

CAMERA Seeks 10 Volunteers to Submit Info to Wikipedia

From: **Lee Green** (leegreen@camera.org)
Sent: Thu 3/13/08 5:44 PM
To: [REDACTED]

CAMERA[®] ALERT

Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America

www.camera.org

*Help us grow our team! Please **forward this alert** to people committed to fair and factual reporting about Israel and the Middle East. Do not forward it to members of the news media. Please use this alert as background for your own unique e-mails, letters and calls.*

Shalom CAMERA E-Mail Team:

What if you could ensure accuracy and fairness *directly* in one of the Internet's most visited Web sites, without relying on reporters, editors or publishers? In fact, you can.

Wikipedia, the hugely popular online encyclopedia site, can be edited by anyone. The idea behind Wikipedia is that if thousands of well-meaning and informed volunteers collaborate on an online encyclopedia, the result would be more accurate, up-to-date and inclusive than any print encyclopedia could possibly be.

The bad news is this allows anti-Israel "editors" to introduce all kinds of bias and error into the many Israel-related articles, even the entry on CAMERA. The good news is, **individual volunteers can work as "editors" to ensure that these articles are free of bias and error, and include necessary facts and context.** Assuring accuracy and impartiality in Wikipedia is extremely important. If someone searches for "Israel" on the Google search engine, for example, the top result returned by Google would be the Wikipedia page on Israel.

CAMERA seeks 10 volunteers to help us keep Israel-related entries on Wikipedia from becoming tainted by anti-Israel editors. All it takes to be an effective volunteer is a basic comfort level with computers. Call or email me, and I will train you on how to become a volunteer Wikipedia editor.

gilead@camera.org or call 617-789-3672

With thanks,
Gilead Ini
Senior Research Analyst
www.camera.org

To help support CAMERA's work, [click here.](#)

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Wikipedia and CAMERA

From: **Gilead Ini** (gilead@camera.org)

Sent: Mon 3/17/08 2:35 PM

To: Gilead Ini (gilead@camera.org)

Shalom Wikipedia Editors and CAMERA E-Mail Team,

Thank you all for responding to the latest alert about editing Wikipedia, the online encyclopedia. We know that your time is valuable, and very much appreciate your willingness to spend some of it in the quest for fairness and accuracy on Wikipedia.

And considering the truly impressive quantity *and* quality of volunteers, I'm extremely hopeful that we can and will meet this goal.

Let me begin by addressing a couple of questions that some of you asked.

* First, while our alert noted that we are seeking ten volunteers, what we really meant was that we want *at least* ten. I'm happy to say that we currently have about five times that many!

* Another common question was: *How much time do I need to devote to this project?* The easy answer is: *As much as you decide to devote.* There is no minimum amount of time required to edit Wikipedia. Some of you will only be able to participate periodically, and others will be able to weave this into their daily routine. Whatever amount of time you can spare to learn about and edit Wikipedia will be extremely valuable. Every little bit helps.

That said, I'll also point out that improving articles will sometimes require patience and persistence. Fortunately, patience and persistence between 40 people is a good bit easier than patience and persistence by one person.

Because Wikipedia articles often change, and are never finalized, we do hope that this will be a long term project. **This is a marathon, not a sprint.**

* The final common query was: *Okay, so what do I do? How does Wikipedia editing work?* A few of you already have experience editing Wikipedia. For all the others, I'll address the technical aspect of editing Wikipedia a little bit later.

But first, I'll touch on a few broader, non-technical ideas that are based on my experience with Wikipedia, and on the advice passed onto me by some of the more experienced Wiki editors on this list.

Why are we even concerned with Wikipedia?

Because Wikipedia is extremely popular, influential, and depends on the participation of fair-minded members of the community in order to work well.

What is the problem?

It's influential and popular, but it isn't always accurate. Wikipedia has a series of policies and guidelines meant to ensure that the encyclopedia develops in a fair, accurate and reasonable manner. Unfortunately, these guidelines are often ignored by editors (even while these same editors loudly and speciously cite these guidelines in order to defend their unfair edits). And as we all know, "controversial" topics like the Arab-Israeli conflict tend to attract an especially large number of partisans hoping to warp the public's understanding of the Middle East. This is happening with many Wikipedia articles, ranging from the article about CAMERA, to the article about Nablus, to

various articles about anti-Israel activists, and beyond.

Who are we?

It's best to think of ourselves as a collection of individuals and individual Wikipedia editors interested in discussion about Wikipedia. This encyclopedia is intended to be written and edited by individuals -- not by groups -- and that's what we'll do. At the same time, by having discussions within our group, we can learn about, discuss, and figure out how to overcome the challenges we each encounter as Wikipedia editors.

There is no reason to advertise the fact that we have these group discussions. Anti-Israel editors will seize on anything to try to discredit people who attempt to challenge their problematic assertions, and will be all too happy to pretend, and announce, that a 'Zionist' cabal (the same one that controls the banks and Hollywood?) is trying to hijack Wikipedia.

The Wikipedia community

We also should keep in mind that we are part of a larger, well-established, Wikipedia community. And while there are loud and aggressive groups of anti-Israel editors, most of the Wikipedia community is made up of well-meaning people who often don't know much about the Arab-Israeli conflict. It is important that these people -- our potential allies -- understand that we, too, are concerned with thoughtfully contributing to, and improving, Wikipedia.

First and foremost, that means having a history of working *within the Wikipedia guidelines*. (Note that anyone on Wikipedia can view your editing history.) These guidelines are explained on the Wikipedia website, but I will also discuss some of them a bit later.

Obviously, it's also important to remain civil when arguing ideas on the Wikipedia discussion pages -- even when people inevitably try to provoke you into an online shouting match. It's helpful, if possible, to build relationships. (Fortunately, we now have in this group a built in network of relationships. Nonetheless, it's still helpful to make relationships with established editors, and with super-editors know as 'administrators.')

It's important, after making changes on a Wikipedia article page, to explain these edits on Wikipedia's discussion pages. (I'll address the *technical* details on how exactly to do this later. For now, let's stick with *conceptual* issues.) It's **very** important to avoid framing our arguments in terms of the Mideast conflict, but rather to frame them in terms of Wikipedia's guidelines.

So, for example, imagine that you get rid of or modify a problematic sentence in an article alleging that "Palestinian become suicide bombers to respond to Israel's oppressive policies." You should, in parallel, leave a comment on that article's discussion page (either after or before making the change). Avoid defending the edit by arguing that "*Israel's policies aren't 'oppression,' they are defensive. And anyway Palestinians obviously become suicide bombers for other reasons, for example hate education!*" Instead, describe how this sentence violates Wikipedia's policies and guidelines. One of the core policies is that assertions should adhere to a Neutral Point of View, usually abbreviated **NPOV**. (The opposite of NPOV is **POV**, or Point of View, which is basically another way of saying subjective statement, or opinion.) So it would be best to note on the discussion page that "*This sentence violates Wikipedia's NPOV policy, since the description of Israel's policies as 'oppressive' is an opinion. In addition, it is often noted by Middle East experts that one of the reasons Palestinians decide to become suicide bombers is hate education and glorification of martyrdom in Palestinian society. I will add (or have added) a sentence to that effect, and cite it with a footnote pointing to one or more of these experts' articles.*" (Or something along those lines.)

A veteran Wikipedia editor on this list has suggested that, after setting up your account, avoid editing Israel-related articles for a short period of time; or in the very least, try to edit articles unrelated to Israel more than articles related to Israel. This isn't a bad idea, not only to avoid the appearance of being one-topic editors, but also because it would be easier to practice editing, and to learn about Wikipedia, far from the Mideast hornet's nest. You might practice by visiting and editing articles about other topics that interest you. Editing could mean simply fixing typos and grammar, or it could mean

adding (footnoted) sentences to these topics. This way, you can gain experience without having anti-Israel partisans jumping down your throat.

When signing up for a Wikipedia account, you might also want to avoid, for obvious reasons, picking a user name that marks you as pro-Israel, or that lets people know your real name. Anonymity is an accepted part of Wikipedia. Also, for the sake of greater anonymity, don't forget to always log in before making changes. If you make changes while not logged in, Wikipedia will record your computer's IP address.

What now?

Now that we've considered some thoughts on Wikipedia, we're almost ready to act! You will soon get via email an invitation to join a Google Group entitled Isra-pedia. It is there that we'll discuss problematic Wikipedia pages, and how to improve them. You'll also find there a copy of this welcome email, a tutorial on how to sign up for and edit Wikipeida (i.e. those technical details that I avoided discussion in this email), and an Action Items page. Those of you who already have a Wikipedia account and are familiar with the editing process can ignore the tutorial and focus on the action items and the discussion section of our Google Groups page.

I look forward to working with all of you.

Sincerely,

Gilead Ini
Senior Research Analyst
CAMERA

Action Item:

When you get the invitation to a Google Group called Isra-pedia, accept the invite!

[Isra-pedia] Re: CAMERA

From: **Isra guy** (zeqzeq2@yahoo.com)
Sent: Thu 3/20/08 4:50 PM
To: isra-pedia (isra-pedia@googlegroups.com)

Hi,

1. I strohgly suggest people will start with non israel related articles.
2. With all due respect it does not make anay sense to have wikipedia fights in articles about CAMERA.

Think who uses wikipedia and for what ?

the high school student or the person looking for general information about evenst, people, locations, terminlogy (such as "Right of Return" or " Summer rain operation").

You don't want to be precived as a "CAMERA defender" on wikipedia that is for sure - since they would think you were sent by CAMERA to "repair" the CAMERA entry. You also don't want to apear as only focus and one sided about israel.

So edit articles at random, make friends not enemies - we will need them later on. This is a marathon not a sprint.

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[Isra-pedia] Re: CAMERA

From: **Isra guy** (zeqzeq2@yahoo.com)
 Sent: Fri 3/21/08 1:14 AM
 To: isra-pedia (isra-pedia@googlegroups.com)

I need perhaps to interduce myself. I have been working in wikipedia alone for nearly 3 years and learned a lot in the process.

All of you will be more succesfullif you would appear Neutral as possible.

Look we will not be able to fix everything there and there are real important articles.

Nothing will harm your creadability more that if your edits will identify you as tied to or "representative of" a specific organization.

I will not get into discussion about how important is the CAMERA article in wikipedia - my view is that CAMERA itself is a very important organization but that the article about in wikipedia is near meaningless (people do not shape their view of CAMERA by reading about it in wikipedia)

Since people here have strong views and strong ties with CAMERA my advice is: Stay away from this article for at least 6 month - work on other articles, slowly go into Israel realted articles, in these articles present a view that has to do with Accuracy and for keeping Wikipedia policies in order to make the Wikipedia project BETTER.

If you deal with the CAMERA article now you will burn yourself and let them know what you are and your views - which is bad and would prevent you from making friends in wikipedia - friends we will all need in the long run so that one of us (or more) will become administrators.

Why it is important

 There is in wikipedia the ability by an administrator to set significant limits on other editor. in 90% of the cases sanction placed b one administrator are not chalanged at all. they stick.

In the issue of Israeli-palestine articles there is now additional restrictions that can be placed by an administrator AS LONG AS HE IS AN "uninvolved administrator". One or more of you who want to take this route should stay away from any Israel realted articles for month until they interact in a positive way with 100 wikipedia editors who would be used later to vote you as an administrator.

This is not the only reason but just an example why you should take the marthon view and not rush in for a fight about a not so important article (about a very important orgnization)

rememebr we are not dealing here with convincing the exterme antisemite and anti-israel activists (those on discussion boards) We are not dealing with convincing people who share our views either.

We are targeting those who look up a term in google and it sends them to Wikipedia or those who look for general explnation about issues.

Here is a list of articles I consider highly important- but for now stay away from them also and build your relationship with the wikipedia community WIKIPEDIA is a community - always keep this in mind. you want to make friends there not enemies. It is not a discussion board in which you will "convince" the other side.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1948_Palestinian_exodus

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Causes_of_the_1948_Palestinian_exodus

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hamas>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hezbollah> - notice how it is now "partyu of Allah" (it used to be described in wikipedia as "party of God"

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arab_citizens_of_Israel

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dhimmi> - be carefull as this will get you in direct fight with all the muslims there. for now I don't touch this any more until we have maybe 20 editors who can fight and two "uninvolved" admins on our side...

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-Zionism>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palestine>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1948_Arab-Israeli_War

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al_Nakba

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palestinian_people

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palestinian_right_of_return - this will become a VERY important topic in the NEAR future. We will need your help

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mohammad_Amin_al-Husayni - this is an article that the Palestinians will fight for. You want to get them into trouble: make legitimate edits on this article by bringing quotes from ACADEMIC sources (not jut from links on the web). get them sanctioned after they delete this info.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rachel_Corrie (see issues with policy about photos)

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[Isra-pedia] Re: Fwd: [Isra-pedia] Re: Using each other as a resource

From: Donna Halper (dlh@donnahalper.com)

Sent: Thu 4/10/08 2:45 PM

To: isra-pedia@googlegroups.com

At 02:05 PM 4/10/2008, you wrote:

can we do the same from Boston branches?

I have access to all these scholarly databases because I teach at Emerson and U.Mass/Boston. I don't know whether the public libraries have them all, but I do, anytime you need me to look something up for you.

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[Isra-pedia] Re: Wikipedia article: Deir Yassin

From: **Niki Nymark** (nnyemark@sbcglobal.net)

Sent: Fri 4/11/08 12:20 AM

To: isra-pedia@googlegroups.com

I have spent a fascinating evening reading about Deir Yassin and Uri Millstein. In the Wikipedia article on Millstein, near the end, it says of Millstein, "In his last book, 'Blood Libel at Deir Yassin--The Black Book,' he claims that a key incident in the development of Palestinian national consciousness, the massacre at Deir Yassin, was a myth created by the Israeli Left..." for political purposes. Niki

Gilead <gilead@camera.org> wrote:

This thread is a continuation of the discussion started in the "Use each other as a resource" thread.

Someone there wrote the following. My reply follows:

For example wiki says about Deir Yassin:

"The Deir Yassin massacre took place on April 9, 1948 when between 107

and 120[1] Palestinian Arabs, predominantly old men, women and children[2] living in the village of Deir Yassin (transliterated Hebrew: Dirat HaYasmin) near Jerusalem in the British Mandate of Palestine were murdered by Jewish Irgun-Lehi force."

note [2] is given: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deir_Yassin_massacre#cite_note-1

<^ Uri Milstein: "...in fact, nobody denies: most of the dead in Deir Yassin were old men, women and children" (The War of Independence Vol. IV, p273; translation by Ami Isseroff). >

1) the reference --further below-- and the footnote don't quite seem to jive in relation to the Lib Cong report

2) I have reason to believe that the quote is in fact wrong or doctored. Another writer (Francisco Gil-White: <http://www.hirhome.com/israel/deir-yassin.htm>)claims that Milstein does not hold that Deir Yassin was a massacre.

So maybe we could put a query out when necessary, and if someone has the book article they will check it out for us? Anyone have a copy of Uri Milstein's War of Independence Vol IV p 273 -- to check if that quote is indeed accurate or if it is taken out of context? Otherwise I have to go through interlibrary loan -- which takes forever.

Reply:

I'm looking at History of Israel's War of Independence, Vol. IV, Translated and Edited by Alan Sacks (1998). The title is a bit different than that cited in the footnote, and perhaps more importantly, the translation is by a different person. So the page numbers are different.

On page 376 of this version, Milstein does make something very close to the assertion you describe. Here, he is translated arguing that "it cannot be denied," as opposed to "nobody denies."

So the cite is more or less correct. The next question, then, is whether this assertion is disputed by other reputable historians. If so, this statement of fact in the lede of the article is extremely problematic. That is, if there is significant controversy about the truth of this statement, Milstein's claim can and should be relayed in the article, but not on its own, as an undisputed fact, in the lede. It would have to be relayed along with opposing points of view.

Unfortunately, this is not something I can get to today. If anyone else has reliable resources that they can consult before I have a chance to look into it, please do post your findings here.

<BR

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[Isra-pedia] Re: Wikipedia votes

From: **isra-pedia@googlegroups.com** on behalf of **Isra guy** (zeqzeq2@yahoo.com)

Sent: Wed 4/09/08 2:00 PM

Reply-to:isra-pedia@googlegroups.com

To: isra-pedia (isra-pedia@googlegroups.com)

We will go to war after we have build our army, equiped it, trained

right now we do not have the needed number of people who have enough Wikipedia experaince and deep knowledge of Wikipedia policies to use for articulating out oint from a "policy" precpetive.

We also don't have any admins.

admins can "close" a vote and declare a result. (Not as stright forward as it seems. I know alefty admin who wait until his bodies vote and close the vote soon after.....)

so please if you want to win this war help us build out army. let's not just rush in and achieve nothing or abit more than nothing.

[Isra-pedia] Wikipedia votes

From: **Isra guy** (zeqzeq2@yahoo.com)

Sent: Tue 4/08/08 4:24 PM

To: isra-pedia (isra-pedia@googlegroups.com)

They can be very informal, someone suggest something on the talk page and a vote tally is taken. usually ends up in 3:4 5:2 or so. imagine such votes who used to end up in 5:2 for the pali side suddenly end up 6:6 or 15:6 to our side. At first thsi would stop them the latter may even get our way.

there are more formal votes: deletion of articles, renaming. Such cases there may be 20 participants but can go up to 100 in rare cases. the palis bring all the islamic and lefty friends(a group of 30 -40)...

there are votes on people becomeing an admin. A majority of 80% or so is needed.

these can be 40 votes (with 37 for and 3 against) or can go up to 120 or 200 in rare cases (i.e. if there are 20 against the other side bring his big guns and try to have 100 for)

numbers may change. key is that being orgenized can be a big advantage but this advantage does not need to be seen as cordination.

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[Isra-pedia] Get to know wikipedia editors

From: **Isra guy** (zeqzeq2@yahoo.com)
 Sent: Tue 3/25/08 12:40 AM
 To: isra-pedia (isra-pedia@googlegroups.com)

Jayjg is a key wikipedia editor.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/User:Jayjg>

There was a time that he and another user called <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/User:SlimVirgin> were the two most important and influential editors in wikipedia.

Both have added many subjects but also edited israel related articles and took a lot of heat about it.

Jay is Jewish, he is most likely an attorney and writes very well.

Jay likes things to be done "his way" , he also a great believer about wikipedia project.

If you edit in articles he edit I suggest you follow his lead or get out of the way. Learn from the way he done things and cooperate but there is no need to let him know about this group as it will place him in a bind: He is very loyal to the wikipedia system and once even served few years in the Wikipedia supreme court.

Look at jay's recent contributions on : <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special:Contributions/jayjg> and the way he engage in discussions.

He diverted issues to policy.

examples:

he diverted this discussion:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Talk:Allegations_of_Israeli_apartheid#Latest_questionable_use_of_sources

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Talk:Allegations_of_Israeli_apartheid#Uri_Davis_material.2C_page_numbering
 into this:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia_talk:Verifiability#Using_an_entire_book_as_a_reference

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Reliable_sources/Noticeboard#Mazin_Qumsiyeh_on_qumsiyeh.org

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Reliable_sources/Noticeboard#Bruce_Dixon_or_www.blackcommentator.com

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Reliable_sources/Noticeboard#FromOccupiedPalestine.org

in a different place he turned a dispute into mediation:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia_talk:Requests_for_mediation/Jewish_lobby

Jayjg is a fine example how to work in the most due process way. The other side is not doing this and take advantage of their large numbers. we should learn from all of them.

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