

# Psychological aspects of interpreting violence: A narrative from Palestinian conflict

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Interpreting in conflict-related scenarios and situations is nowadays a growing research area, since it depicts a complex phenomenon that requires distinct definitions and descriptions. It is also career-wise a multifaceted and demanding professional occupation that calls for reliable representations of its practice in the real world, and therefore we must examine said practice thoroughly in order to lay the foundations for accurate findings and narratives. In this sense, we believe that a well-founded analysis of the work of the interpreter in conflict-related scenarios and situations should include questions aimed to delve into its psychological aspects, especially in contexts that might take a significant toll on the interpreter at a personal level, for example humanitarian and human rights missions. It is obvious that any professional working in any conflict-related scenario will experience to a different extent a number of emotional impacts, but we consider this assumption to be too speculative and that it should be addressed in the particular case of interpreters. Accordingly, we conducted semi-structured interviews with professional interpreters in the framework of a qualitative study on interpreting in the Palestinian Conflict that allowed us to examine their performance in sensitive or stressful situations, such as interviews with victims, some of them children. The results reveal a noteworthy range of coping mechanisms and psychological effects, from the detachment of machine-like behaviour to open displays of trauma. This evinces that we must still analyse the psychological aspects and working conditions of interpreters in conflict-related scenarios so as to holistically study their figure and develop potential training courses.

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