) as it is broadcast on the [Astra 1M](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SES_Astra), [Hot Bird 6](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hot_Bird_6), [Eutelsat W2](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eutelsat_W2)A, [Badr 4](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabsat), [Turksat 2A](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turksat_2A), [Thor 6](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thor_6), [Nilesat 102](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nilesat_102), [Hispasat 1C](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hispasat_1C) and [Eurobird 1](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eurobird_1) satellites. The [Optus C1](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Optus_C1) satellite in [Australia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Australia) carries the channel for free.

For availability info of the Al Jazeera network's other TV channels, see their respective articles. Segments of Al Jazeera English are uploaded to [YouTube](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/YouTube).

It is also possible to watch Al Jazeera English over the internet from their official website. The low-resolution version is available free of charge, while the high-resolution version is available under subscription fees through partner sites. In some countries that do not regularly offer Al Jazeera English through satellite or cable, the availability of internet video streaming receiver boxes, like those sold by [Roku](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roku) in the United States, offer the low-resolution stream without the use of a computer.

Al Jazeera's English division has also partnered with [Livestation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Livestation) for Internet-based broadcasting. This enables viewers to watch Al Jazeera English and Al Jazeera live worldwide.

Al Jazeera is available in [Canada](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canada) on Bell Express Vu Channel 516, as part of the package "International News I." Al Jazeera is available on [Rogers Cable](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rogers_Cable) individually. Al Jazeera is also available on Shaw Cable TV Channel 513, as part of the package "Multicultural" Free preview until Mar. 8, 2011

**On the Web**

Al Jazeera's web-based service is accessible subscription-free throughout the world. The station launched an [English-language edition](http://english.aljazeera.net/) of its online content in March 2003. This English language website was relaunched on 15 November 2006, along with the launch of [Al Jazeera English](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al_Jazeera_English). The English and Arabic sections are editorially distinct, with their own selection of news and comment. Al Jazeera and Al Jazeera English are streamed live on the official site, as well as on [YouTube](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/YouTube). On 13 April 2009, Al Jazeera launched condensed versions of its English and Arabic sites for mobile device users.

The Arabic version of the site was brought offline for about 10 hours by an [FBI](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/FBI) raid on its ISP, [InfoCom Corporation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/InfoCom_Corporation), on 5 September 2001. InfoCom was later convicted of exporting to [Libya](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Libya) and [Syria](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syria), of knowingly being invested in by a [Hamas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hamas) member (both of which are illegal in the United States), and of underpaying customs duties.

**Web host changes**

The English-language site was forced to change [internet hosting providers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web_host) several times, due, in Al Jazeera's opinion, to political pressure. Initially, hosting for the English-language site was provided by the U.S.-based company [DataPipe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/DataPipe), which gave Al Jazeera notice, soon followed by [Akamai Technologies](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Akamai_Technologies). Al Jazeera later shifted to the French branch of [NavLink](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=NavLink&action=edit&redlink=1), and then to (the current host) [AT&T](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AT%26T) [WorldNet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/WorldNet) Services.

**Internet TV Appliances**

On 1 February 2011, Internet Appliance [Roku](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roku), had posted on its Facebook page that the English-Language Al Jazeera Live, would be streaming on its Roku devices through a private channel called Newscaster and also through the BBC channel. It permitted the announcement following an unrest in Egypt so American viewers can watch the latest events going on in the middle east. A Roku user must add the private channel Newscaster by going to Roku. Roku is used to stream [Netflix](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Netflix) and [Hulu](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hulu) content as well as many other private channels.

An Al Jazeera site designed specifically for [Google TV](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Google_TV) exists, featured under the "Spotlight" section of the operating system.

Free Android market app offers free 24/7 live streaming of Al Jazeera in English and in Arabic.

**Creative Commons**

On 13 January 2009, Al Jazeera released some of its broadcast quality footage from Gaza under a Creative Commons license. Contrary to business "All Rights Reserved" standards, the license invites third parties, including rival broadcasters, to reuse and remix the footage, so long as Al Jazeera is credited. The videos are hosted on [blip.tv](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blip.tv), which allows easy downloading and integration with [Miro](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miro_%28software%29).

**Citizen journalism**

Al Jazeera accepts user-submitted photos and videos about news events through a **Your Media** page, and this content may be featured on the website or in broadcasts.

Al Jazeera used the [Ushahidi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ushahidi) platform to collect information and reports about the [Gaza War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaza_War), through [Twitter](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twitter), [SMS](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SMS) and the website.

**Plans**

Future projects in other languages include [Al Jazeera Urdu](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al_Jazeera_Urdu), an [Urdu](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Urdu) language channel to cater mainly to [Pakistanis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pakistan), as well as a Kiswahili service called [Al Jazeera Kiswahili](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Al_Jazeera_Kiswahili&action=edit&redlink=1) to be based in Nairobi and broadcast in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi.

Al Jazeera has been preparing to launch a [Turkish language](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turkish_language) news channel. On 10 February, Al Jazeera acquired Turkey's [Cine 5](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cine_5) television channel.

Al Jazeera will launch its [Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian) news channel from [Sarajevo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sarajevo), [Bosnia and Herzegovina](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bosnia_and_Herzegovina) in the second half of 2011. It will cover the [Balkan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Balkan) states of [Bosnia and Hercegovina](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bosnia_and_Hercegovina), [Serbia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Serbia), [Croatia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Croatia) and [Montenegro](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Montenegro), plus the surrounding [Balkan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Balkan) states.

Al Jazeera has also been reported to be planning to launch an international newspaper.

Al Jazeera Arabic began using a [chroma key](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chroma_key) studio on 13 September 2009. Similar to [Sky News](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sky_News), Al Jazeera broadcast from that studio while the channels main newsroom was given a new look. The channel relaunched, with new graphics and music along with a new studio, on 1 November 2009, the 13th birthday of the channel.

**Attacks on and censorship of Al Jazeera**

**Algeria**

On 27 January 1999, several Algerian cities lost power simultaneously, reportedly to keep residents from watching a program in which Algerian dissidents implicated the Algerian military in a series of massacres.

On 4 July 2004, the Algerian government froze the activities of Al Jazeera's Algerian correspondent. The official reason given was that a reorganization of the work of foreign correspondents was in progress. The international pressure group [Reporters Without Borders](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reporters_Without_Borders) says, however, that the measure was really taken in reprisal for a broadcast the previous week of another *Al-Itijah al-Mouakiss* debate on the political situation in Algeria.

**Palestinian Territories**

On 15 July 2009, the [Palestinian National Authority](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palestinian_National_Authority) closed down Al Jazeera's offices in the West Bank, apparently in response to claims made on the channel by [Farouk Kaddoumi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Farouk_Kaddoumi) that PA President [Mahmoud Abbas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahmoud_Abbas) had been involved in the death of [Yasser Arafat](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yasser_Arafat). In a statement announcing the decision, the Palestinian Information Ministry said the station's coverage was "unbalanced" and accused it of incitement against the PLO and the PA.

On 19 July 2009, President Abbas rescinded the ban and allowed Al Jazeera to resume operations.

**United States**

On 13 November 2001, during the [U.S. invasion of Afghanistan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War_in_Afghanistan_%282001%E2%80%93present%29), a U.S. missile strike destroyed Al Jazeera's office in [Kabul](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kabul). There were no casualties.

According to [Glenn Greenwald](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glenn_Greenwald), Al Jazeera is "constantly demonized in the American media." When Al Jazeera reported events featuring very graphic footage from inside Iraq, Al Jazeera was decried as anti-American and as inciting violence because it reported on issues concerning national security.

Examples of censorship in the U.S. came shortly after the start of the invasion. On Monday, 24 March 2003, two Al Jazeera reporters covering the [New York Stock Exchange](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_York_Stock_Exchange) (NYSE) had their credentials revoked. The [New York Stock Exchange](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_York_Stock_Exchange) banned Al Jazeera (as well as several other news organizations whose identities were not revealed) from its trading floor indefinitely. NYSE spokesman Ray Pellechia claimed "security reasons" and that the exchange had decided to give access only to networks that focus "on responsible business coverage". He denied the revocation has anything to do with the network's [Iraq](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iraq) war coverage. However, Robert Zito, the exchange's executive vice president for communications, indicated that Al Jazeera's graphic footage broadcast on Sunday, 22 March 2003, led him to oust Al Jazeera. The move was quickly mirrored by [NASDAQ](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NASDAQ) stock market officials. The NYSE ban was rescinded a few months later.

In addition, [Akamai Technologies](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Akamai_Technologies), a U.S. company whose founder was killed in 9/11, canceled a contract to provide web services for Al Jazeera’s English language website.

**Death of Tareq Ayyoub**

Main article: [Tareq Ayyoub](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tareq_Ayyoub)

On 8 April 2003, Al Jazeera's office in [Baghdad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baghdad) was hit by a missile, killing reporter [Tareq Ayyoub](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tareq_Ayyoub) and wounding another. Al Jazeera reports that it had mailed coordinates for their office to the U.S. State Department six weeks earlier and that these should have clearly identified their location. Dima Tareq Tahboub, the widow of Tareq Ayyoub, continues as of 2003[[update]](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Al_Jazeera&action=edit) to denounce her husband's death and has among other things written for [*The Guardian*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Guardian) and participated in a documentary broadcast on [Al Jazeera English](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al_Jazeera_English).

On 30 January 2005, [*The New York Times*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_New_York_Times) reported that the [Qatari](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qatar) government, under pressure from the [Bush](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_W._Bush) administration, was speeding up plans to sell the station. However, as of 2011, the station/network has not been sold and it is unclear whether there are still any plans to do so.

**Al Jazeera bombing memo**

Main article: [Al Jazeera bombing memo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al_Jazeera_bombing_memo)

*Also see* [*O'Connor - Keogh official secrets trial*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/O%27Connor_-_Keogh_official_secrets_trial).

On 22 November 2005, the UK [tabloid](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tabloid_%28newspaper_format%29) [*The Daily Mirror*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Daily_Mirror) published a story claiming that it had obtained a leaked memo from [10 Downing Street](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/10_Downing_Street) saying that former [U.S. President](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/U.S._President) [George W. Bush](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_W._Bush) had considered bombing Al Jazeera's Doha headquarters in April 2004, when [United States Marines](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Marines) were conducting a contentious assault on [Fallujah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fallujah).

In light of this allegation, Al Jazeera has questioned whether it has been targeted deliberately in the past — Al Jazeera's [Kabul](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kabul) office was bombed in 2001 and another missile hit its office in [Baghdad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baghdad) during the invasion of Iraq, killing correspondent [Tareq Ayyoub](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tareq_Ayyoub). Both of these attacks occurred subsequent to Al Jazeera's alleged disclosure of the locations of their offices to the United States.

**Egypt**

During the [2011 Egyptian protests](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2011_Egyptian_protests), on 30 January, the Egyptian government ordered the TV channel to close its offices. A day after, on 31 January, Egyptian security forces arrested six Al Jazeera journalists for several hours and seized their camera equipment. There were also reports of disruption in Al Jazeera Mubasher's Broadcast to Egypt.

**Libya**

Written to be a martyr to be Ali Hassan al-Jaber in [Bayda](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bayda%2C_Libya), Libya

[Ali Hassan al-Jaber](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ali_Hassan_al-Jaber), a [cameraman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cameraman), was killed by pro-Gaddafi sleeper cells while covering the [2011 Libyan civil war](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2011_Libyan_civil_war) in [Benghazi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benghazi).

**Website attacks**

Immediately after its launch in 2003, the English site was attacked by one or several [hackers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hacker_%28computer_security%29), who launched [denial-of-service attacks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Denial-of-service_attack), and another hacker who redirected visitors to a site featuring an [American flag](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flag_of_the_United_States). Both events were widely reported as Al Jazeera's website having been attacked by "[hackers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hacker_definition_controversy)". In November 2003, John William Racine II, also known as 'John Buffo', was sentenced to 1,000 hours of community service and a $1,500 U.S. fine for the online disruption. Racine [posed as an Al Jazeera employee](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_engineering_%28security%29) to get a password to the network's site, then redirected visitors to a page he created that showed an American flag shaped like a U.S. map and a [patriotic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patriotic) motto, court documents said. In June 2003, Racine pleaded guilty to [wire fraud](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wire_fraud) and unlawful interception of an electronic communication. As of 2011, the perpetrators of the denial-of-service attacks remain unknown.

**Recognition by Secretary Clinton**

On 4 March 2011, U.S. [Secretary of State](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secretary_of_State) [Hillary Rodham Clinton](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hillary_Rodham_Clinton) testified before the [Senate Foreign Relations Committee](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Senate_Foreign_Relations_Committee) that Al Jazeera provided more informative news coverage than the opinion-driven coverage of American mass media. Most American media outlets declined comment. [Michael Clemente](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Michael_Clemente_(television_executive)&action=edit&redlink=1) of [Fox News](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fox_News) called the comments "curious", while not directly refuting them.

Secretary Clinton's remarks contrast dramatically to [Secretary of Defense](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secretary_of_Defense) [Donald Rumsfeld](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Donald_Rumsfeld)'s complaints of bias early in the previous decade.

**Editorial independence**

Al Jazeera emphasizes that it is editorially independent, though much of its funding comes from the Qatar government. U.S. State Department internal communications, released by [WikiLeaks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/WikiLeaks) as part of the [2010 United States diplomatic cables leak](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_diplomatic_cables_leak), claim that the Qatar government manipulates Al Jazeera coverage to suit political interests.

**Criticism and controversy**

While Al Jazeera has a large audience in the Middle East, the organization and the original Arabic channel in particular have taken significant criticism and been involved in numerous controversies.

In the United States, a poll taken in 2006 concluded Americans in general have an unfavorable view of Al Jazeera.

A widely reported criticism is the unfounded allegation that Al Jazeera showed videos of masked terrorists beheading western [hostages](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hostage) in Iraq. When this was reported in other media, Al Jazeera pressed for retractions to be made. This allegation was again repeated on [Fox News Channel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fox_News_Channel) in the USA on the launch day of Al Jazeera's English service, 15 November 2006. Later [*The Guardian*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Guardian) apologized for incorrect information that Al Jazeera 'had shown videos of masked terrorists beheading western hostages'.

**Anti-American bias**

Emmy award winning journalist [Dave Marash](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dave_Marash), who served as a veteran correspondent for ABC's [Nightline](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nightline), resigned from his position as Washington anchor for Al Jazeera English in 2008. Dave Marash cited "reflexive adversarial editorial stance" against Americans and "anti-American bias".

**Bahrain**

The [Bahraini](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bahrain) Information Minister, [Nabeel Yacoob Al Hamer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nabeel_Yacoob_Al_Hamer), banned Al Jazeera correspondents from reporting from inside the country on 10 May 2002, saying that the station was biased towards Israel and against Bahrain. After improvements in relations between Bahrain and Qatar in 2004, Al Jazeera correspondents returned to Bahrain.

**Iran**

The station allegedly used the term "Arabian Gulf" instead of the term "[Persian Gulf](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Persian_Gulf)", which is endorsed by the government of Iran.

**Egypt**

Al Jazeera has been criticized by Egyptian newspapers and television shows for its allegedly biased coverage of news that are related to Egypt and its government, and they argue that these "continuous attacks against Egypt is to destroy Egypt’s image in the region" as many of them suggest.

In addition, Al Jazeera has filed a lawsuit against the Egyptian [Al-Ahram Newspaper](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Ahram_Newspaper) for an article posted on 9 June 2010 named "Jazeerat AlTaharoush" ("Al Jazeera an Island of Harassment"), which Al Jazeera finds to be "wholly deceptive and journalistically unprofessional" and claims that the article's aim is to "damage the reputation of the Al Jazeera Network".

**Iraq**

During the Iraq war, Al Jazeera faced reporting and movement restrictions, as did other news-gathering organizations. In addition, one of its reporters, [Tayseer Allouni](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tayseer_Allouni), was expelled from the country, while another one, Diyar Al-Omari, was stripped of his journalistic permits by the US. Reacting to this, Al Jazeera announced on 2 April 2003, that it would "temporarily freeze all coverage" of Iraq in protest of what Al Jazeera described as unreasonable interference from Iraqi officials. In May 2003, the [Central Intelligence Agency](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Central_Intelligence_Agency), through the [Iraqi National Congress](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iraqi_National_Congress), released documents purportedly showing that Al Jazeera had been infiltrated by Iraqi [spies](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spy), and was regarded by Iraqi officials as part of their propaganda effort. As reported by the [Sunday Times](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Sunday_Times_%28UK%29), the alleged spies were described by an Al Jazeera executive as having minor roles with no input on editorial decisions.

On 23 September 2003, [Iraq](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iraq) suspended Al Jazeera (and [Al-Arabiya](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Arabiya)) from reporting on official government activities for two weeks for what the Council stated as supporting recent attacks on council members and Coalition occupational forces. The move came after allegations by Iraqis who stated that the channel had incited anti-occupation violence (by airing statements from [Iraqi insurgency](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iraqi_insurgency) leaders), increasing ethnic and sectarian tensions, and being supportive of the insurgency.

During 2004, Al Jazeera broadcast several video tapes of various victims of kidnappings in Iraq, which had been sent to the network. The videos had been filmed by the kidnappers holding the hostages. The hostages were shown, often blindfolded, pleading for their release. They often appeared to be forced to read out prepared statements of their kidnappers. Al Jazeera has assisted authorities from the home countries of the victims in an attempt to secure the release of kidnapping victims. This included broadcasting pleas from family members and government officials. Contrary to some allegations, including the oft-reported comments of [Donald Rumsfeld](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Donald_Rumsfeld) on 4 June 2005, Al Jazeera has never shown [beheadings](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Decapitation). (Beheadings have appeared on numerous non-Al Jazeera websites and have sometimes been misattributed to Al Jazeera.)

On 7 August 2004, the Iraqi [Allawi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iyad_Allawi) government shut down the Iraq office of Al Jazeera, claiming that it was responsible for presenting a negative image of Iraq, and charging the network with fueling anti-Coalition hostilities. Al Jazeera spokesman Jihad Ballout said: "It's regrettable and we believe it's not justifiable. This latest decision runs contrary to all the promises made by Iraqi authorities concerning freedom of expression and freedom of the press," and Al Jazeera vowed to continue its reporting from inside Iraq. News photographs showed United States and Iraqi military personnel working together to close the office. Initially closed by a one-month ban, the shutdown was extended indefinitely in September 2004, and the offices were sealed, drawing condemnation from international journalists.

In April 2003, the Qatar channel broadcast a long commemorative program showing ex-General of the Iraqi Republican Guards, Sayf ad-Din Rawi, who claimed that a [neutron bomb](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neutron_bomb) had been dropped on the international airport of Baghdad during the invasion of Iraq.

**Israel**

On 19 July 2008, Al Jazeera TV broadcast a program from Lebanon that covered the "welcome-home" festivities for [Samir Kuntar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samir_Kuntar), a Lebanese militant who had been imprisoned in Israel for killing several people in a [Palestine Liberation Front](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palestine_Liberation_Front) raid from Lebanon into Israel. In the program, the head of Al Jazeera's Beirut office, Ghassan bin Jiddo, praised Kuntar as a "pan-Arab hero" and organized a birthday party for him. In response, Israel's Government Press Office (GPO) threatened to boycott the satellite channel unless it apologized. A few days later an official letter was issued by Al Jazeera's director general, Wadah Khanfar, in which he admitted that the program violated the station's Code of Ethics and that he had ordered the channel's programming director to take steps to ensure that such an incident does not recur.

The television network was also criticized for allegedly biased coverage of events in the [Israeli-Palestinian conflict](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli-Palestinian_conflict), including the [Bat Mitzvah massacre](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bat_Mitzvah_massacre) in 2002, where the network failed to note that the massacre victims were attending a [bat mitzvah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bat_mitzvah) celebration for a 12 year old girl, and neglected to mention that the gunman crashed the event at a crowded banquet hall. When the Palestinian militant [Raed Karmi](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Raed_Karmi&action=edit&redlink=1) was assassinated by the Israeli army, Al Jazeera was criticized for failing to mention Israeli accusations about how many people he had killed, which would have provided a context for the story.

On 13 March 2008, Israel imposed sanctions on Al Jazeera, accusing it of slanted coverage favoring [Hamas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hamas). Deputy Foreign Minister [Majalli Wahabi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Majalli_Wahabi) said that Israel would deny entry visas to Al Jazeera employees, and that Israeli officials would not be available for interviews with the network. According to Wahabi, "We have seen that Al Jazeera has become a part of Hamas... taking sides and cooperating with people who are enemies of the State of Israel. The moment a station like Al Jazeera gives unreliable reports, represents only one side, and doesn't present the positions of the other side, why should we cooperate"? Wahabi said that the [Israeli Foreign Ministry](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Foreign_Ministry_of_Israel) would send letters of complaint to the government of Qatar and Al Jazeera.

In February 2009, Israel again imposed sanctions on Al Jazeera after Qatar closed the Israeli trade office in [Doha](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Doha) in protest to the [Gaza War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaza_War). Initially, Israel contemplated declaring Al Jazeera a hostile entity and shutting down its Israel offices, but after a legal review, the Israeli government decided instead to impose limited measures to restrict Al Jazeera's activities in the country. All Al Jazeera employees would not have their visas renewed, and the Israeli government would issue no new visas. Al Jazeera staff would also not be allowed to attend government briefings and reduced access to government and military offices or interview [Knesset](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Knesset) members. The station would only be allowed access to three official spokespersons: The [Prime Minister's Office](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Office_of_the_Prime_Minister_%28Israel%29), the [Foreign Ministry](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Foreign_Ministry_of_Israel), and the [IDF Spokesperson's Unit](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/IDF_Spokesperson%27s_Unit).

In August 2011, Samer Allawi, Al Jazeera's Afghanistan bureau chief, was arrested by Israeli authorities on charges of being a member of [Hamas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hamas). Walied Al-Omary, Al Jazeera's bureau chief in Israel and the Palestinian territories, said the military court accused Allawi of making contact with members of Hamas's armed wing. A co-leader of [The Committee to Protect Journalists](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Committee_to_Protect_Journalists) said "Israel must clarify why it continues to hold Samer Allawi."

**Kuwait**

The Al Jazeera office in Kuwait City was closed by government officials after airing a story on police crackdowns. The story had video of police beating activists and included interviews with members of the Kuwaiti opposition. Four MP's were injured in the crackdown. Kuwait's Minister of Information described Al Jazeera's coverage as *"intervention in a Kuwaiti domestic issue"*.

**Qatar**

Al Jazeera has been criticized for failing to report on many hard-hitting news stories that originate from [Qatar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qatar), where Al Jazeera is based. The two most frequently cited stories were the revoking of citizenship from the Al Ghafran clan of the [Al Murrah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al_Murrah) tribe in response to a failed coup that members of the Al Ghafran clan were implicated in, and Qatar's growing relations with and diplomatic visits to [Israel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israel).

**Somalia**

In January 2009 Al Jazeera aired a documentary on toxic waste dumped in Somalia. A Somali journalist who studied the contents of the two part Al Jazeera documentary, *The Toxic Truth*, has concluded that Al Jazeera failed to rigorously research the story because one of the letters used to substantiate arms smuggling was issued on 15 April 1992, from the Ministry of Defense of People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, almost two years after [South Yemen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Yemen) and [North Yemen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_Yemen) united to form the [Republic of Yemen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Republic_of_Yemen) in May 1990. Another criticism of the documentary was that Al Jazeera did not allow [Ali Mahdi Muhammad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ali_Mahdi_Muhammad), former interim president of [Somalia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Somalia), to exercise his [right of reply](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Right_of_reply) for being accused of authorizing [Italy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italy) based companies to build dumping grounds in Somalia.

**Spain**

Main article: [Tayseer Allouni](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tayseer_Allouni)

Reporter [Tayseer Allouni](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tayseer_Allouni) was arrested in Spain on 5 September 2003, on a charge of having provided support for members of [al-Qaeda](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Qaeda). Judge [Baltasar Garzón](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baltasar_Garz%C3%B3n), who had issued the arrest warrant, ordered Allouni held without bail. Al Jazeera wrote to then Spanish Prime Minister [Jose Maria Aznar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jose_Maria_Aznar) and protested: "On several occasions Western journalists met secretly with secret organizations and they were not subjected to any legal action because they were doing their job, so why is Allouni being excluded?" Allouni was released on bail several weeks later over health concerns, but prohibited from leaving the country.

On 19 September, a Spanish court issued an arrest warrant for Allouni before the expected verdict. Allouni had asked the court for permission to visit his family in [Syria](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syria) to attend the funeral of his mother but authorities denied his request and instead ordered him back to jail.

Although he pleaded not guilty of all the charges against him, Allouni was sentenced on 26 September 2005 to seven years in prison for being a financial courier for al-Qaeda. Allouni insisted he merely interviewed [bin Laden](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Osama_bin_Laden) after the September 11 attack on the United States. Al Jazeera has continuously supported Allouni and maintain that he is innocent.

Many international and private organizations ([Reporters Without Borders](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reporters_Without_Borders) among them) condemned the arrest and called on the Spanish court to free Taysir Allouni. Websites such as [Alony Solidarity](http://www.alonysolidarity.net/) were created to support Allouni.

**United Kingdom**

UK officials, like their US counterparts, strongly protested against Al Jazeera's coverage of the [2003 invasion of Iraq](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2003_invasion_of_Iraq). Al Jazeera stated that the coalition leaders were taking exception because its reporting made it more difficult for both countries to manage the way the war was being reported.

**United States**

Prior to September 11, 2001, the [United States government](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_government) had praised Al Jazeera for its role as an independent media outlet in the Middle East. U.S. officials have since claimed an anti-American bias to Al Jazeera's news coverage.

The station first gained widespread attention in the West following the [September 11, 2001 attacks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/September_11%2C_2001_attacks), when it broadcast videos in which [Osama bin Laden](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Osama_bin_Laden) and [Sulaiman Abu Ghaith](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sulaiman_Abu_Ghaith) defended and justified the attacks. This led to significant controversy and accusations by the United States government that Al Jazeera was engaging in [propaganda](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Propaganda) on behalf of terrorists. Al Jazeera countered that it was merely making information available without comment, and several western television channels later followed suit in broadcasting portions of the tapes. Military analyst and defense consultant [James F. Dunnigan](http://jimdunnigan.com/default.htm#top) assigns Al Jazeera a primary role in the rise of religious hatred and terrorism in the modern Muslim world.

At an 3 October 2001 press conference, [Colin Powell](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colin_Powell) tried to persuade the emir of Qatar to shut down Al Jazeera.

On 13 November, 2001, during the [U.S. invasion of Afghanistan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War_in_Afghanistan_%282001%E2%80%93present%29), a U.S. missile strike destroyed Al Jazeera's office in [Kabul](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kabul). There were no casualties.

On 12 October 2008, Al Jazeera broadcast interviews with people attending a [Sarah Palin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sarah_Palin) [2008 United States presidential election](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_presidential_election%2C_2008) rally in [St. Clairsville, Ohio](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Clairsville%2C_Ohio), with interviewees making comments about [Barack Obama](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barack_Obama) such as "he regards white people as trash". The report received over 2 million views on [YouTube](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/YouTube) and elicited comment by Colin Powell: "Those kind of images going out on Al Jazeera are killing us." Following this the [*Washington Post*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Washington_Post) ran an [op-ed](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Op-ed), claiming the news channel was deliberately encouraging "anti-American sentiment overseas”, which was criticized by Al Jazeera as "a gratuitous and uninformed shot at Al Jazeera's motives", as the report was just one of "hundreds of hours of diverse coverage".

Al Jazeera won praise for its coverage of the [2011 Arab protests](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2011_Arab_protests) from Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, who testified at a Senate hearing that "Al Jazeera has been the leader in that they are literally changing people’s minds and attitudes. And like it or hate it, it is really effective." She also stated "in fact viewership of Al Jazeera is going up in the United States because it’s real news. You may not agree with it, but you feel like you’re getting real news around the clock instead of a million commercials..."

**Detention of Sami Al Hajj**

Main article: [Sami Al Hajj](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sami_Al_Hajj)

Al Jazeera cameraman [Sami Al Hajj](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sami_Al_Hajj), a [Sudanese](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sudan) national, was detained while in transit to Afghanistan in December 2001, and up until May 2008 was held, without charge, as an [enemy combatant](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enemy_combatant) in [Camp Delta](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Camp_Delta) at [Guantánamo Bay](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guant%C3%A1namo_Bay). The reasons for his detention remain unknown, although the U.S.' official statement on all detainees is that they are security threats. [Reporters Without Borders](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reporters_Without_Borders) have repeatedly expressed concern over Al Hajj's detention, mentioned Al Hajj in their Annual Worldwide Press Freedom Index, and launched a petition for his release. On 23 November 2005, Sami Al Hajj's lawyer [Clive Stafford-Smith](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clive_Stafford-Smith) reported that, during (125 of 130) interviews, U.S. officials had questioned al-Hajj as to whether Al Jazeera was a front for [al-Qaeda](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Qaeda). Al-Hajj has since expressed plans to launch legal action against former U.S. President [George W. Bush](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_W._Bush) for his treatment while in Guantanamo. According to Smith, these accusations include having been beaten and [sexually assaulted](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sexually_assaulted) during his incarceration.

**Satellite disruption**

During the [2010 FIFA World Cup](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2010_FIFA_World_Cup) opening game, Al Jazeera Sports' transmission in the Arab world went down without explanation in the first half, while the second half transmission was patchy. Al Jazeera and FIFA said they were working to figure out the cause of the disruption to Al Jazeera's official broadcasting rights. The British newspaper *The Guardian* reported that evidence points toward jamming by the Jordanian government.

**Network**

Al Jazeera operates a number of [specialty channels](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Specialty_channel) besides its original flagship news channel. As of early 2007, the Al Jazeera network's TV channels include:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | **Launched in** | **Website** |
| **Al Jazeera** | the original international [Arabic-language](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabic_language) 24h [news channel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/News_channel) | 1 November 1996 | [aljazeera.net/channel](http://www.aljazeera.net/channel/) |
| [Al Jazeera Sports](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al_Jazeera_Sports) | a popular Arabic-language [sports channel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sports_channel) | 2003 | [aljazeerasport.net](http://www.aljazeerasport.net/) |
| [Al Jazeera Sports +1](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al_Jazeera_Sports_%2B1) | 2004 |
| [Al Jazeera Sports +2](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al_Jazeera_Sports_%2B2) | 2004 |
| [Al Jazeera Sports +3](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al_Jazeera_Sports_%2B3) | 2008 |
| [Al Jazeera Sports +4](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al_Jazeera_Sports) | 2008 |
| [Al Jazeera Sports +5](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al_Jazeera_Sports) | August 2009 |
| [Al Jazeera Sports +6](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al_Jazeera_Sports) | August 2009 |
| [Al Jazeera Sports +7](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al_Jazeera_Sports) | August 2009 |
| [Al Jazeera Sports +8](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al_Jazeera_Sports) | August 2009 |
| [Al Jazeera Sports HD](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al_Jazeera_Sports) |  |
| [Al Jazeera Mubasher](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al_Jazeera_Mubasher) (a.k.a Al Jazeera Live) | a live politics and public interest channel (similar to [C-SPAN](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C-SPAN), [Houses of the Oireachtas Channel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Houses_of_the_Oireachtas_Channel) or [BBC Parliament](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BBC_Parliament)), which broadcasts conferences in real time without editing or commentary | 2005 | [mubasher.aljazeera.net/](http://mubasher.aljazeera.net/) |
| [Al Jazeera Children's Channel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al_Jazeera_Children%27s_Channel) (a.k.a. JCC) | a [children's interest channel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Children%27s_interest_channel) | 2005 | [jcctv.net](http://www.jcctv.net/) |
| [Al Jazeera English](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al_Jazeera_English) | a global [English-language](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_language) 24h [news channel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/News_channel) | 2006 | [aljazeera.com](http://www.aljazeera.com/) |
| [Al Jazeera Documentary Channel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al_Jazeera_Documentary_Channel) | an Arabic language [documentary channel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Documentary_channel) | 2007 | [doc.aljazeera.net](http://doc.aljazeera.net/) |
| [Al Jazeera Training Center](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Al_Jazeera_Training_Center&action=edit&redlink=1) | an Arabic language [Training Center](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Training_Center&action=edit&redlink=1) |  | [Training.aljazeera.net](http://Training.aljazeera.net/) |
| [Al Jazeera Mubasher Misr](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Al_Jazeera_Mubasher_Misr&action=edit&redlink=1) | a version of [Al Jazeera Mubasher](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al_Jazeera_Mubasher) focused on [Egypt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egypt) | 2011 | [mubasher-misr.aljazeera.net](http://mubasher-misr.aljazeera.net/) |
| [Al Jazeera Balkans](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Al_Jazeera_Balkans&action=edit&redlink=1) | a version of Al Jazeera focused on Ex-Yugoslavia stationed in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina | 2011 |  |

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