

We Analyzed Thousands of News Articles: Here's the Proof of Pro-Israel Bias in Mainstream Media

U.S. media outlets were crucial in helping Israel sell the Gaza genocide to the American public.



[Adam Johnson](#)

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Photo illustration: The Intercept / Photo: Muhammed Eslayeh/Anadolu via Getty Images

Ask anyone who has followed news about Gaza with even a smidgen of critical thinking, and they will tell you: Media organizations are biased against Palestinians — and systematically favor Israel.

It's easy to say but harder to prove. Doing empirical analysis that shows these biases is time-consuming and complex, full of pitfalls and nuances that can muddy the picture. Yet the double standards are everywhere — and there are ways to do sober, qualitative work that elucidates not only the differences in how Israeli and Palestinian life are covered, but also in how other recent conflicts are covered.

For my new book "[How to Sell a Genocide: The Media's Complicity in the Destruction of Gaza](#)," I attempt to demonstrate, beyond a reasonable doubt, that U.S. media coverage of the war on Gaza was one-sided, racist, dehumanizing, and often veered into outright incitement.



[Related](#)

[Leaked NYT Gaza Memo Tells Journalists to Avoid Words “Genocide,” “Ethnic Cleansing,” and “Occupied Territory”](#)

I examined over 12,000 articles from the New York Times, the Washington Post, CNN.com, Politico, Axios, USA Today, and The Associated Press, along with 5,000 TV segments that aired on CNN and MSNBC. The focus is on center-left media outlets influential with the Biden administration during the first year of the conflict — with an emphasis on the [first few months](#), when Israel [firmly established](#) its [narrative justifying the genocide](#), rendering mass death inevitable. Here are seven statistical findings that prove the U.S. media’s bias against Palestinians.

Israel’s “Right to Defend Itself”

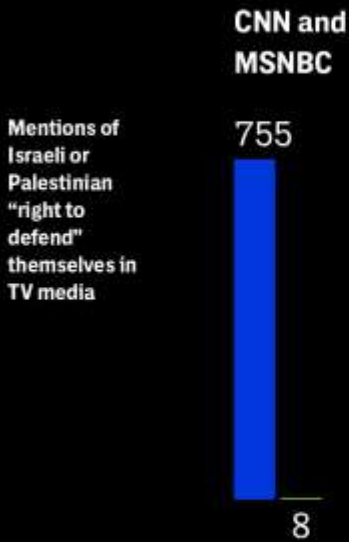
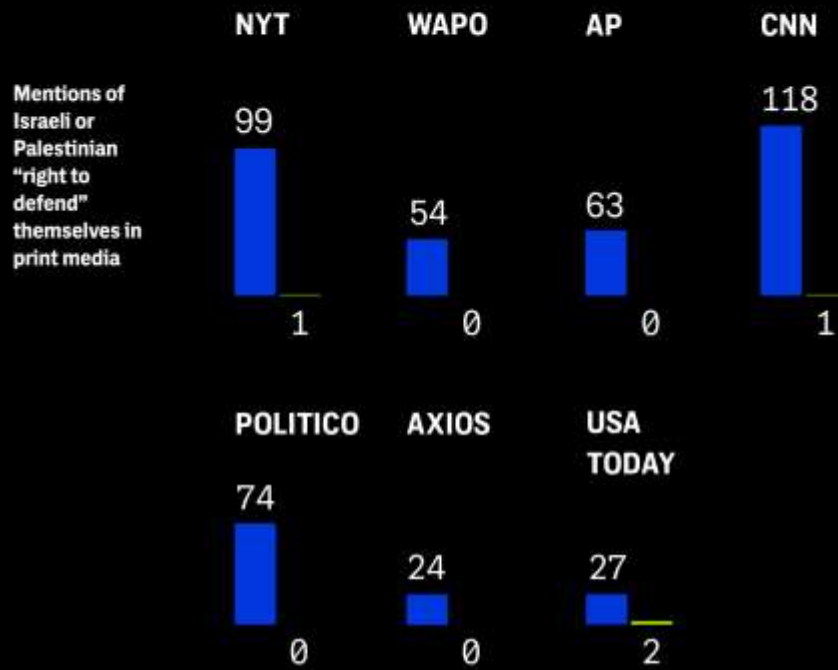
The media’s penchant for invoking a nation’s “[right to defend itself](#),” typically followed by the [rationalization of mass civilian killing](#), was reserved almost exclusively for Israel. On CNN and MSNBC, guests, anchors, and reporters mentioned the right to self-defense for Israel 94 times more than they did for Palestinians. In print media, Israel was afforded this right over 100 times more frequently than Palestinians in Gaza.

Watch a supercut below of the phrase being repeated on TV news.

Right to Self-Defense

News outlets gave Israelis the “right to defend” themselves, but not Palestinians.

■ Israeli ■ Palestinian



Timeline: First 90 days of conflict

Chart: The Intercept

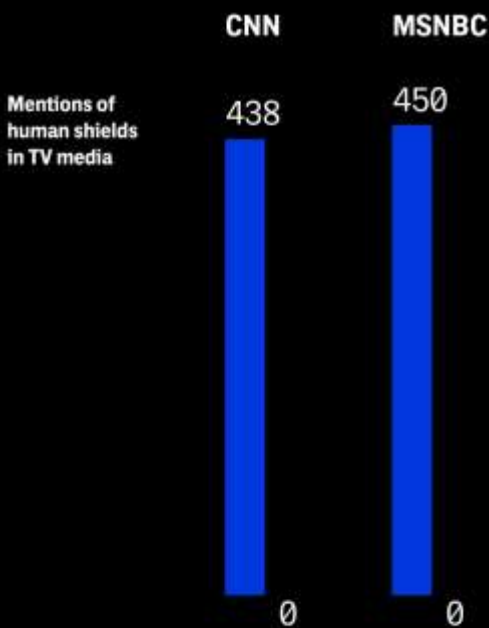
“Human Shields” to Justify Killing Palestinians

News outlets frequently apply the term “[human shields](#)” to any instance where a guerrilla force operates near civilian infrastructure — a definition rejected by human rights groups, but used by partisans to explain away civilian deaths. That didn’t stop media outlets from invoking the term hundreds of times about civilians near Palestinian fighters, implicitly [justifying their deaths](#) in Israeli attacks. On the other hand, my analysis of TV news showed no mention at all of the Israeli military’s use of “human shields” — despite [documented cases where Israel’s tactics meet the legal definition](#).

“Human Shields”

News outlets disproportionately referred to civilians near Palestinian militants as “human shields.”

■ Israeli narratives ■ Palestinian narratives



Timeline: First year of conflict

Source: “How to Sell a Genocide”

The Intercept

Chart: The Intercept

Emotive Words About Killing Civilians

Cable networks and print media outlets consistently applied a double standard in favor of Israel when using the terms “massacre,” “barbaric,” “savage,” and “slaughter” to describe the killing of civilians. Over a 100-day period that saw

roughly 24,000 Palestinians killed, the use of these emotive words in the print media I surveyed was entirely in favor of Israel. (I only included instances when the words appeared in outlets' own editorial voices, not when they quoted commentators or officials.)

Watch supercuts below of U.S. news personalities using the phrase "savage."

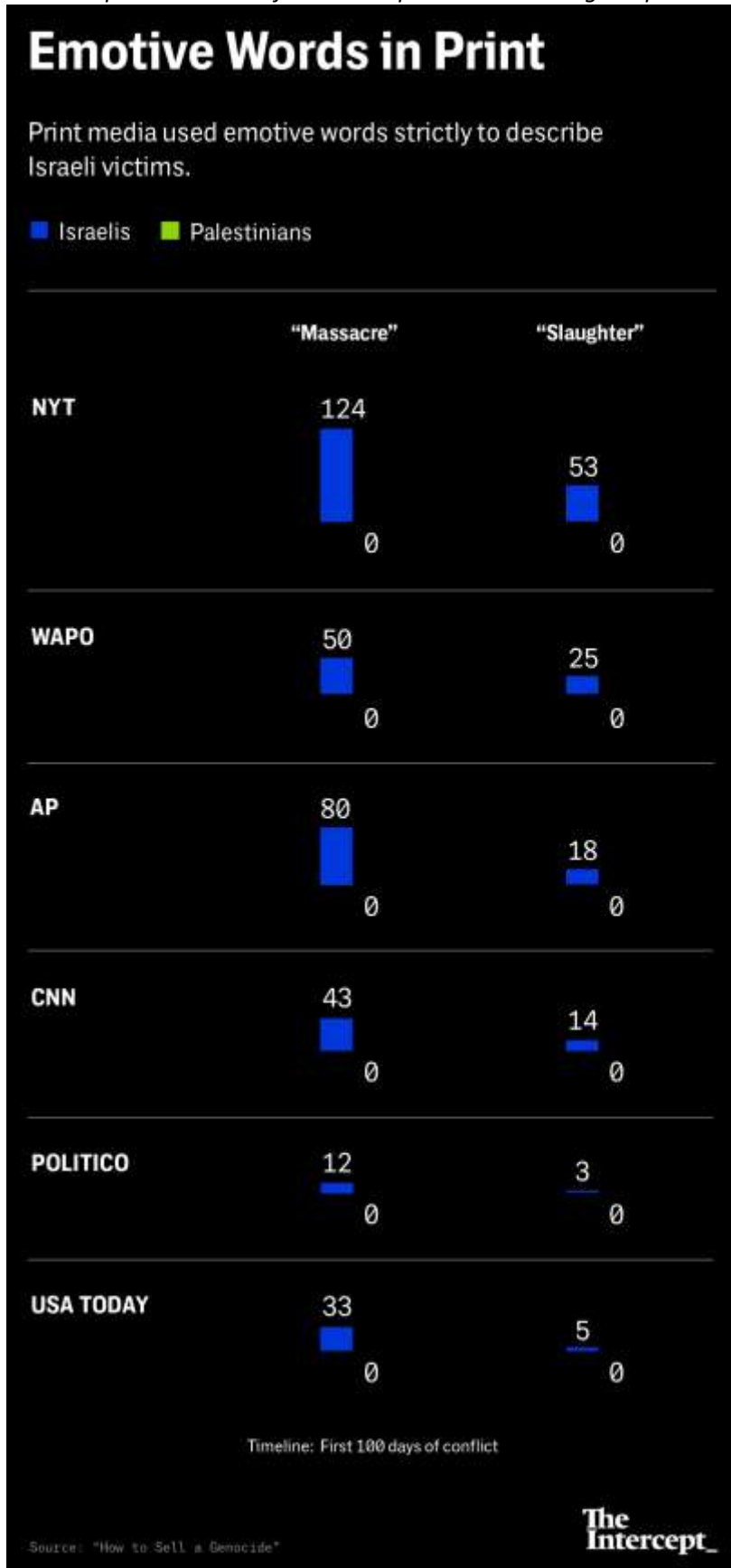
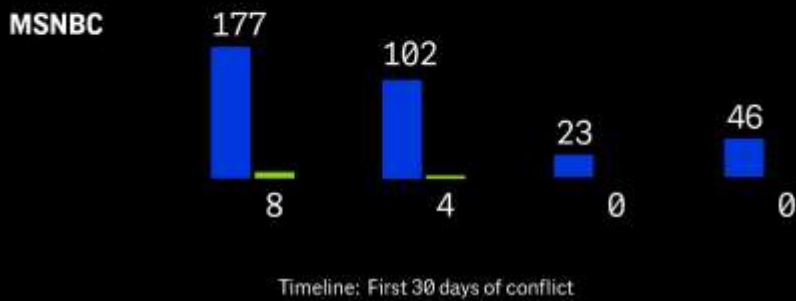


Chart: The Intercept

Emotive Words on TV

In TV news, emotive words strictly described Israeli victims.

■ Israelis ■ Palestinians



Source: "How to Sell a Genocide"

The Intercept

Chart: The Intercept

Using " Hamas-Run " to Downplay Palestinian Deaths



[Related](#)

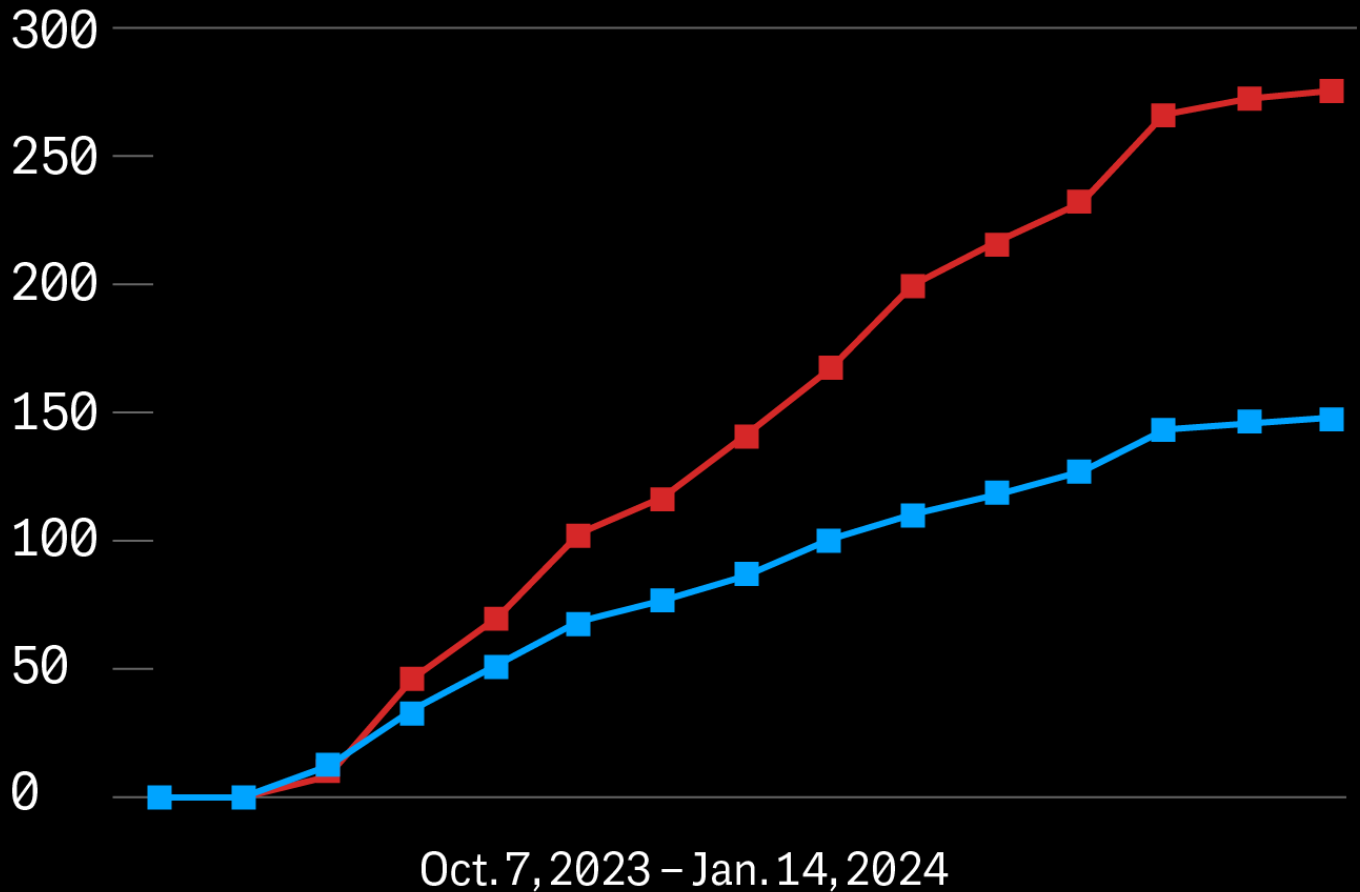
[Israeli Military Found Gaza Health Ministry Death Toll Was Accurate. Will These Deniers Admit It?](#)

After the October 17 bombing of Gaza’s al-Ahli Arab hospital by Israel, media outlets almost uniformly adopted pro-Israel pressure groups’ pejorative qualifiers “ Hamas-run ” or “ Hamas-controlled ” to describe Palestinian death counts, thereby [discrediting them](#). Neither CNN nor MSNBC used the term between October 7 and October 17, 2023, but it quickly skyrocketed in usage as the body count in Gaza grew — with the use of a related phrase becoming an [official policy at CNN](#). This, despite the U.S. State Department, World Health Organization, Human Rights Watch, and others’ long use of Gaza Health Ministry figures.

“ Hamas-Run ” Pejorative

News outlets qualified the Palestinian death toll by saying it came from the “ Hamas-run ” or “ Hamas-controlled ” Gaza Health Ministry.

■ MSNBC ■ CNN



Cumulative mentions of the “ Hamas-run ” qualifier skyrocketed after Israel bombed al-Ahli Arab Hospital on October 17

Chart: The Intercept

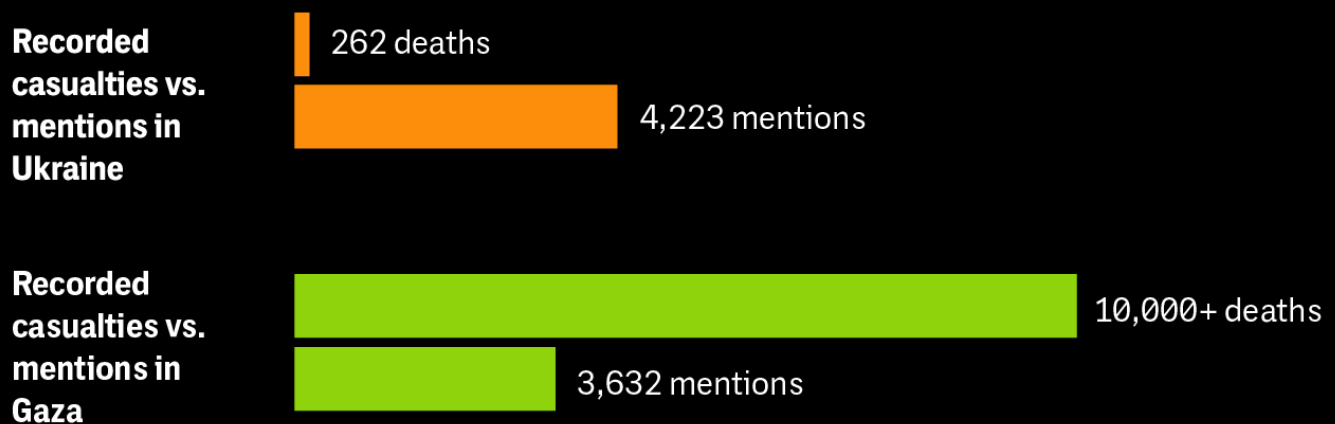
Sympathetic Victims: Gaza vs. Ukraine

Victims of Israel's attack on Gaza who could be expected to elicit sympathy from audiences — like journalists and children — received little coverage during the first 100 days of Israel's assault, compared to their counterparts in Ukraine.

Child Casualties

CNN and MSNBC disproportionately mentioned child casualties in Ukraine compared to Gaza.

■ Ukrainian ■ Palestinian



Timeline: First 100 days of conflict (respectively)

Source: "How to Sell a Genocide"

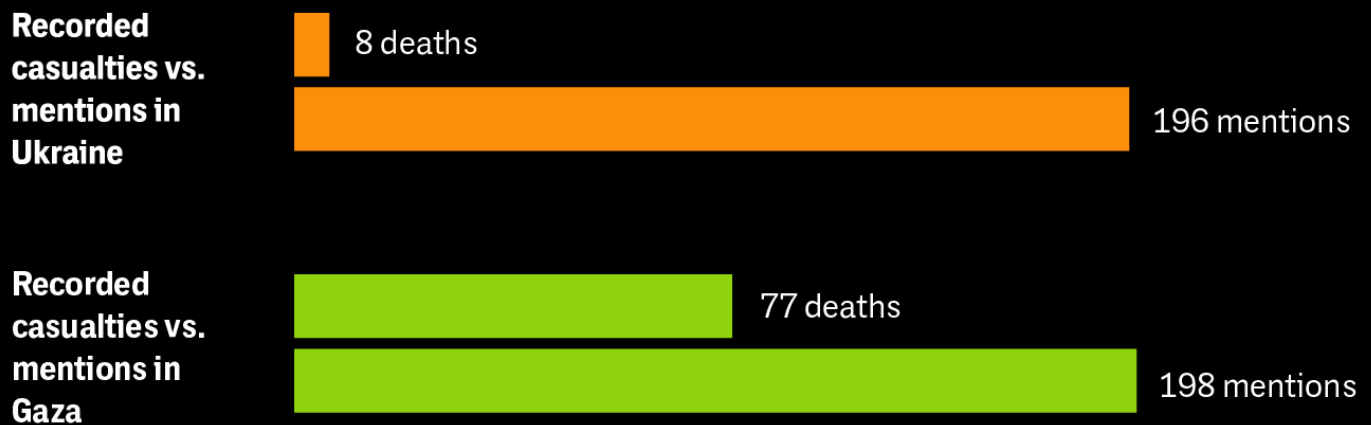
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Chart: The Intercept

Journalist Casualties

CNN and MSNBC evoked casualties of media workers evenly in Ukraine and Gaza, despite the latter group's higher death toll.

■ Ukrainian ■ Palestinian



Timeline: First 100 days of conflict (respectively)

Source: "How to Sell a Genocide"

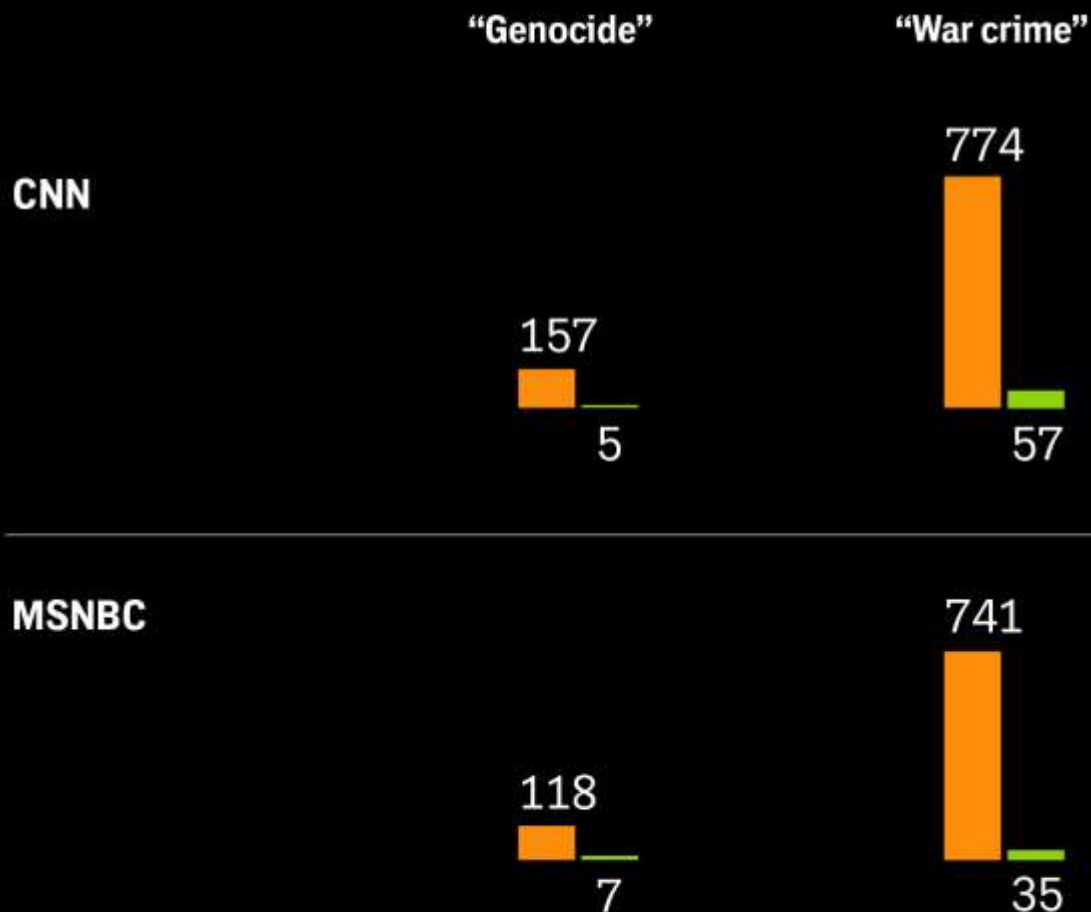
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Chart: The Intercept

“War Crimes” in Gaza vs. Ukraine

News outlets seldom mentioned the terms “war crime” or “genocide” when covering Gaza, especially in comparison with Ukraine.

■ Ukrainian ■ Palestinian



Timeline: First 30 days of conflict (respectively)

Source: “How to Sell a Genocide”

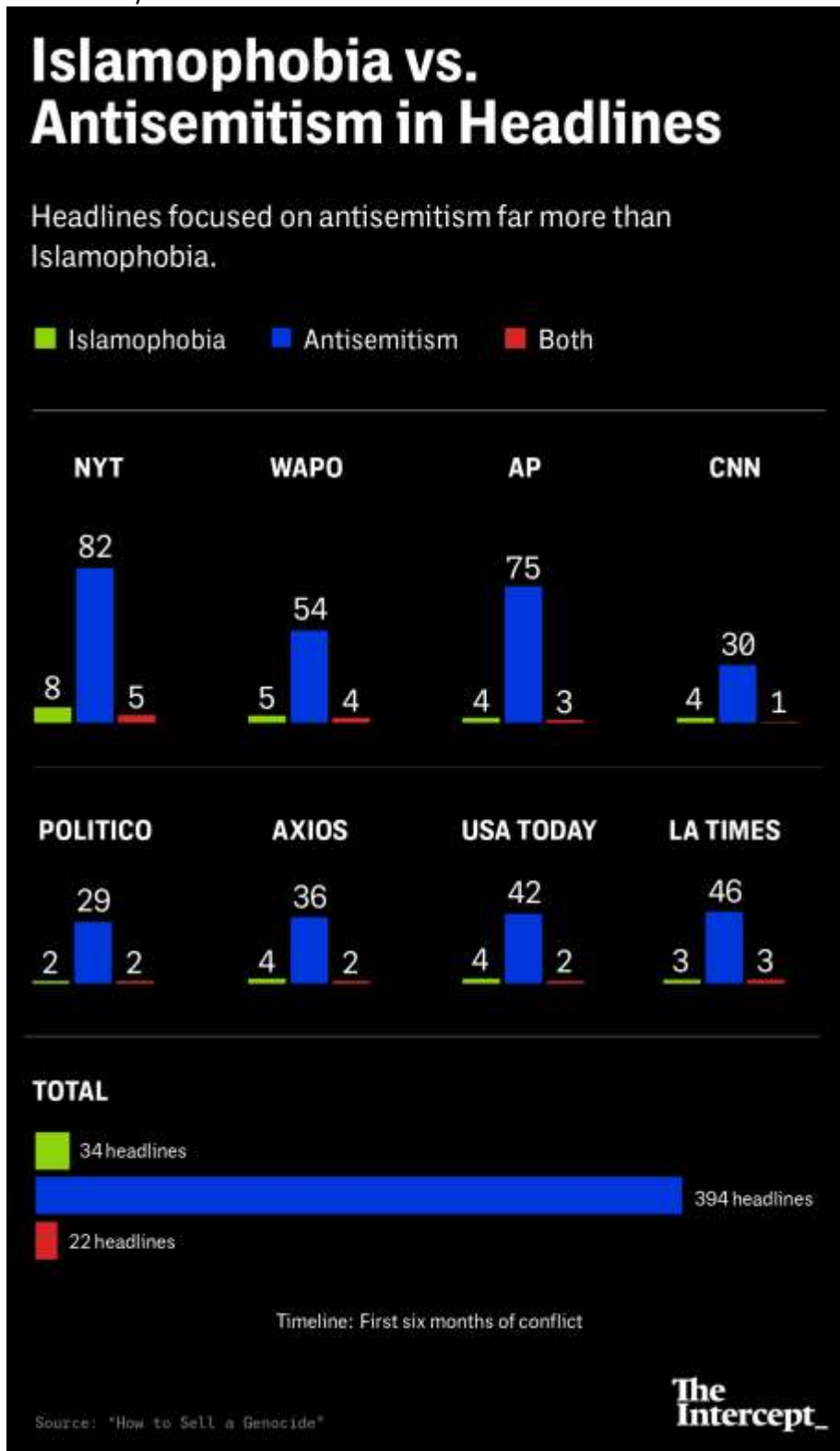
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Antisemitism vs. Islamophobia

While incidents of antisemitism and Islamophobia were on the rise in the months after October 7, coverage focused almost entirely on antisemitism with little or no regard for anti-Muslim bigotry or how the mass killing in Gaza impacted Palestinians stateside. This was especially true on [college campuses](#), where students protesting Israel's war were tarred as antisemites in the mainstream press, while Muslim, Arab, and Palestinian students [who faced discrimination](#) barely received any attention.



Which Bigotry as Sole Focus

Headlines were 31 times more likely to focus exclusively on antisemitism than Islamophobia.

■ Antisemitism ■ Islamophobia

TOTAL



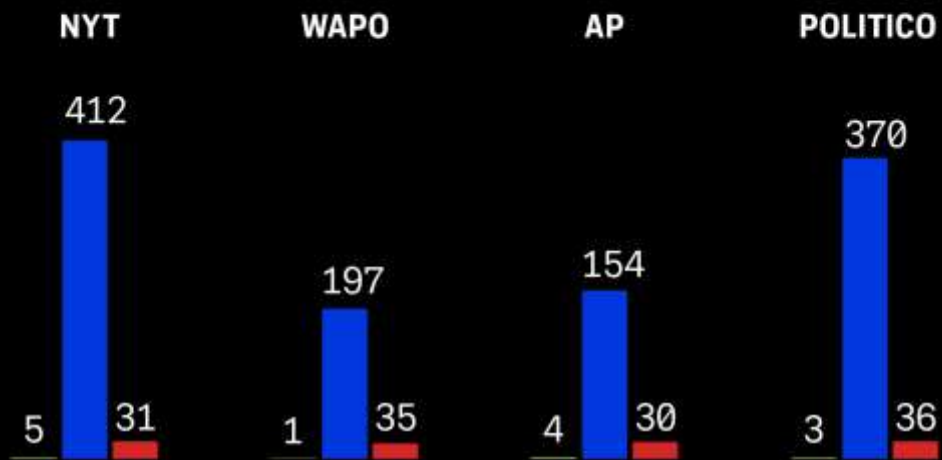
Data sourced from the New York Times, Politico, Axios, USA Today, Washington Post, LA Times, and AP from the first six months of conflict

Source: "How to Sell a Genocide"

Islamophobia vs. Antisemitism on Campus

Campus protest coverage emphasized antisemitism and barely addressed Islamophobia.

■ Islamophobia ■ Antisemitism ■ Both (same clause)



TOTAL



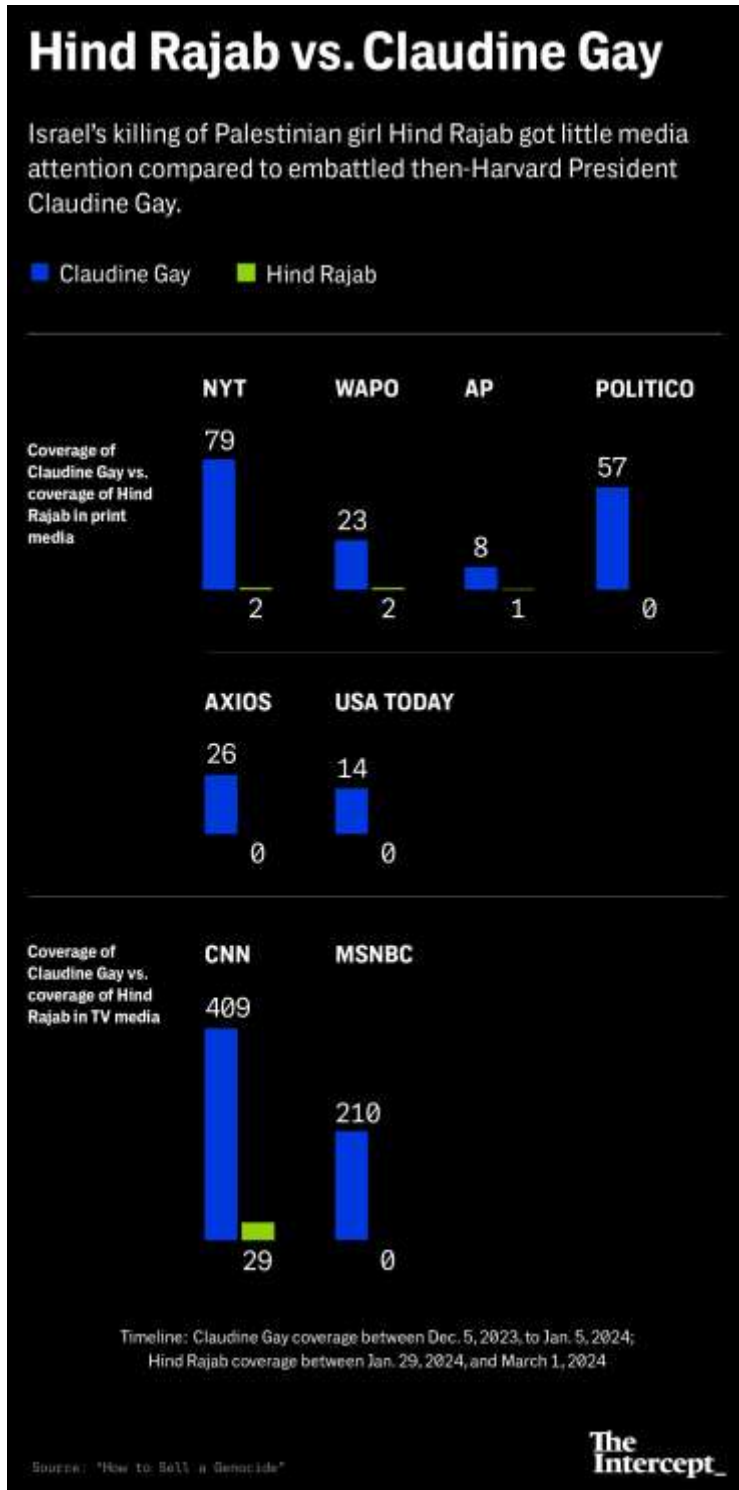
Timeline: First six months of conflict

Source: "How to Sell a Genocide"

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Campus Antisemitism vs. Killing Children in Gaza

For a poignant example of how Palestinians are dehumanized, consider the media's treatment of former Harvard University President Claudine Gay in comparison to their coverage, or lack thereof, of the [killing of Hind Rajab](#). Not long after Gay [resigned](#) under pressure from Congress amid a monthslong fixation on allegations of antisemitism on college campuses and allegations of plagiarism by Gay over 20 years prior, the Israeli military opened fire on a car carrying Rajab and her family and left the 5-year-old Palestinian girl to die. On the New York Times homepage, stories about Gay appeared in 15 of the 31-day period covering the height of the scandal, whereas Rajab didn't appear once in the month that followed her death.



Campus vs. Thousands of Deaths

Headlines in print media about then-Harvard President Claudine Gay versus the Gaza death toll during a period when thousands of Palestinian children were killed

■ Claudine Gay ■ Palestinian child victims

TOTAL



Data sourced from the New York Times, Politico, Axios, USA Today, Washington Post, and AP from Dec. 5, 2023, to Jan. 5, 2024

Source: "How to Sell a Genocide"

The Intercept

Correction: May 15, 2026

A caption for the "Emotive Words on TV" graphic misstated the specific Sunday shows where the mention of "massacre," "slaughter," and "brutal" were counted; they were the ABC, CBS, NBC, and CNN Sunday shows — not CNN, MSNBC Sunday shows. The visual ratios on the bars were also updated on the graphics for child casualties and mention of war crimes to accurately reflect the scales.

End of First Report: Continue to next

Netanyahu's War on Truth

Israel's Ruthless Propaganda Campaign to Dehumanize Palestinians



Israeli soldiers detain blindfolded Palestinian men in a military truck in the southern Gaza Strip on Nov. 19, 2023. Photo: Mahmud Hams/AFP via Getty Images



[Jeremy Scahill](#)

February 7 2024, 6:00 a.m.

Two weeks before Hamas commandos led a series of raids into Israel on October 7, Benjamin Netanyahu stood before an [empty chamber](#) at the United Nations headquarters in New York City. The Israeli prime minister brandished a map of what he promised could be the “New Middle East.” It depicted a state of Israel that stretched continuously from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea. On this map, Gaza and the West Bank were erased. Palestinians did not exist. “What a historic change for my country! You see, the land of Israel is situated on the crossroads between Africa, Asia, and Europe,” Netanyahu [bellowed](#) at a handful of spectators in the large hall, nearly all of whom were his loyalists or underlings. “For centuries, my country was repeatedly invaded by empires passing through it in their campaigns of plunder and conquest elsewhere. But today, as we tear down walls of enmity, Israel can become a bridge of peace and prosperity between these continents.”

During that speech, Netanyahu portrayed the full normalizing of relations with Saudi Arabia, an initiative [spearheaded](#) under the Trump administration and [embraced](#) by the [Biden White House](#), as the linchpin of his vision for this “new” reality, one which would open the door to a “visionary corridor that will stretch across the Arabian Peninsula and Israel. It will connect India to Europe with maritime links, rail links, energy pipelines, fiber-optic cables.”

He was speaking on the grand stage of the U.N. General Assembly, but no world leaders bothered to attend. Outside, some 2,000 people, a mixture of American Jews and Israeli citizens, protested his [attacks](#) on the independence of the [Israeli judiciary system](#). The scene served as a reminder of how deeply unpopular his far-right governing [coalition](#), not to mention Netanyahu himself, had become in Israel. At that moment, it seemed that Netanyahu was pushed against the ropes, in a losing battle to continue his political reign.

Netanyahu is using the horrors of October 7 to wage the crusade he's been preparing for his entire political career. Just days later, as Hamas commandos penetrated the barriers encircling Gaza and embarked on their deadly raids targeting several military installations as well as kibbutzim, everything changed in an instant. Everything, that is, except the primary agenda that has been at the center of Netanyahu's long political career: the absolute destruction of Palestine and its people.

Just as the Bush administration [exploited](#) the [9/11 attacks](#) to [justify](#) a [sweeping war](#) in which it declared the world a battlefield, Netanyahu is using the horrors of October 7 to wage the crusade he's been preparing for his entire political career. With his grip on power fading last fall, the October 7 attacks provided him with just the opportunity he needed, and he hitched his political survival to the war on Gaza and what could be his last chance to eliminate Israel's Palestinian problem once and for all.

In that sense, Bibi was saved by Hamas.



Photo: Lev Radin/Pacific Press/LightRocket via Getty Images

Prime Minister of Israel Benjamin Netanyahu shows a graphic illustrating his “New Middle East” during his speech at the 78th Session of the U.N. General Assembly on Sept. 22, 2023.

Intelligence Failures

Four months in, Netanyahu’s war of annihilation against Gaza has become a [guerrilla war](#) of attrition. Not a single Israeli hostage has been freed through military force, and Hamas has shown an enduring resilience and ability to [pick off](#) Israel Defense Forces soldiers. The Israeli public, outside of the ideological true believers intent on [occupying and settling](#) Gaza, is showing signs of fatigue and desperation. Many family members of captives are [growing louder](#) in their demands for an immediate deal with Hamas that centers the lives of their loved ones over the political agenda laid out by Netanyahu and his clique. Some have [demanded](#) new elections or Netanyahu’s [resignation](#). Protests against the war, though small, are beginning to grow inside Israel, with [some demonstrations](#) echoing global calls demanding a humanitarian ceasefire and an end to Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory.

As the death toll in Gaza surpasses a conservative estimate of 27,000 lives, many of the core narratives deployed by the Israeli and U.S. governments to justify the slaughter are coming under increased scrutiny; some have been definitively debunked. In Israel, this is a delicate line of inquiry. That Hamas killed large numbers of Israelis is not in doubt. But how they managed to do so while living under the lauded and vigilant eyes of the Mossad, Shin Bet, the Israeli Security Agency, and the IDF is the subject of mounting public attention.

There have been several credible reports that Israeli intelligence analysts warned that Hamas operatives appeared to be training for raids into Israel. The New York Times and other outlets have [reported](#) on the existence of a 40-page internal Hamas document code-named “Jericho Wall.” Purportedly obtained by Israeli intelligence, it is said to lay out detailed plans by Hamas to conduct precisely the type of assault against Israeli military installations and villages that occurred on October 7.

While warnings from Israeli analysts who reviewed the document were reportedly brushed aside by senior officials, last July a signals intelligence officer urged the chain of command to take it seriously. Noting a recent daylong training exercise by Hamas in Gaza, the analyst asserted that the training precisely mirrored the operations laid out in the document. “It is a plan designed to start a war,” she [pleaded](#). “It’s not just a raid on a village.”



Photo: Noam Galai/Getty Images

Hundreds of vehicles damaged or destroyed during the October 7 Hamas-led attacks and subsequent counterstrikes by the Israeli military are collected at a site in Tkuma, Israel, on Nov. 5, 2023.

The night before Hamas's raid, intelligence analysts began reporting significant evidence suggesting that Hamas might be preparing for an attack inside Israel. The head of Shin Bet traveled to the south and orders were issued to deploy a special counterterror force to confront any potential incursions, according to an [investigative report](#) in the Israeli publication Yedioth Ahronoth.

Shortly after 3 a.m. on October 7, a senior intelligence official concluded the activity in Gaza was likely another Hamas training exercise, saying, "We still believe that [Hamas leader Yahya] Sinwar is not pivoting towards an escalation." A few hours later, as Israeli officials gathered in a command center chaotically scrambling to deploy forces to respond to the multipronged attacks led by Hamas, a senior officer silenced the room: "The Gaza Division was overpowered." Early on in the war against Gaza, Netanyahu sought to [deflect blame](#) for failing to foresee Hamas's attacks onto his intelligence services. "Contrary to the false claims: Under no circumstances and at no stage was Prime Minister Netanyahu warned of Hamas's war intentions," read a tweet posted on Netanyahu's official Twitter account. "On the contrary, all the security officials, including the head of military intelligence and the head of the Shin Bet, assessed that Hamas had been deterred and was looking for a settlement. This assessment was submitted again and again to the prime minister and the cabinet by all the security forces and intelligence community, up until the outbreak of the war."

But serious questions lingered over how Hamas was able to lay siege to large sections of what Israel calls the "Gaza envelope" and whether Netanyahu had knowledge that an attack of this very nature was being planned in full view of Israel's extensive surveillance systems and spy networks. There is also a mounting body of evidence to indicate that Israeli forces were given orders on October 7 to stop Hamas's attacks at all costs, including the killing of Israeli civilians taken captive by Palestinian fighters. The Israeli military has [indicated](#) that it plans to conduct an "uncompromising" investigation into the intelligence failures, drawing the ire of some far-right members of Netanyahu's government. Under fire from his own ministers and supporters for impugning Israeli military and intelligence agencies, Netanyahu apologized for his comments, deleted the tweet, and then shifted to the stance he now repeats: There will be a time for such inquiries — but only after Israel achieves total victory in Gaza and eliminates Hamas. "The only thing that I intend to have resign is Hamas," he [said](#) in November. "We're going to resign them to the dustbin of history."



Photo: Omar Ishaq/picture alliance via Getty Images

The destruction in the area where the Al-Maqousi Towers, Al-Mashtal Hotel, and Al-Khalidi Mosque stood after the Israeli army withdrew from north of Gaza City on Feb. 3, 2024.

Information Warfare

The violent ethnonationalist ideology at the center of Netanyahu's reign was born before his tenure and will endure when he's gone. But his rule has embodied the most extremist and destructive version of the Israeli state project. Netanyahu understands the power of defining and dominating the narrative, particularly when targeting it to U.S. audiences. For decades, he has advanced the Israeli propaganda doctrine of [hasbara](#) — the notion that Israelis must be aggressive about “explaining” and justifying their actions to the West — to manipulate his adversaries and allies, domestic and international, into serving his objectives.

Netanyahu's “vision of himself as the chief defender of the Jewish people against calamity allowed him to justify almost anything that would keep him in power,” [observed](#) former President Barack Obama in his 2020 memoir.

In the aftermath of October 7, Netanyahu cast Israel's siege of a tiny strip of land the size of Philadelphia as a war of the worlds in which the very fate of humanity was at stake. “It's not only our war. It's your war too,” Netanyahu said in his first [interview](#) on CNN after the October 7 attacks. “It's the battle of civilization against barbarism. And if we don't win here, this scourge will pass. The Middle East will pass to other places. The Middle East will fall. Europe is next. You will be next.”

The Israeli government rapidly deployed a multipronged propaganda strategy to win unprecedented support from the U.S. and other Western governments for a sweeping war against the entire population of Gaza. To oppose Israel's war is [antisemitic](#); to question its assertions about the events of October 7 is akin to Holocaust denial; to [protest the mass killing](#) of Palestinian civilians is to do the [bidding of Hamas](#).



[Israel's War on Gaza](#)

At the center of Israel's information warfare campaign is a tactical mission to dehumanize Palestinians and to flood the public discourse with a stream of false, unsubstantiated, and unverifiable allegations. “We were struck Saturday by an attack whose savagery I can say we have not seen since the Holocaust,” Netanyahu told President Joe Biden in a [phone call](#) on October 11. “They took dozens of children, bound them up, burned them and executed them.” He added: “We have never seen such savagery in the history of the state. They're even worse than ISIS and we need to treat them as such.”

“We are fighting human animals and we are acting accordingly,” [said](#) Israel's Defense Minister Yoav Gallant on October 9. The message of these statements and others like them was clear: Israel is confronting monsters, and no one has any business telling the Jewish state, established in the aftermath of World War II under the mantra of “Never again,” how to respond to an attempted genocide. Israeli officials routinely invoke the Holocaust, compare Hamas to the Nazis or to ISIS, and portray the events of October 7 as evidence of an organized effort to commit genocide against the Jewish people.

On October 10, three days after the attacks, the Israeli military organized a tour for international journalists to view the scene at Kfar Aza Kibbutz. As they guided reporters and camera crews through the community, IDF officials [spread rumors](#) that as many as [40 babies](#) had been murdered by Hamas, some of them beheaded. “It’s something I never saw in my life. It’s something I used to imagine of my grandmother and my grandfather in Europe and other places,” an Israeli general [told](#) reporters. “We got very, very disturbing reports that came from the ground that there were babies that had been beheaded,” [said](#) IDF spokesperson Jonathan Conricus in a briefing for international journalists. “I admit it took us some time to really understand and to verify that report. It was hard to believe that even Hamas could perform such a barbaric act.”

Lt. Col. Guy Basson, deputy commander of the Israeli army’s Kfir Brigade, claimed that he saw the aftermath of eight babies who [were executed](#) in a nursery at Kibbutz Be’eri. Among the victims, Basson asserted, was also a survivor of the Auschwitz death camp. “I see the number engraved on her arm, and you say to yourself, she went through the Holocaust in Auschwitz and ended up dying on Kibbutz Be’eri.” Another Israeli soldier [told](#) a journalist that “babies and children were hung on a clothes line in a row.”



Photo: Brendan Smialowski/AFP via Getty Images

President Joe Biden speaks with Eli Beer, founder of volunteer EMS organization United Hatzalah of Israel on Oct. 18, 2023, in Tel Aviv. Beer told several graphic stories about the Hamas attacks that were later debunked.

Three weeks after the October 7 attacks, Eli Beer, the head of a volunteer EMS squad in Israel, traveled to the U.S. and addressed a gathering at the convention of the Republican Jewish Coalition in Las Vegas. “I saw in my own eyes a woman who was pregnant, four months pregnant,” he [said](#). “They came into her house, in front of her kids, they opened up her stomach took out the baby, and stabbed the little, tiny baby in front of her and then shot her in front of her family and then they killed the rest of the kids.”

Beer offered graphic descriptions of other horrors he claimed to have witnessed. “These bastards put these babies in an oven and put on the oven. We found the kid a few hours later,” he [told](#) the U.S. audience on October 28. “I saw little kids

who were beheaded. We didn't know which head belonged to which kid." Beer, whose stories were widely [reported](#) in the international media, also [met with](#) Biden and Secretary of State Antony Blinken in Israel soon after the attack. But there is a problem with the gut-wrenching narratives that have bolstered the underlying justification for the slaughter of Gaza: They are either complete fabrications or have not been substantiated with a shred of evidence. Many have been thoroughly disproven by major Israeli media outlets.

In the immediate aftermath of the attacks, Netanyahu and other Israeli officials [presented](#) U.S. and international leaders with a range of graphic images and videos along with unverified narrative explanations for what they allegedly depicted. "It's simply depravity in the worst imaginable way," Blinken [said](#) after first viewing the photos. "Images are worth a thousand words. These images may be worth a million."

In a coup for Netanyahu's hasbara campaign, Biden and other leaders have laundered many of Israel's obscene lies. In a coup for Netanyahu's hasbara campaign, Biden and other leaders have laundered many of Israel's obscene lies. Beginning just days after October 7, Biden [repeatedly](#) claimed that he personally saw photographs of beheaded babies and more atrocities. Even after the White House [admitted](#) Biden had seen no such photos, he continued to make the allegation, including after visiting Netanyahu and other Israeli officials in Tel Aviv. "I saw some of the photographs when I was there — tying a mother and her daughter together on a rope and then pouring kerosene on them and then burning them, beheading infants, doing things that are just inhuman — totally, completely inhuman," Biden [said](#) at a campaign event in December.

Blinken told the U.S. Senate another harrowing story about how Hamas terrorists had tortured a family in their living room while intermittently taking breaks to eat a meal their victims had placed on the dining table before the horrors began that morning. "A young boy and girl, 6 and 8 years old, and their parents around the breakfast table. The father's eye gouged out in front of his kids. The mother's breast cut off, the girl's foot amputated, the boy's fingers cut off before they were executed," Blinken [said](#). "And then their executioners sat down and had a meal. That is what this society is dealing with."

The story Blinken told about terrorists eating a meal while torturing an Israeli family, as well as some of the assertions about decapitated babies, was based on the [speculative fiction](#) invented by Yossi Landau, an official from the [scandal-plagued](#) private Israeli rescue organization Zaka, who has [repeatedly spread](#) wildly false stories.



Photo: Amir Levy/Getty Images/Getty Images

Army rescue and Zaka crews search Kibbutz Be’eri, one of the sites attacked by Hamas fighters, on Oct. 22, 2023. Members of Zaka, a private Israeli rescue organization, repeatedly spread disinformation, some of which was promoted by U.S. officials.

There was [no Holocaust survivor](#) killed at Kibbutz Be’eri that day. There were no mass beheadings of babies, no group executions in a nursery, no children hung from [clotheslines](#), and no infants placed in ovens. No pregnant woman had her stomach cut open and the fetus knifed in front of her and her other children. These stories are entirely fictional, a set of audacious lies weaponized to generate the type of collective rage used to justify the unjustifiable.

According to major Israeli [media outlets](#) that have worked diligently to [identify](#) all the victims of the October 7 attacks, there was one infant killed that day: a 9-month-old named [Mila Cohen](#) who was shot dead at Kibbutz Be’eri as her mother held her in her arms. Cohen’s mother, who was wounded by gunfire, survived. Among the other civilians killed on October 7, seven of them were between the ages of 2 and 9 years, and 28 were between the ages of 10 and 19. Fourteen of these children died in [Hamas rocket attacks](#), not at the hands of the armed commandos who stormed the kibbutzes.

There is no doubt that widespread atrocities and war crimes were committed during the Hamas-led attacks of October 7. It is also true that Israeli military, government, and rescue officials have engaged in a deliberate misinformation campaign about the nature of many deaths that occurred that day.

These stories are a set of audacious lies weaponized to generate the type of collective rage used to justify the unjustifiable.

Israeli officials have toured the world with a film [produced](#) at the direction of the IDF. The 47-minute “Bearing Witness to the October 7 Massacre” features video allegedly seized from Palestinian attackers equipped with GoPro cameras and cellphones, according to Israeli officials. The movie has not been released to the public and has only been available via special invitation from the Israeli government. Its audiences have [included](#) Hollywood celebrities, [dozens](#) of U.S. lawmakers and government officials, journalists, and global luminaries; it has screened at various international venues, including museums established in memory of the Holocaust. While hours of footage of the attacks and their aftermath are available online, including video shot by Palestinians who participated in the raids, the Israeli government has said the footage is too sensitive to be publicly released.

An IDF official, [in uniform](#), personally delivers the professionally produced Digital Cinema Package for the screenings, and viewers are required to sign nondisclosure agreements affirming they will not record or distribute the footage. “It will change the way you view the Middle East and the way you view the war in Gaza,” said Gilad Erdan, Israel’s ambassador to the United Nations, at the Los Angeles [premiere](#) of the footage last November. The film was characterized in media accounts as [depicting](#) “murder, beheadings, rapes and other atrocities against Jewish adults and children.”

The event, at the Museum of Tolerance, was organized by Israeli actor Gal Gadot, star of the “Wonder Woman” movies, for film executives and other members of the Hollywood industry. “Hamas must be eradicated. This is the only way to prevent another massacre,” Erdan added. “If Israel doesn’t eradicate this evil, mark my words: The West is next.”

While Israel has emphasized how incendiary the footage is, British journalist Owen Jones, who [attended](#) an IDF screening in the U.K., said a “significant amount” of the video is already in the public domain. He said that while there was footage of one IDF soldier who had apparently been decapitated, as well as the already public footage of an unsuccessful attempt to behead a migrant Thai worker with a garden tool, there was no footage substantiating allegations of torture, sexual violence, and mass beheadings, including of babies or other children. “Clearly this footage hasn’t been selected at random. You would expect it to be the worst material that they have,” Jones said. “This isn’t to say none of this happened, it’s just not in the footage, which has been provided by the Israeli authorities.”

Israel’s hasbara campaign is reminiscent of the Bush administration’s monthslong carnival of lies, sanitized and [promoted](#) by [major](#) media [outlets](#), about alleged weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. And Biden directly participated in President

George W. Bush's campaign as well. In his October 2002 Senate floor speech endorsing war against Iraq, [Biden declared that Saddam Hussein](#) "possesses chemical and biological weapons and is seeking nuclear weapons."



Photo: Brendan Smialowski/AFP via Getty Images

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu hugs U.S. President Joe Biden upon his arrival at Tel Aviv's Ben Gurion Airport on Oct. 18, 2023.

Allegations of Systematic Rape

The Israeli propaganda machine is well oiled. Anyone can look back at Israel's four-month war against Gaza and trace a pattern: Israel chooses an issue and demands global attention to its agenda at the expense of any other matter. When news organizations began reporting on the civilian toll of Israel's initial airstrikes against Gaza, the government [accused](#) photographers for major news organizations of being Hamas members or sympathizers who had foreknowledge of the October 7 attacks. Netanyahu said the journalists were "accomplices in crimes against humanity." Israel then [portrayed](#) Gaza's [hospitals](#) as secret Hamas command centers, an allegation that the Biden administration bolstered as the IDF prepared to [lay siege to Al-Shifa Hospital](#) last November.

Throughout the war, Israel has sought to direct media and global attention to various new smoking-gun narratives. And in nearly every case, it succeeds in getting the U.S. on board to launder and promote the talking points. In late November, as the [civilian death toll](#) in Gaza climbed, Israel was struggling to retain its dominance of the narrative. Global demands for a ceasefire were mounting, and even some of Israel's [allies](#) were expressing [horror](#) at the indiscriminate killing of women and children and the worsening humanitarian catastrophe.

A weeklong truce, during which captives were exchanged, [raised hopes](#) that a more enduring peace deal could be on the horizon, despite Israeli insistence that that was out of the question. "A prolonged ceasefire that allows more hostages to be released, and that evolves towards a permanent ceasefire linked to a political process, is something we have consensus on," [said](#) the EU's top foreign policy official Josep Borrell.

Days earlier, the prime ministers of Spain and Belgium traveled to the Rafah border to push for such a deal and drew the fury of the Israeli government when they publicly condemned the indiscriminate killing of Palestinian civilians. Eli Cohen, then the Israeli foreign minister, accused the leaders of offering “support [for] terrorism,” while Netanyahu released a [statement](#) condemning them because they “did not place total responsibility on Hamas for the crimes against humanity it perpetrated.”

Anyone can look back at Israel’s four-month war against Gaza and trace a pattern: Israel chooses an issue and demands global attention to its agenda at the expense of any other matter.

It was at this moment that the Israeli government decided it needed to remind the world of Israel’s victimhood and launched a new phase of the hasbara campaign. It began accusing the international community of standing silent in the face of what Israeli officials described as a widespread campaign of rape and sexual violence aimed at Jewish women and orchestrated by Hamas on October 7. By early December, the issue had become a major focus of conservative media and Israel’s allies.

“I say to the women’s rights organizations, to the human rights organizations, you’ve heard of the rape of Israeli women, horrible atrocities, sexual mutilation? Where the hell are you?” Netanyahu [said](#) in a December 5 speech in Tel Aviv. That day, on the other side of the globe, Biden was at a campaign fundraising event in Boston. “Over the past few weeks, survivors and witnesses of the attacks have shared the horrific accounts of unimaginable cruelty: reports of women raped — repeatedly raped and their bodies being mutilated while still alive, of women corpses being desecrated, and Hamas terrorists inflicting as much pain and suffering as — on women and girls as possible and then murdering them. And it’s appalling,” Biden [said](#). “The world can’t just look away — what’s going on. It’s on all of us — the government, international organizations, civil society, individual citizens — to forcefully condemn the sexual violence of Hamas terrorists without equivocation — without equivocation, without exception.”

From the earliest moments following the October 7 attacks, Israel charged that women had been raped by Hamas fighters, though it was often an allegation made in sequence alongside other alleged atrocities. But in mid-November, those assertions began evolving into a sustained public blitz, [accusing](#) Hamas of instituting a plan to “systematically rape women.” Israel government spokesperson Eylon Levy [spoke](#) of a “Hamas rapist machine.”

“Hamas used rape and sexual violence as weapons of war,” [charged](#) Erdan, the U.N. ambassador. “These were not spur-of-the-moment decisions to defile and mutilate girls and parade them while onlookers cheered; rather, this was premeditated.”

To date, there has been no credible evidence presented publicly that such a campaign took place, and Hamas has vehemently denied that its fighters committed any acts of rape or sexual assault. The fact that Israel has not produced forensic evidence for individual rapes does not prove that no such deeds took place. Rape investigations are often complex, particularly [when the crime occurs amid a chaotic scene of mass violence](#). Sexual violence is common in warfare, and it often takes years for the full story of such crimes to emerge.

But there is a difference between making specific allegations of rape or sexual assault and charging that organized mass rape was a central component of an operation meticulously planned over the course of years. Israel’s evidence of the latter comes nowhere near to measuring up to its claims.

Israeli rescue workers as well as civilian and military medical officials have described evidence of dead women who were naked or had clothing removed, as well as women who were subjected to genital mutilation, though they have not released documentary or forensic evidence.

But many of the most [graphic allegations](#) of mass rapes have been offered by Israeli military or rescue officials who acknowledge they have [no training](#) or expertise in forensics. Some of them, whose claims have been featured in many media accounts, also spread false stories about other alleged atrocities.



Photo: Lev Radin/Pacific Press/LightRocket via Getty Images

Shari Mendes, an IDF reservist originally from New Jersey, speaks at a conference organized by Israel at the U.N. on Dec. 4, 2023. Mendes has been one of the most prominent voices alleging widespread sexual violence occurred on October 7. Shari Mendes, an architect serving in the IDF reserves in a rabbinical unit, was deployed to a morgue to prepare bodies for burial after the attacks. An American originally from New Jersey, Mendes did multiple TV and print interviews about her experiences. “We have seen women who have been raped, from the age of children through to the elderly,” she [told](#) reporters, [emphasizing](#), “This is not just something we saw on the internet, we saw these bodies with our own eyes.” For months, Mendes has served as one of the most visible witnesses bolstering Israel’s allegations of systematic rape. But few media outlets featuring her claims have mentioned the [valid concerns](#) about her credibility and her history of promoting a false story. She [told](#) the Daily Mail last October, “A baby was cut out of a pregnant woman and beheaded and then the mother was beheaded.”

On December 5, as Israel engaged in a global media push around its allegations that Hamas had committed mass rapes, Mendes was a featured speaker at an [event](#) in New York organized by Israel’s mission to the U.N. on sexual violence and the October 7 attacks. The Times of Israel [reported](#) that Mendes “is not legally qualified to determine rape.” The observations of first responders or members of religious burial units, particularly those without relevant scientific credentials, are not a replacement for forensic documentation of an uncontaminated crime scene. Israeli authorities have said evidence that would typically be taken in cases of suspected sexual assault was not recovered in the aftermath of the attacks, attributing this failure to a combination of the magnitude of the deaths, the charred nature of some bodies, and to Jewish burial practices.

Some of the evidence publicly [cited](#) by Israeli officials is testimony provided by Zaka, the private Israeli rescue organization whose members have been widely documented to have spread false allegations. Haaretz published an [exposé](#) documenting Zaka’s role in the rampant mishandling of forensic evidence that day and its subsequent campaign of misinformation.

The Israeli government has maintained that it possesses evidence that has not been made public and has [enlisted](#) international teams of forensic and other crime scene experts. Israel's Ministry of Welfare and Social Affairs told the [New York Times](#) there are "at least three women and one man who were sexually assaulted and survived." But other Israeli officials have [stated](#) that there are no known living victims of rape that day, while some have described the challenge of identifying potential victims.



[Related](#)

[New York Times Puts "Daily" Episode on Ice Amid Internal Firestorm Over Hamas Sexual Violence Article](#)

On December 28, the New York Times published what instantly became the most widely circulated [news story](#) purporting to document a widespread campaign of sexual violence orchestrated by Hamas. That story has come under intense [scrutiny](#), including [within the Times newsroom](#).

The family of Gal Abdush, whose alleged rape was at the center of the Times article, disputed the article's assertion she was raped. One relative also suggested the family was pressured, under false pretenses, to speak with the reporters. Abdush's sister wrote on Instagram that the Times reporters "mentioned they want to write a report in memory of Gal, and that's it. If we knew that the title would be about rape and butchery, we'd never accept that." A woman who filmed Abdush on October 7 told [YNet](#) that Israeli journalists working for the Times had pressured her into giving the paper access to her photos and videos. "They called me again and again and explained how important it is to Israeli hasbara," she [recalled](#). This series of events was documented extensively by [Mondoweiss](#).

Critics of the Times story also [pointed to the inconsistencies](#) of the accounts of some of the alleged witnesses featured, as well as to its use of information provided by members of Zaka.

Several Israelis who survived the October 7 attacks have publicly claimed that they witnessed rapes by Palestinian assailants, but Israeli investigators have said they are still searching for supporting evidence. Authorities also say they must match alleged victims with specific eyewitness testimony in order to bring potential charges. What often goes unmentioned in Israel's sweeping allegations is an important fact: Hamas was not the only Palestinian group to attack Israelis on October 7. Many individuals who had no knowledge of Hamas's plans poured across the

border and committed acts of violence in what has been referred to as an unplanned “second wave.” Some of these [non-Hamas](#) Palestinians also took Israeli hostages back to Gaza.

One survivor of the Nova music festival massacre, a veteran of Israel’s special forces, has given multiple interviews to major media outlets, including the New York Times, about a rape he claims to have witnessed. During an appearance on CNN, Raz Cohen [described](#) the assailants as “Five guys — five civilians from Gaza, normal guys, not soldiers, not Nukhba,” referring to Hamas’s elite commando force. “It was regular people from Gaza with normal clothes.” Cohen, it must be noted, has told varying, sometimes contradictory, versions of what he witnessed.

Israel has painted all actions on October 7 as being committed by Hamas and its fighters. That storyline obviously serves Israel’s military and political objectives, but the truth is more complicated.

In light of Israel’s well-documented campaign of lies and misinformation about other events on October 7, incendiary allegations, such as claims that Hamas engaged in a deliberate campaign of systematic rape, should be viewed with extreme skepticism.



Photo: Thomas Coex/AFP via Getty Images

Members of the media go on a press tour organized by the Israeli military on Oct. 22, 2023, at Kibbutz Be’eri, which was targeted by Hamas during the October 7 attacks. Witnesses said that an Israeli tank fired on a house filled with Israeli civilians held hostage on October 7.

Friendly Fire

As many U.S. media outlets and politicians have promoted and laundered Israel’s claims, spreading them far and wide, there have been strong voices among the Israeli public and media that have exhibited skepticism. This is especially true regarding the actions taken by Israeli forces as they responded to the October 7 attacks. Calls are growing inside Israel,

led by survivors and victims' families, for the Israeli government to provide a factual explanation of precisely how their loved ones died: Were they killed by Palestinian militants or by the Israeli military?

Israeli media outlets have aired interviews with survivors and IDF personnel [describing](#) what they refer to as “friendly fire” [incidents](#), including the shelling of a house where Hamas commandos were holding Israeli civilians hostage. Families of some Israelis killed at Kibbutz Be’eri have [cited](#) witnesses who said that an Israeli tank fired on a house filled with Israeli civilians held hostage on October 7. A dozen hostages, including 12-year-old twins, died inside the house after Israeli forces began shelling it.

“According to the evidence, the shooting of the tank was fatal and killed many hostages in addition to the terrorists,” the families [wrote](#) in a January 4 letter to the IDF’s chief of staff. Given the “seriousness of the incident, we do not think it is right to wait with the investigation until after the end of the war.” They demanded a “comprehensive and transparent investigation into the decisions and actions that led to this tragic outcome.” Israeli military Brig. Gen. Barak Hiram has since admitted he ordered the shelling that day. “The negotiations are over,” he [recalled](#) saying. “Break in, even at the cost of civilian casualties.”

Yasmin Porat, who had escaped the horrors at the Nova music festival and sought refuge in a home at Be’eri, offered extensive details on this incident, as [Electronic Intifada reported](#). In a [series](#) of interviews on Israeli media, Porat described how Palestinian commandos entered the home and told the Israeli civilians they intended to take them hostage and, after moving them to a location with other hostages at the kibbutz, ultimately used their Israeli captives to contact the police to negotiate. “Their objective was to kidnap us to Gaza. Not to murder us,” she told Israeli network Kan News. “And after we were there for two hours with the abductors, the police arrive. A gun battle takes place that our police started.”

Porat, who said her captors “treated us very humanely,” described how she managed to escape the house by convincing one of the gunmen to exit with her. After using her as a “human shield” to exit the house, the Palestinian was taken into custody, and Porat remained on the scene as Israeli forces laid siege to the house. “They eliminated everyone, including the hostages. There was very, very heavy crossfire,” she said. “Everyone was killed there. Just horrible.” Other witnesses at Be’eri have [described](#) how Israeli forces were able to retake the kibbutz from Palestinian fighters only after the IDF shelled houses where hostages were being held.

There is also [evidence](#) indicating that Israeli forces responding to the attacks at the Nova music festival, where 364 people died, may have killed Israeli civilians as they attacked Palestinian militants, including with munitions fired from Apache helicopters. Yedioth Ahronoth and other major Israeli media outlets have published reports detailing the massive fire from combat helicopters and drones unleashed against the gunmen who violently stormed the festival. Military sources [described](#) the difficulty in distinguishing civilians from attackers, particularly in the early phases of the Israeli counterstrike.

In the most sweeping journalistic account to date of the events surrounding the Israeli military’s operations on October 7, Ronen Bergman and Yoav Zitun — two well-connected and prominent Israeli journalists — [wrote](#) about the state of chaos and panic within the security establishment. They described “a command chain that failed almost entirely and was entirely blindsided; orders to open fire on terrorist vehicles speeding towards Gaza even as there was a concern that they contained captives — some sort of renewed version of the Hannibal Directive.”

The Hannibal Directive, which dates back to 1986 and has been the subject of great controversy in Israel, authorized military forces to stop the kidnapping of Israeli soldiers at all costs, even if it meant shooting or injuring the captives. In a 2003 [investigation](#), the Israeli newspaper Haaretz reported the broadly held understanding of the directive: “From the point of view of the army, a dead soldier is better than a captive soldier who himself suffers and forces the state to release thousands of captives in order to obtain his release.”

The Hannibal Directive was [allegedly rescinded](#) in 2016. But Bergman and Zitun report that by midday on October 7, the IDF issued a similar order, instructing all units to stop Hamas from bringing hostages back to Gaza and to do so “at any cost.” They describe Israeli helicopter gunships, drones, and tanks firing on any and all cars en route to Gaza, burning

them and in some cases killing everyone inside the vehicles. Haaretz [reported](#) on an IDF commander, locked in a subterranean bunker, calling in a strike against his own bases “in order to repulse the terrorists.”

The truth is that we do not know how many of their own people Israeli forces killed during the counteroffensive on October 7. Nor do we know what happened in the [firefights](#) when armed Israelis, including kibbutz private security and military personnel, sought to defend their settlements.

How many Israelis — soldiers and civilians — were killed in the chaos and had their deaths recorded as killed or sadistically burned alive by Hamas?

Beyond the deadly shelling of the house at Be’eri, the public has been given very few details of what exactly transpired when official Israeli military forces deployed to confront the commandos from Gaza. Israeli military and police forces engaged in prolonged standoffs and shootouts with Palestinian gunmen holed up in houses, police stations, military installations, and other buildings, often holding hostages. In some cases, these battles went on for days.

In November, Netanyahu senior adviser Mark Regev was asked by MSNBC host Mehdi Hasan about some of the lies told by Israeli officials and soldiers about the events of October 7. Regev remarked that when a claim has been proven false, Israel retracts or clarifies it. “We originally said, in the atrocious Hamas attack upon our people on October 7, we had the number at 1,400 casualties and now we’ve revised that down to 1,200 because we understood that we’d overestimated, we made a mistake,” Regev [said](#). He then added: “There were actually bodies that were so badly burnt we thought they were ours; in the end, apparently they were Hamas terrorists.”

Israel’s social security agency has stated that the death toll from October 7 is 1,139 people. It has identified 695 Israeli civilians killed that day, along with 71 foreigners, most of whom were migrant laborers. Some 373 members of Israeli military and security forces were [reported](#) dead.

Israel has estimated that between 1,000 and 1,500 Palestinian fighters were killed that day, many of them during assaults launched with advanced weapons fired from tanks, helicopters, and drones. How many Israelis — soldiers and civilians — were killed in the chaos and had their deaths recorded as killed or sadistically burned alive by Hamas? How many Israeli lives were sacrificed under Hannibal-style orders to prevent them from being taken hostage at all costs?

The answers to these questions will bring no absolution to those who initiated the carnage on October 7. No civilians would have died in those Israeli communities had Hamas not launched its operations. It is also true that if Israel had not engaged in a [75-year campaign](#) of [ethnic cleansing](#) and [apartheid](#), there would not have been an October 7. The illusion promoted by the Israeli state that its people could live a bucolic life in the “Gaza envelope” while their government enforced the caging and repression of 2.3 million Palestinians next door was shattered.

The families of the dead deserve to have answers. The specifics of what happened that day also matter because of how these events have shaped the public attitude toward Israel’s war, with its horrifying death toll, particularly among Palestinian children.



Photo: Dawoud Abo Alkas/Anadolu via Getty Images

Many Palestinian families take refuge under harsh conditions at a school affiliated with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees, or UNRWA, in the Daraj neighborhood as the Israeli attacks continue in Gaza City, Gaza, on Feb. 6, 2024.

Faulty Justifications

Cynical manipulation of the truth has been a hallmark of Netanyahu's career. He has [long advocated for Hamas](#) to achieve and maintain power in Gaza precisely because he believed it was the single best path to achieving his own colonial agenda.



[Before They Vowed to Annihilate Hamas, Israeli Officials Considered It an Asset](#)

“Anyone who wants to thwart the establishment of a Palestinian state has to support bolstering Hamas and transferring money to Hamas,” Netanyahu [told](#) his Likud confederates in 2019. The logic was clear: The world will never give the Palestinians a state while Hamas remains in power. That’s why, since at least 2012, Netanyahu has [facilitated the continued flow of money](#) to Hamas.

By January 18, with the horrors in Gaza intensifying, U.S. and European diplomats were telling anyone who would listen that they were deep into planning for a “day after” scenario that would pave the way for a two-state solution. Netanyahu responded to this chatter by giving a televised speech in Hebrew. “I clarify that in any arrangement in the foreseeable future, with an accord or without an accord, Israel must have security control over the entire territory west of the Jordan River,” Netanyahu [said](#). “That’s a necessary condition. It clashes with the principle of sovereignty but what can you do?” While it was reported as a defiant rebuke of his U.S. and European allies, there was nothing new in Netanyahu’s position. It has been the Likud party’s official stance since its 1977 charter. “Between the Sea and the Jordan there will only be Israeli sovereignty,” the [document](#) reads. “A plan which relinquishes parts of western Eretz Israel, undermines our right to the country, unavoidably leads to the establishment of a ‘Palestinian State,’ jeopardizes the security of the Jewish population, endangers the existence of the State of Israel, and frustrates any prospect of peace.”

The hospitals are Hamas, the U.N. is Hamas, journalists are Hamas, European allies are Hamas, the International Court of Justice is antisemitic.

The lies that were spread in the immediate aftermath of the October 7 attacks did not end there. Nearly every week, sometimes every day, the Israeli government and military have unloaded a fresh barrage of allegations intended to justify the ongoing slaughter. The hospitals are Hamas, the U.N. is Hamas, journalists are Hamas, European allies are Hamas, the International Court of Justice is antisemitic. The tactic is effective, particularly because the U.S. and other major allies have consistently laundered Israel’s unverified allegations as evidence of the righteousness of the cause.



Photo: Amir Levy/Getty Images

Israel Defense Forces spokesperson Daniel Hagari, pictured in northern Gaza on Dec. 15, 2023, is a daily fixture in Israel's propaganda campaign.

The latest example is Israel's campaign to destroy UNRWA, the single most important humanitarian organization in Gaza, which was established in 1949 specifically to protect Palestinians violently expelled from their homes and land by the creation of the Israeli state. Almost [immediately after](#) the [ICJ ruled against Israel](#) in the genocide case [brought by South Africa](#) in The Hague, Israel accused 12 of the organization's 30,000 employees of participating in the October 7 attacks. Israel then [presented](#) the U.S. and other governments with "intelligence" it claimed to have obtained from the interrogations of Palestinian captives, documents recovered from the bodies of dead Palestinians, seized cellphones, and signals intercepts. Israel charged that 10 percent of UNRWA's 12,000-person local staff in Gaza had some form of "links" to Hamas. "The institution as a whole is a haven for Hamas' radical ideology," an anonymous senior Israeli official told the Wall Street Journal in a widely cited article penned by a [former IDF soldier](#).

The innuendo-laced allegation of UNRWA staff having undefined "links" to Hamas and Islamic Jihad, or "close relatives" who belong to the groups is a risible charge given that Hamas is not just an armed militia, but also the governing civil authority in Gaza.

The U.S. responded to Israel's allegations by immediately announcing it was [suspending](#) all funding to UNRWA. "We haven't had the ability to investigate [the allegations] ourselves," Blinken [admitted](#) on January 30. Nonetheless, he declared: "They are highly, highly credible."

But journalists from Sky News reviewed the so-called dossier and [reported](#), "The Israeli intelligence documents make several claims that Sky News has not seen proof of and many of the claims, even if true, do not directly implicate UNRWA." Britain's Channel 4 also obtained the document and [determined](#) it "provides no evidence to support its explosive new claim that UNRWA staff were involved with terror attacks on Israel." The Financial Times, which also reviewed the materials, [reported](#) there were specific allegations of direct participation in the October 7 attacks against four Palestinians employed by UNRWA, not 12 as originally asserted.

This was a transparent attempt by Israel to distract from the rulings in the ICJ genocide case and to obliterate a U.N. agency that Israel has [long viewed](#) as an impediment to its goal of denying Palestinians the right to return to the homes and territory from which Israel expelled them. It was also an action that explicitly violated the orders issued by the world court, which directed Israel to "take immediate and effective measures to enable the provision of urgently needed basic services and humanitarian assistance." Based on Israel's sweeping and unverified allegations alone, the U.S. led scores of Western nations to denounce the U.N. agency and pull their funding at the moment it is needed most. From weapons and intelligence to political, diplomatic, and legal support, Israel has wanted for nothing from the Biden administration. The [mounting pile of Palestinian civilian corpses](#) and their surviving family members, meanwhile, are relegated to the workshopped afterthoughts uttered by Western politicians who have been told they should occasionally squeeze a line or two into their speeches about death and suffering in Gaza.

Propaganda and weaponized lies can only obscure the dead bodies, the forced starvation, the mass killing of children, and the utter destruction of an entire society for so long. Over time, it becomes increasingly difficult to conceal the nexus between the actions taken by Israel after October 7, the mendacious narratives it deployed, and Netanyahu's desperate struggle to retain political power and his personal liberty. The 1,200 Israeli and international victims of October 7, and the more than 27,000 Palestinians whose deaths were justified in their names, deserve an unvarnished rendering of the truth.