



INTERMEDIATE **Internet war of words over Gaza**

Internet sites and international media have reported a bitter war of words over the conflict in Gaza. People across the world are expressing their rage and anger at the situation. They are using social networking websites, newspapers and TV news channels such as the BBC to air their views. Moderators, the people who filter e-mails and telephone calls for racist or venomous comments, are struggling to cope. They are snowed under with a deluge of posts and calls, many full of hate. The AFP news agency reports a French website that had to shut down its reader comments page. Clemence Lemaistre of 20minutes.fr reported a vicious cycle of posts against Jews that "unleashed a stream of anti-Muslim remarks," so all reader contributions were rejected.

The Internet and TV debate shows have become a battleground for international public opinion. News agencies report that the BBC's Have Your Say programme received thousands of comments and calls after asking the question, "Can Israel do anything it wants?" Many of these were rejected for breaking hate-speech laws and using racially offensive, obscene and harmful language. According to sources, BBC producers and presenters have been encouraged to 'stay away' from the topic unless it is the main theme of one of its shows. The biggest problem is for social networking sites like Facebook and YouTube. These sites do not check any posts that appear online. They have to rely on members to alert them to posts that go too far and encourage hatred and racism.

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READING / LISTENING

TRUE / FALSE

Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- a. People are using the Internet to verbally attack other people.
- b. Moderators say it's easy to delete all of the racist messages.
- c. A French site shut down its comments page because of abusive posts.
- d. All of the posts on the French site were against Jewish people.
- e. Hamas and Israeli troops fought a battle on a TV debate show.
- f. A BBC television show said Israeli could do anything it wants to do.
- g. BBC bosses advised presenters to avoid talking about the Gaza War.
- h. Posts on Facebook are moderated by members, not by the site itself.

SYNONYM MATCH

Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|----------------|----------------------------|
| 1. bitter | a. disrespectful |
| 2. air | b. manage |
| 3. cope | c. flood |
| 4. deluge | d. break acceptable limits |
| 5. unleashed | e. most important |
| 6. debate | f. hate-filled |
| 7. offensive | g. let loose |
| 8. main | h. depend |
| 9. rely | i. voice |
| 10. go too far | j. discussion |

PHRASE MATCH

Match the following phrases from the article

(sometimes more than one. combination is possible):

- | | |
|---|--------------------|
| 1. a bitter war | a. and anger |
| 2. expressing their rage | b. laws |
| 3. air their | c. public opinion |
| 4. snowed under with a | d. views |
| 5. unleashed a stream of anti- | e. from the topic |
| 6. a battleground for international | f. of words |
| 7. breaking hate-speech | g. Muslim remarks |
| 8. presenters have been encouraged to 'stay away' | h. too far |
| 9. They have to rely on members | i. deluge of posts |
| 10. posts that go | j. to alert them |