

INTRODUCTION

We hear the endlessly repeated refrain, “I condemn the atrocities of October 7th,” but public understanding of what happened that day has been distorted and exploited by Israeli propaganda, in collusion with Western media, governments, and civil institutions. It is not by chance that the dominant, mainstream narrative advances a pro-Israel agenda: in 2009, [a manual for *hasbara*](#) was leaked to the public, detailing a glossary of terms and argumentation strategies to fight against “attacks” on Israel in the court of public opinion. A Hebrew word meaning “to explain,” and the name of the [state-sponsored propaganda arm](#) of the Israeli government), **hasbara** is a key tool maintaining the system of oppression. Relying on deeply embedded Western biases, **hasbara** sells people in the countries that provide financial and political backing for the Zionist project to [a positive image of Israel](#) in order to justify atrocities committed by the apartheid state. We hope this resource sheet helps you discern and counter the false narrative created to justify [the ongoing occupation of Palestine](#).

CONTEXT

History did not start on Oct 7th, 2023; it did not start in 1948 either. In 1948, [the Nakba](#) (Arabic for “catastrophe”) began as [Zionist terrorist gangs](#) expelled more than 700,000 Palestinians from their homes and [destroyed over 500 villages](#) to make way for the settler colony. But even before 1948, British and French colonial governments paved the way for the Nakba through the [Sykes-Picot Agreement](#) and the [Balfour Declaration](#) — arrangements made by Anglo-European forces without consultation or consent from any Palestinians, [opposed by the majority of Anglo-European Jews at the time](#).

The dehumanization of the Palestinian has been key in maintaining ethnic supremacy and military occupation. Calling its military the “Israeli *Defense Force*” is a prime example of how hasbara works: it implies that Israel must always be on guard from the eminent attack of the savage Palestinian, despite the fact that they are the ones with [weapons, money, and total administrative control](#), recognized by the UN and the wider international community as a military occupation [in violation of international law](#). Consistent with this “defensive” framing, the Israeli population believes that they are in danger and [live next to an enemy](#) that teaches their children to hate Jews. Cultivating this deep-seated fear is necessary for preparing Israelis [to serve in the military](#) and enforce the occupation.

The central “enemy” used to fear-monger is Hamas. Hamas is a word used to describe anything in opposition to Israel, a pattern you have probably spotted already: the flotillas are Hamas, Qatar is Hamas, protesters and the student movement are Hamas, even the hostage families are Hamas. This is not a new tactic. Just as Amerikkka and so-called Canada create an image of the enemy of the state, an enemy that threatens a way of life, and move to eradicate this enemy, so does Israel with Hamas. So if we repeat the perfunctory condemnation of “Hamas’ attack on October 7th” demanded from every news organization and government entity and passing Zionist, we are reinforcing this narrative framing. Here we will unpack the main points that undergird this propaganda, so you can understand and challenge them when you hear them repeated.

Right to Defend/Right to Exist

The primary pretext of Israel's aggression on Gaza is that they have a "right to defend" themselves against Hamas, which is integral for preserving their "right to exist." There is no legal basis for either of these "rights":

- According to international humanitarian law, [Israel is an occupying force](#) and [Palestinians are an occupied people](#).
- Occupied people have a [legally protected right to resist their occupiers](#) by any means necessary.
- Further, under international law, [no state has a "right to exist"](#) — *people* have a right to exist, which is what the [Genocide Convention](#) laws are supposed to protect.

Unprovoked Attack

A key element of the Israeli narrative about October 7th was that it was "unprovoked" — this is untrue for so many reasons, here are just a few avenues for understanding the unmitigated and escalating violence of colonization Palestinians had been subject to prior to that day:

- ["2023 is 'deadliest year' for Palestinian children say human rights groups"](#) – The New Arab, Oct. 6, 2023
- ["Israeli forces attack worshippers in violent Al-Aqsa Mosque raid"](#) – Middle East Eye, Apr. 4, 2023
- ["Times Of Israel Removes 'When Genocide Is Permissible' Post"](#) – Talking Points Memo, Aug. 1, 2014
- ["Introduction to Palestine 2: The Mandate Years and the Nakba"](#) - DecolonizePalestine

Hannibal Directive

It has now been widely reported that on October 7, the IDF enacted a military protocol known as the "Hannibal Directive," which commands soldiers to prevent the capture of hostages at any cost, including killing their own people. Credible evidence demonstrates that the IDF was responsible for many, if not most, of the Israeli casualties on that day. Electronic Intifada has [covered this extensively](#):

- ["Army was ordered to kill Israelis on 7 October, defense minister confirms"](#) – Feb. 7, 2025
- ["How Israel killed hundreds of their own people on October 7th"](#) – Oct. 7, 2024 (comprehensive compilation of a year of investigative reporting)
- ["We killed Israelis on 7 October, says Israeli air force colonel"](#) – Dec. 5, 2023
- ["Israeli child 'burned completely' by Israeli tank fire at kibbutz"](#) - Nov. 25, 2023

Mainstream Israeli publications have also reported on this extensively:

- [IDF Ordered Hannibal Directive on October 7 to Prevent Hamas Taking Soldiers Captive](#) – Ha'aretz, July 24, 2024
- [IDF officers invoked defunct 'Hannibal Protocol' during Oct. 7 fighting – report](#) – Times of Israel, July 7, 2024
- [IDF carried out Hannibal Directive, new 'Sword of Damocles' operation on October 7](#) - Jerusalem Post, Feb. 27, 2025

Strategic Negligence

One of the ways Israel creates the conditions for violence is by withdrawing resources from their own communities in closest proximity to the people they target most aggressively (ie, Gaza Envelope in the south, towns bordering Lebanon in the north), and allowing those communities to be sacrificial victims to justify its aggression.

- [Numbers that Reveal Abandonment: Government Allocations to Local Governments in the 'Gaza Envelope'](#) – Avda Center Report, Oct. 26, 2023 (worth noting that these budget cuts were made right after [a "pre-emptive" attack on Gaza in 2022](#))
- [Israel Knew Hamas's Attack Plan More Than A Year Ago](#) - NYTimes, Nov. 30, 2023
- [Israeli military abandoned kibbutz \[Be'eri\] for hours...](#) – NBC News, July 12, 2024
- [How IDF failed Kfar Aza on Oct. 7](#) - Ynet, Feb. 16, 2025
- [Israeli soldier reveals 'strange order' to cancel Gaza border patrols on 7 Oct](#) – The Cradle, July 31, 2025

Conflation of military and civilian targets

By calling them “hostages,” Israel and its supporters efface the reality that the majority of people initially captured were military personnel. If this were indeed a war and not a genocide, they would be described instead as “prisoners of war.” At the same time that the media has focused on the 251 people taken captive on October 7th, it has completely ignored the more than 10,000 Palestinians currently held in Israeli prisons, including over 500 children, the vast majority of whom have never even been charged with a crime. While the resistance consistently targets military infrastructure, they are described as terrorists; meanwhile Israel targets civilian infrastructure and says everyone in Gaza is a potential terrorist. Here are just a couple examples of how this breaks down upon scrutiny:

- El's Jon Elmer [breaks down footage released by the IDF investigation](#), revealing command and control breakdown in attack on Nahal Oz military base and demonstrating specific military objective of the attack

- Nova Festival: [IDF knew about it, Hamas did not](#); organized in collaboration with the military and encouraged to continue [despite security warnings](#); [Israel likely responsible](#) for many casualties.

Manufacturing Consent

The Zionist Western media apparatus manufactures consent for genocide by circulating propaganda about atrocities that did not occur, focusing the narrative on hypothetical violence against Jews rather than actual violence against Palestinians, and portraying Palestinians as barbaric savages and Israelis as innocent victims. All of this feeds the narrative dehumanization of Palestinians that serves to justify the ongoing violence of the occupation.

- The 40 beheaded babies lie: [No evidence](#) has ever been supplied to confirm the widely circulated claim that 40 babies were beheaded, and Zaka (the response unit that made the claim) has been shown to have not only [lied repeatedly](#) to Israeli and Western media, but also to have [tampered with the scene of the attack](#), destroying evidence and staging photo-ops.
- Mass Rape hoax: the NYTimes hired Anas Schwartz, who had never worked as a journalist and had previously served in Israeli intelligence, to write “Screams Without Words,” an article that is still available on their website despite repeatedly being debunked by multiple sources, and was found to be so egregious that over 50 journalism professors [sent the NYTimes editorial board a letter](#) calling out their journalistic malpractice.
- Meanwhile, the cruel and violent deaths (including beheadings) of actual Palestinian babies, and the [extensively documented](#), systematic sexual abuse of Palestinians by the Israeli occupation is ignored by mainstream media.

****This is a community-created resource, which we will continually update to provide ongoing research and evidence to help counter hasbara as needed!****

LINKS:

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<https://hasbarafellowships.org/>

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<https://decolonizepalestine.com/introduction-to-palestine/>

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<https://armsembargonow.ca/>

<https://archivinggenocide.com/report-by-francesca-albanese-to-the-un-from-economy-of-occupation-to-economy-of-genocide/>

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<https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-prevention-and-punishment-crime-genocide>

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<https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/israel-palestine-force-storm-aqsa-mosque-assault-worshippers>

<https://talkingpointsmemo.com/livewire/times-israel-genocide-permissible>

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<https://electronicintifada.net/content/israeli-child-burned-completely-israeli-tank-fire-kibbutz/41706>

<https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2024-07-07/ty-article-magazine/.premium/idf-ordered-hannibal-directive-on-october-7-to-prevent-hamas-taking-soldiers-captive/00000190-89a2-d776-a3b1-fdbe45520000>

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-officers-invoked-defunct-hannibal-protocol-during-oct-7-fighting-report/>

<https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/defense-news/article-844008>

<https://adva.org/en/gaza-envelope-budget/>

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/8/7/israels-assault-on-gaza-what-we-know-so-far>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/30/world/middleeast/israel-hamas-attack-intelligence.html?searchResultPosition=6>

<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/israeli-military-kibbutz-internal-inquiry-rcna161497>

<https://www.ynetnews.com/article/b1xfv2151g>

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<https://www.timesofisrael.com/key-idf-officer-reportedly-voiced-concern-about-nova-festival-but-was-told-to-ok-it/>

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<https://truthout.org/articles/journalism-professors-nyt-risks-credibility-with-inaction-on-oct-7-article/>

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/03/1161081>