

**Part 5: Crisis Communication and Ethical Considerations**

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Rare Beauty experienced public backlash and has faced criticism over its stance on the Israel-Palestine conflict. According to [Newsweek](#), Gomez previously sparked uproar online after she chose to remain neutral over the conflict, with the singer and actor's social-media posts on the topic not having sat well with some fans. Claims that Rare Beauty's CEO Scott Friedman is a Zionist have also led to calls for a boycott of the cosmetics line.

Selena Gomez's Rare Beauty public relations crisis began when the brand decided to put out a public response to the ongoing Israel-Hamas war. The Rare Beauty team put out a statement with a graphic titled "Humanitarian Crisis in Gaza" where they took to Instagram announcing donations to various organizations such as the International Red Cross, the Palestinian Red Crescent Society and Magen David Adom (MDA). In this public statement, Rare Beauty expressed solidarity with Palestinian civilians. Rare Beauty also included Israel's emergency medical service (MDA) which supports the Israeli military. This public statement experienced tremendous backlash since consumers felt as if the statement was contradictory taking both sides and didn't feel like full support for Palestinian civilians. This response illustrates how a lack of clarity in communication can lead to misinterpretation Rare Beauty's intention to support inclusivity through their donations was overshadowed by the public perception of "both-sides" rhetoric, making the crisis worse.

Rare Beauty's efforts to address a humanitarian crisis backfired because the message was not received as intended. Consumers felt as if Rare Beauty failed to take a strong moral stance calling the statement "misleading." Users on social media felt that donating to an Israeli organization (MDA) contradicts their message of wanting to protect Palestinian lives. Consumers perceived this message as support for both sides of the war, accusing the brand of engaging in "both-sides" rhetoric. This post from a crisis communication perspective triggered calls for a

[boycott](#) of the brand. Social media users and supporters of the brand took it upon themselves to voice their frustrations and upsets.

It is unclear whether Rare Beauty had a well-prepared strategy crisis communication plan for managing public backlash. This [public statement](#) came after Selena Gomez's neutrality had already sparked criticism therefore, the timing and tone of the statement were reactive.

Unfortunately, Rare Beauty got themselves involved in a complex and difficult situation. Rare Beauty needs to navigate all the cultural sensitivities of a deeply devised geopolitical conflict which is incredibly challenging to do from an ethics perspective. The true challenge lies in balancing corporate social responsibility with the sensitivities of international politics. Rare Beauty faced a tough ethical dilemma—whether to remain neutral or take a more defined stance. They ended up alienating both sides by trying to appear neutral.

Rare Beauty thought this would be a promising idea because their brand wants to represent inclusivity and diversity. However, Rare Beauty has now been accused of failing to align with the values of those impacted by the Gaza conflict. It also does not help that the brand's CEO has been being scrutinized for following the Israel Defense Forces on social media has added fuel to the [boycott](#) movement.

This crisis represents the reasons why it is a true ethical challenge for brands or companies to engage in any humanitarian or political issue. Despite trying to support global causes this still has the potential to alienate certain groups of people. A crisis response from Rare Beauty would need to include addressing the social media users' concerns transparency. Rare Beauty could have handled the situation more ethically by being more detailed and honest about why it chose to donate to both Palestinian and Israeli organizations and explaining how this

aligns with its commitment to humanitarian aid. This would mean they would need to clarify why they made the decision to donate to organizations and adjust their future messages explaining its rationale for supporting these organizations and refining future communications to better reflect the concerns of its diverse audience. The brand could display accountability and engage more directly with its critics by openly addressing concerns or offering a dialogue. Rare Beauty would benefit from having a clear, proactive communication strategy that involves message testing before public releases to ensure the response resonates with its audience for future crises.

This case underscores the ethical implications of corporate involvement in political or humanitarian issues. Rare Beauty needs to be cautious when engaging in divisive conflicts and ensure their actions align with their core values. In future crises, Rare Beauty could improve by being more transparent and deliberate in its communications, ensuring that its responses are well-researched, authentic and reflective of the diverse concerns of its audience.

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