

A Critical Discourse Analysis of the discursive construction of the October 7<sup>th</sup> Palestine vs

Israel conflict in *Al Jazeera* and *The Jerusalem post*.

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## Abstract

Within my dissertation, I explore how two opposing news outlets from the Middle East use language to construct a binary following the October 7<sup>th</sup> conflict. I focus on a brief period starting from October 7<sup>th</sup> to November 7<sup>th</sup> to reveal how the initial stages of the conflict between Palestinians/Hamas and Israelis affected war reporting. I employ Van Leeuwen's (2008) approach of Critical Discourse Analysis to answer my research question: *How do Al Jazeera and The Jerusalem Post use language to depict a binary throughout October 7<sup>th</sup>?* My sample consists of nineteen news articles retrieved from *Al Jazeera* and *The Jerusalem Post*. From the findings, this dissertation argues there is evidence of binaries across the news outlets, and they are constructed through 'us' vs 'them' and victim/defence modes of journalism.

### List of key words

**-Al Jazeera; The Jerusalem Post; Palestine; Israel; Binaries; Binary; Objectivity; Conflict; October 7<sup>th</sup>**

## Declaration

I hereby certify that this dissertation constitutes my own product, that where the language of others is set forth, quotation marks so indicate, and that appropriate credit is given where I have used the language, ideas, expressions or writings of another.

I declare that the dissertation describes original work that has not previously been presented for the award of any other degree of any institution.

Signed,

Anya Collins

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List of Abbreviations

CDA- Critical Discourse Analysis

AJE- *Al Jazeera English*

JP- *The Jerusalem Post*

WW1-World War One

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Context

The ongoing conflict between Palestinians and Israelis has been consuming media attention for decades (Gelvin, 2021). However, there is a gap in the literature regarding how Middle Eastern outlets -who have a connection to the conflict -have constructed October 7<sup>th</sup> due it being a recent event. This dissertation will address this gap by conducting a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) on how news outlets, *Al Jazeera* (AJE) and *The Jerusalem Post* (JP), with differing social and political biases, construct and establish a binary in regard to the ongoing issues in the region that have continued to engulf Middle Eastern and global politics for centuries. A good example of these binary views influencing news reporting is AJE facilitating a pro-Palestinian view and JP a pro-Israeli view. Focusing on the construction of binaries will allow me to expand upon the concepts of 'us vs them,' victim vs defence modes of journalism and the struggles regarding objectivity as these are key parts of how I approached news reporting in my dissertation.

### 1.2 The History of the Israel-Palestine conflict

Due to the longevity and complexity of the conflict, the origin story and background context can be lost in translation, leading outsiders to a state of confusion (Gerner, 2019, p.2). To gather a better understanding of my research topic I have provided a historical summary of the ongoing conflict between Palestine and Israel.



Initially, Arabs and Jews co-existed in the region in peace but this changed over 'the course of the nineteenth century and following the beginning of Zionist settlement in Palestine' (Hever, 2021, p. 23). Simply, the current state of this conflict is a war over land (Gelvin, 2021) that has escalated into the severity displayed in the media. Both sides of the conflict 'claim an exclusive right to inhabit and control some or all of Palestine' (Gelvin, 2021, p.2). Mock et al., (2012) addresses this escalation as forming between 1918-1948, just before the resolution, which will be discussed below.

The relationship between the countries has three main standpoints: World War One (WW1), The 1947/48 resolution and the 1967 six-day war.

WW1 played a pivotal role in straining the relationship between Israel and Palestine as it 'devastated the remote, somewhat neglected and under-developed Palestine (Bickerton, 2010, p.52). Firstly, it is important to recognise that before the end of WW1, the Ottoman Empire (Turkish Empire) had rule over Palestine. However, during WW1 this changed when the Ottoman Empire became an enemy of Great Britain during the war, and as a consequence, the Ottoman Empire was conquered by Great Britain who then 'occupied Palestine' (Mathew, 2011, p. 28). The 'Balfour Declaration' issued in 1917 was a significant turning point for the divide of (Zionist) Jews and the Palestinian Arabs. This conveyed Britain's overwhelming support for 'a national home for the Jews in Palestine' (Mathew, 2011, p. 26). Furthermore, the author of the Declaration (Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour) wrote, in a memorandum to Lord Curzon, that 'the four Great Powers are committed to Zionism. And Zionism, be it right or wrong, good, or bad, is rooted in age-long traditions, in present needs, in future hopes, of far

profounder import than the desires and prejudices of the 700,000 Arabs who now inhabit that ancient land' (Shveitser, 2021). Therefore, demonstrating his support for the Zionist movement over the Palestinian citizens.

The later introduced 1947 resolution resulted in 'partitioning Palestine into a Jewish and Arab state' (Rowley and Taylor, 2006, p.78). From this, the Jewish community were devoted 'some 50 per cent of Palestine' (Rowley and Taylor, 2006, p.79). This is a significant factor within the timeline of Israel and Palestine as it recognised the state of Israel. Before this resolution 'Israel' was referred to as a 'British Palestine.'

One of the major historical landmarks that followed this was the 1967 six-day war which led to the 'Israeli occupation of the remainder of the British mandated Palestinian East of the River Jordan and the colonisation of settlements' (Bickerton, 2010, p.106). Their success over the Arabs also granted them the Gaza Strip. From an Arab perspective, the 1967 war was the Israelis fault due to their 'determination to maintain military superiority' (Bickerton, 2010, p. 110). Whereas the Israelis viewed it as the Arabs problem for failing to 'recognise and accept the political sovereignty of the Jews in Israel' (Bickerton, 2010, p. 110).

### 1.3 The tensions surrounding October 7<sup>th</sup>.

The most recent major altercation between the communities initially took place on October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023. This conflict, also known as Israel-Hamas war, received an astounding amount of media coverage internationally, who declared their support for either side.

This conflict depicted Hamas launch an attack into Israel, which resulted in a retaliation that is still ongoing. The initial attack caused 1,200 Israeli deaths with a further 5,431 injured and the retaliation has seen around '33,797 Palestinians dead' and '76,465 injured' (Statista, 2024). Although there is a lack of literature contextualising the conflict, due to the recency of the events, Samuel (2023) offers a perspective, placing Palestinians as victims within a long history of repression against them. He suggests the attack from Hamas could be due to 'Israel's oppressive, dispossessive, self-determination-denying occupation of the West Bank and its suffocating 16-year blockade of the Gaza Strip' which provided 'the crucial context for Hamas's attack' (2023, p.6). Furthermore, he presented the attack as the final resort for Palestinians: 'The criminalization and suppression of nonviolence renders armed conflict the only way Palestinians can wage their struggle for self-determination.' (2023, p.9).

The blockade of the Gaza Strip was implemented in 2007 due to Hamas' control of Gaza. Israel 'declared the political party and Gaza itself to be a "hostile entity" (Smith, 2019, p. 39). This blockade 'sharply restricted the flow of people and goods in and out' (Smith, 2019, p.39). Arguably, this restriction, combined with years of oppression from the Israelis, led Hamas to the October 7<sup>th</sup> attack. However, this is only one argument for why it took place, due to this being an attack conducted by Hamas, the Israeli perspective is not present in the most recent literature.

The argument of *why* this conflict took place is not one that has been overly presented within academic literature due to its recent occurrence. Therefore, it is imperative that this dissertation lays out *what* happened to offer a timeline of the period I am

analysing. Following the October 7<sup>th</sup> attack Israel declared war on Hamas. Soon after this, Israel conducted a siege on Gaza, blocking them off from international aid. On October 13<sup>th</sup>, Israeli soldiers forced the Gazan residents to evacuate and just four days later, an explosion on Al-Ahli Arab hospital occurred. The remainder of October saw several more attacks and the continuing blockade of the Gaza Strip

#### 1.4 The Structure

This dissertation begins with a review of previous literature into my research area; regarding objectivity and 'us vs them' reporting. From here I conducted a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of news articles taken from my chosen outlets (AJE and JP) to allow me to answer my research question. My results are then presented based on key findings that enabled me to summarise themes from my analysis. Following on from this, I will discuss these findings in relation to the wider context of war journalism. Finally, my conclusion states the overall findings and relevance of my research.

## 2.Literature Review

There is a plethora of literature relating to the Palestine and Israel conflicts as it has been a persistent newsworthy topic for an extended period. Within this literature review I will be discussing several concepts of war journalism to generate a discourse surrounding the issues of conflict reporting and how this could lead to the construction of binaries. Firstly, I will cover how news organisations position themselves by focusing on objectivity and therefore the concept of journalism of attachment as this questions objectivity as a core journalistic value. I will then introduce the 'us' vs 'them' binary and discuss relevant literature relating to how these are created through humanisation and framings of previous conflicts.

### 2.1 Objectivity

I will primarily be conducting research relating to objectivity during war and conflict and the struggles conflict journalists face when trying to remain neutral and fair in their reporting.

#### 2.1.1 What is objectivity?

The concept of objectivity within war journalism is a contested issue that is widely debated amongst scholars as some believe it is a journalistic code of conduct that should be upheld to its highest standard whereas others believe that in times of war and conflict it should be neglected. Rodgers (2012) summarises this as 'whether the reporter strives to adhere to it or knowingly rejects it', objectivity is still 'central to all journalism' (2012, p.47). Ultimately, he defines objectivity as a process that involves the journalist withholding their personal views from their reporting (2012, p.47).

Furthermore, Rodgers (2012, p.47) expands upon this idea that ‘the question of objectivity is especially pressing’ regarding war reporting, which is what makes it this ‘contested’ issue among journalists. Other scholars such as Frost (2000, as seen in Thussu and Freedman, 2003, p.216) elaborate upon the struggles of remaining objective. He states that ‘objectivity’ is associated and often confused with ideas of ‘truth,’ but that often being truthful does not always prove ‘that the means used or the means that could be used, are objective.’ Consequently, there is this blurred line amongst journalists as being objective requires truth but one cannot always fulfil this without demonising the other side.

### 2.1.2 Should journalists remain objective in conflict reporting?

The question of objectivity becomes complicated (even more so) when a journalist is morally, emotionally, and physically apart of the conflict being reported on. Zandberg and Neiger’s (2005) research conducted on war journalism and journalists as members of contradicting communities relates to the concept I am exploring, whereby one’s journalistic reporting changes when they are connected with the conflict. As part of this study, they analyse the initial period of the Al-Aksa intifada in relation to media reporting. They concluded that there is a difficult relationship when reporting on conflicts where you are a citizen and apart of an ‘interpretative community;’ this tension prevented them from remaining professional as they became more attached to the conflict (2005, p.138). Elaborating upon this, Hallin (1986, p.116) introduces two ways journalists approach reporting. On one hand there is this ‘sphere of legitimate controversy’ where journalists aim to be balanced and objective. But there is also a

'sphere of consensus' which Zelizer et al., (2002, p.40) understands as journalists who 'feel free to invoke a generalized "we" and to take for granted shared values and shared assumptions'. This proves that there is a fine line between remaining objective and being morally correct for your country.

Zandberg and Neiger (2005) also cover Schudson's 'neutral model' to address how journalists view their role. They conclude how journalists see their role as 'quasi-scientific,' so they must report in an 'objective and balanced manner' (2005, p.132). This model creates a foundation for what journalists should be and it is important to see the contrast between this model and their role when they are applying war journalism modes of reporting instead.

Another theory that relates closely to my research on war journalism is Bell's (1995). 'Journalism of attachment.' This concept aimed to reject ideas of neutrality when reporting on war and conflict and instead promote the truth of the war. Bell (1995) proposed that reporters become apart of the conflict, which consequently forces them to talk about it, meaning journalists need to 'attach' themselves to the issue rather than being objective and taking a neutral stance. In relation to my research, when a journalist applies victim or defensive modes of journalism, they are not remaining objective; instead, they are 'attaching' themselves to one side of the conflict and presenting their support for who they deem to be the 'good guys.' This idea is supported by Ruigrok (2008, p.295), as in his research on the Bosnian war he states that 'Journalists practicing journalism of attachment [...] take sides with what they consider the main victims of the war' and they separate 'good guys' and 'bad guys'.

This is evident in previous literature conducted on Palestine vs Israel too, where international news conveys their support for Israel, demonising Palestine in the process as they deem Israel as the 'good guys.' Visers' (2003) quantitative analysis of 'the indicators of bias in the portrayal of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict by the New York Times and Israel's Haaretz newspaper' (2003, p. 114) reveals that both outlets demonstrated pro-Israeli bias. To summarise, this pattern has been detected where journalists who lack objectivity (and instead are more attached) use language to condemn others. This therefore conveys the problems with objectivity and the issues it has with war reporting.

Often in war journalism, when one is not objective, their work can appear biased. Ozohu-Suleiman's (2014) study used the peace journalism model to investigate how AJE and Press TV reported on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict compared to western media. The Peace journalism model (Galtung, 2003) is one that glorifies truthful reporting and it 'highlights peace initiatives' to create a peaceful society. Peace journalism is also a "journalism of attachment" to all victims as opposed to war journalism which attaches to their own side (Galtung, 2003, pp. 178-179). Similarly to Viser's (2003) findings, Ozohu-Suleiman (2014) discovered that most worldwide news favoured Israel or were bias in some way to a particular side. Kressel's (1987, as cited in Ozohu-Suleiman, 2014, p.87) findings also supported this, he 'reviewed over 40 such studies dating from the early 1960s to the mid-1980s' and all of them established that western coverage was 'characterised by inaccuracy and favouritism towards either Israel or Palestine' which raises questions on whether objectivity is even possible. In Thussu and Freedman's research (2003), they found that the USA favoured Israel in



their news coverage and outside sources. They also found that 'there was a disproportionate emphasis on Israeli deaths relative to those of Palestinians' and the descriptions of Israeli deaths was a lot more violent and emotional (Thussu and Freedman, 2003, p.144). This behind-the-scenes support clearly manifests itself into their media coverage which comes across as bias to an outsider.

This suggestion that journalists cannot remain completely objective has been labelled 'strategic ritual of emotionality in journalism' by Wahl-Jorgensen (2012). This case study on Pulitzer-prize winning articles reveals that most news is in fact characterised by 'anecdotal leads, personalised story-telling and widespread invocation of emotion' (2012, p.137). This article was positioned against Tuchman's 'strategic ritual of objectivity', which she argued allows a journalist to remain professional, ensuring 'deadlines will be met and libel suits avoided' (Tuchman, 1972, p.662) and instead reveals that there must be emotions manifested into ones reporting too, 'journalistic story-telling, despite its allegiance to the ideal of objectivity, is also profoundly emotional' (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2012, p.130).

Another argument presented is that these factors are not mutually exclusive and can have a relationship with one another. Pantti (2010, p.179) discovered that 'emotion did not pose a fundamental challenge to the rationales of factuality and objectivity' and therefore a journalist can express emotions while reporting on facts. Furthermore, her interviews with television journalists revealed that without the element of emotion, 'the whole truth is not told' (2010, p.179). Regarding journalism relating to conflict reporting, Kovach and Rosensteil (2005, as cited in Wahl-Jorgensen, 2012, p.141),

contribute to this debate and explain that in the context of disaster coverage 'emotion ought to come at those moments when any other reaction would seem forced or out of place'. Overall, majority of previous literature exposes the issues with conflict journalists remaining objective; it is natural to attach through human emotion.

## 2.2 Us vs Them

Another aspect of war journalism is the categorisation of those involved in a conflict through the construction of an 'us' vs 'them': this is visible when journalists report on their country's conflicts.

In Ottosen's (1995, p.98) research he refers to the idea of 'us and the other' and explains that nations eventually 'start to define other nations as the other'.

Furthermore, Knightley (1975, as cited in Ottosen, 1995, p.99) describes how "an important element of war reporting is to 'demonise' the enemy". So, the 'other' is the opposition and presented in a negative way. A study conducted by Fujii (2004) conveys how this aspect of 'demonising the enemy' can be witnessed in media reporting during the Rwandan genocide. During the civil war between the Hutu government and Tutsis, RTLM played a significant part in demonising the Tutsis, Chalk (1999, p 98, as cited in Fujii, 2004, p104) states that 'the station was a showpiece of skillful hate-mongering, adopting the talk radio format of Western stations.' Furthermore, the Hutu government were able to frame this message of 'kill or be killed' to their people (Fujii, 2004, p.105), which encouraged them to commit acts of genocide and similarly to the conflict in Palestine vs Israel 'the extremists were able to define the nature of the conflict as Hutu v. Tutsi, and to justify violence against Tutsi as acts of self-defence rooted in historical

injustices' (Fujii, 2004 , p.105). Arguably, as opposed to being attached, this is instead a clear example of emotional journalism whereby the government use passionate language due to their historical attachment.

This is similar to the employment of victim and defence modes of journalism, which was coined by Wolfsfeld et al., (2008). Their study explores how journalistic routines for covering violence led to the construction of 'ethnocentric news,' which means to look at another culture from the perspective of your own. They understand this working by analysing 'how journalists routines ensure a steady flow of culturally acceptable news stories that reinforce hatred between enemies' (2008, p.401). Their literature summarises that when emotive language is employed to describe one's own citizens this is an example of victim modes of journalism (2008, p.403). In contrast, defensive modes are 'employed when one's forces have carried out an attack that has inflicted a similar loss on the enemy' (2008, p.401). Signs of this include 'lowering the emotional impact' and lowering the 'level of prominence or even ignore such events' (2008 p.405). As part of their research they listened to two television channels, one from Palestine and the other from Israel. They concluded that Israel displayed defensive modes of journalism when reporting on 'The Killing of Shehadeh' as they made 'little attempt to dramatize the events' (2008, p.412). Therefore, this approach creates a precedent for my own research into the Palestine vs Israel conflict.

Linking back to Ottosen's introduction of 'us vs the other,' the concept of 'us vs them' is also a key part of the language journalists use to describe certain wars. Taylor (1997, p.130) conveyed this distinction between the terms 'our wars' and 'other people's

wars', 'our wars' are often related to 'our troops' and 'our allies'. Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch's (2009) handbook on journalism expands upon this, explaining that 'the media coverage supports 'our' side and the audiences' emotional involvement is much greater whereas in the second scenario, the coverage and the media involvement is more detached' (2009, p.373). This highlights the issues with embedding journalists with the military, they appear to see and feel the war as though the army were on 'their' side.

### 2.3(DE)Humanisation and Demonisation

Similarly to the creation of 'us vs them,' journalists also have the power to humanise or dehumanise a social actor, often through demonising them as the enemy. Research by Joseph (2014, pp.225-231) explores this idea that the media have an influence on international conflicts as their 'framing influences what is selected and highlighted' - although framing will be discussed in greater detail shortly. There is no denying that the media play a pivotal role in constructing a conflict and 'in facilitating the construction of the public sphere.' This article also covers how 'the construction of a common enemy has become an integral part of political processes' to gain outside support. As regards the Israel – Palestine conflict, this author conveys how the media describe Palestinians and Israel differently; this summarises the importance of the media's role in either demonising or humanising those involved. Bazian's (2015) research supports this idea that Palestine and Israel are described differently within the media. He draws upon the American Freedom Defence Initiative's adverts whereby they 'produced a series of national advertisements... with the accompanying message:

In any war between the civilized man and the savage, support the civilized man.

Support Israel, Defeat Jihad' (Bazian, 2015, p.1058). He emphasises here the humanisation of Israel and the demonisation and 'racist framing' of Palestinians (Bazian, 2015, p.1058).

Research conducted by Oren and Bar-Tal (2007, pp. 112-114) further explores dehumanisation and the concept of delegitimization. Firstly, they define delegitimization as 'stereotypes with extremely negative connotations that are used to describe a specific case of group categorisation.' They then expand upon this, explaining there are multiple types, one being 'dehumanisation,' which 'involves categorising a group as non-human.' To support Joseph (2014), they also refer to the use of the label 'enemy' as a way of delegitimising another group, explaining that 'the social categorisation as an 'enemy' defines the other group as a severe threat'.

Returning to the idea of defensive modes of journalism, they convey how the opposing sides will often employ the label 'enemy' to justify their own actions. Similarly, Hodges (2013, p.4) also mentions how demonisation can be used to construct binaries, he explains this through the construction of 'an out-group and distancing that group from the humanity of the in-group'.

Unlike Bazian's (2015) research where he concluded international news organisations were dehumanising the Palestinian community specifically, Oren and Bar-Tal (2007) conclude that both sides dehumanise each other equally, using enemy labels to support their case. Their statistics from the aftermath of the 2000 intifada show that there were 'similar trends' across both Palestine and Israel for how they viewed each other. For example, '70% of Israelis supported violent acts against Palestinians' and

similarly, '70% of Palestinians were for military operations against Israeli targets' (Oren and Bar-Tal ,2007 p.123). The consequences of delegitimization and dehumanisation within news reporting illustrates that labels and polarisation language can be vital for how one side views the other and delegitimising the opposition can 'increase mistrust' (Oren and Bar-Tal ,2007, p.120) which leads to justification of such conflicts. Albeit in a different context, Manne (2017, p.165) discusses how dehumanising others as being morally bad can influence others as it promotes feelings of 'resentment, righteous anger, jealousy...'.

Another aspect of demonisation and humanisation that Joseph (2014) explores is the distinction between 'worthy vs unworthy victim[s]': a worthy victim will be 'humanised' and portrayed in news stories which in turn generates 'more reader interest and sympathy' (2014, p.232). Whereas an unworthy victim will receive 'minimal humanisation' (2014, p.232). Herman and Chomsky (1988) first introduced this idea, under their 'propaganda system'. They believe this system will always ignore the abuse permitted by its own government but if it appears elsewhere, they are a 'worthy' victim (1988, p.97). To conclude, this theory supports how certain sides can be portrayed in such a way as to affect the reader's moral judgement, if someone is presented as a victim and humanised this can affect how a reader sees the opposition. Arguably, it can help to build this construction of the of 'us vs them' and the 'enemy'.

## 2.4 Framing

This subsection shifts from what is being done by conflict journalists (dehumanisation) to how it is being done (through framing as technique). This literature makes a

connection between the two as my focus is on analysing how language creates a binary.

Framing was introduced by Entman (1993) to address how certain texts were being constructed in certain ways, he states that to frame is 'to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described' (1993, p.52)

Brantner et. al's (2011) study evaluates how visual framing can affect several factors such as a readers' emotional response regarding the Gaza conflict that took place in 2009. They concluded that 'representations of the Israelis and of the Palestinians differed considerably in the visual and the verbal texts' (2011, p.524) as their analysis showed that 'images aimed to generate empathy for the Palestinians and pictures that emphasized the institutional power and statesmanship of the Israelis were detected' (2011, p.524). Similarly, Fahmy and Eakin (2013, pp. 86-99) also conducted research into the framing of the Palestine-Israel conflict. They produced an 'online content analysis of 156 online stories from Haaretz, The Guardian, and The New York Times' to examine 'the extent to which the 2010 Mavi Marmara incident is framed' based on the peace/war journalism classification. Using other scholars' literature as evidence, they found that 'Haaretz significantly used more war journalism indicators' than the other news outlets as they employed more 'victimising language'. Furthermore, the most dominant war journalism frames were focused on 'the here and now' and 'elite oriented sourcing' as both were beneficial for Israel. Further literature also confirmed

how differently Palestinians were framed within the international news media compared to the Israeli's. Dunsky (2008, p.68) noted that in the context of the Israel-Palestine conflict, the history of how Palestinians became refugees is 'rarely incorporated into the reporting' despite this being a 'core issue' within the conflict. Previous literature by Lee and Maslog (2005) also investigated War Journalism and Peace Journalism framing based on Galtung's classification. Their study examines the extent 'to which four Asian regional conflicts involving India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, and the Philippines are framed based on this classification' (2005, p.311). According to Knightley (2000, as cited in Lee and Maslog, 2005, p.311) 'war journalism is characterized by an identification with one side or with the home side of the war; military triumphalist language; an action orientation; and a superficial narrative with little context, background, or historical perspective'. Overall, within Lee and Maslog's (2005, p.317) findings, they revealed that 'out of the 1,338 stories, 56% were framed as war journalism'. Similarly to Fahmy and Eakin's (2013) study, 'the three most salient indicators of war journalism were a focus on the here and now (17.6%), an elite orientation (15.4%), and a dichotomy of the good and the bad (10.3%)' (Lee and Maslog, 2005, p.320).

Arguably, from this literature on framing (regarding conflict journalism in particular), it can be concluded that news organisations thrive off dichotomising those caught up in the conflict. The overall findings also convey that war journalism is very dominant in conflict reporting; in the case of Israel vs Palestine, it may be in each part's interests to frame the other in such a way as to victimise themselves and justify their own violence.



In support of this, Harcup and O'Neill, (2001, p.279) proposed several news values they deemed most newsworthy, one of which was 'magnitude'. The magnitude of a story relates to its scale, 'the numbers of people involved or [its] potential impact'.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Critical discourse Analysis

The methodological approach I employ throughout my research is Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). I applied a mixed inductive/deductive approach (Wodak and Meyer, 2009) as I was seeking texts that explicitly linked to this idea of victim vs defence modes of journalism while being open to novel features of the text.

CDA was proposed by linguist Norman Fairclough to 'develop ways of analysing language which address its involvement in the workings of contemporary capitalist societies' (Fairclough, 2013, p.4). He has since simplified the understanding of CDA to mean both 'interdiscursive analysis' (2013, p.7) which is a fusion between discourse, genre, and style, and 'linguistic analysis' (2013, p.7). This is useful for bringing my research together as it will enable me to address my findings and allow me to depict how the contrasting publications use language to exert power, creating a binary between us vs them to support their community.

The concept of CDA is a contested one, with many scholars viewing it differently and therefore taking different approaches. Wodak and Meyer (2009) see CDA as an approach that is interested 'in studying social phenomena' (2009, p.2) through analysing language to see how this impacts social structures. Similarly, Van Dijk (2015) takes a social approach when defining CDA, he believes analysts will explore language to uncover 'social inequalities' (2015, p. 466). Furthermore, Van Leeuwen (2008, p.3)

primarily emphasises the role of social actors, and views discourse 'as recontextualized social practice'.

What is discourse?

Weedon (1987, p. 108) argued that discourse is:

'More than just ways of thinking and producing meaning...they constitute 'the "nature" of the body, unconscious and conscious mind and emotional life of the subjects they seek to govern'.

Relating to my research, Van Dijk (1993, as cited in, Mullet, 2018, p.119) associates discourses with something that can ascribe 'positive representations of one's own group and negative representations of others'.

For the purpose of this dissertation, I will employ CDA to analyse the language Israeli and Palestinian journalists use to moralise such actions within the conflict.

### 3.2 Constructing CDA

The approach I have demonstrated within this dissertation is Van Leeuwen's (2008) representation of social actors. This approach 'investigates how the participants of social practices can be represented in English discourse' (2008, p.23). I have decided to focus on the representation of social actors as it is relevant to analysing how binaries are created in relation to October 7<sup>th</sup>. This approach will be useful in addressing my research question: *How do Al Jazeera and The Jerusalem post use language to depict a binary throughout October 7<sup>th</sup>?*

As part of Van Leeuwen's approach I have narrowed my search down to focus on the following factors:

- Exclusion and Inclusion: 'Representations include or exclude social actors to suit their interests and purposes in relation to the readers for whom they are intended' (Van Leeuwen, 2008, p.28)
- Role Allocation: Useful element to identify who is the victim in each text. He finds these in texts by looking at the 'active and passive voice,' 'who is represented as agent, who as patient with respect to a given action' (Van Leeuwen, 2008, p.32)
- Association and Dissociation: 'way in which social actors can be represented as a group' (Van Leeuwen, 2008, p.39)
- Functionalisation: 'occurs when said actors are referred to in terms of an activity or something they do' and in 'highly generalised categorisations' (Van Leeuwen, 2008, p.42)
- (imp)Personalisation: Personalisation is defined as when the social actors are represented as 'human beings. (Van Leeuwen, 2008, p.46)

In summary, I employ these five factors from Van Leeuwen's approach into my research as they will allow me to draw upon my research question regarding how a binary is created during the initial period of the conflict between Palestine and Israel. Furthermore, the factors above are the most relevant in the context of the Palestine-Israel conflict. By analysing texts using these pointers, I will be able to investigate how AJE and JP associate and represent each side of the conflict.

### 3.3 The publications

*Al Jazeera English* was chosen to represent Palestinian attached media. Cherribi, (2017, p.47) summarised how AJE have ‘a vision of catering to an international Islamic community’, which Palestinians are apart of. The reason I chose to focus on AJE is because it is more understandable to read and analyse as an English speaker. The *Al Jazeera* network was introduced to ‘produce programming that was journalistically sound and free from government interference’ (Seib, 2012, p.8).

*The Jerusalem Post online* was chosen to represent an Israeli-sympathetic view as it is well read in Israel ([www.jpost.com](http://www.jpost.com), n.d.). *The Jerusalem Post* was founded in 1932 and was originally called ‘*The Palestine Post*’ until 1950 ([www.jpost.com](http://www.jpost.com), n.d.). Although they claim a ‘centrist stance,’ it can be assumed they are more pro Israeli due to their ownership by ‘Eli Azur’ (an Israeli businessman) as he will have an impact on the stories published. I also narrowed my search to their online content as it was easily accessible to me.

### 3.4 Data Collection

Purposive sampling has been conducted to gather the data for my study as I chose texts related to my research question. Qualitative sampling is seen as ‘purposive’ when ‘it aims to select appropriate information sources to explore meanings’ (Fossey et al., 2002, p.726). Ultimately, what was relevant to me were articles that covered the conflict, mentioned October 7<sup>th</sup> or used language that created a binary within their headline. I then used Nexis to narrow down my data, using key words to support this.

The sample of my study consists of nineteen articles, I have accumulated twelve from AJE and seven from the JP, this is due to AJE producing more 'news' articles as JP had a heavy focus on editorial articles and international news topics. Due to this, they were not suitable for analysis because they did not address the Palestine vs Israel conflict. Additionally, editorial articles would create difficulties in comparative analysis as my AJE samples were all under 'news,' opinion columns do not constrain the writer in the same way as 'news' articles do.

I gathered the articles from the 7th of October 2023 to the 7th of November 2023 which marked the beginning of the Israel-Hamas war. I chose to collect articles spanning this month to get an abundance of information. I believed the beginning of the conflict would have a lot of value and influence; perhaps journalists would be more inclined to adopt this 'us vs them' approach. Furthermore, choosing to dedicate my research to this month was also a practical consideration as it would have been time consuming to conduct a wider analysis in the brief time I had.

Once I knew the period I wanted to analyse, I decided on what news outlets from either side I wanted to look at. I concluded that one newspaper publication from either side would allow me to address my objectives and aims as the polarisation concept I explored in my literature review only assumed two poles. I initially chose *Haaretz* and *Al Jazeera English* because these were the only news outlets I had knowledge of. However, I came across my first hurdle when *Haaretz* required a monthly subscription. After doing extensive research into Israeli news outlets, I decided to use *The Jerusalem Post* online, as -like *Haaretz*- it is an established newspaper within the Middle East that

reports on the Palestine- Israel conflict. Overall, I selected these organisations as there was evidence to see them ideologically aligned.

I accessed my articles through the database 'Nexis' via the university library. I initially used the search 'Israel vs Palestine,' with the newspaper organisation written in the publication section on Nexis. I employed these key words to access coverage on the most recent conflict. Overall, a total of 215 articles appeared for AJE under the initial search 'Palestine vs Israel', however only some were relevant to my research questions. I determined this relevance by exploring whether the texts included stories related to the conflict. Similarly, JP published 154 articles, with majority being opinion pieces. Perhaps there is relevance to the abundance of opinion articles published post October 7<sup>th</sup> conflict, it shows they are adapting this victim mode of journalism and are not hiding behind an 'objective' stance. As mentioned previously, opinion pieces allow the reader to be more flexible in their writing style whereas articles portrayed as 'news' are more restrictive, making it more ineligible for me to unpick.

My first article '*Hamas' war crimes: a strategic weapon for Israel in the international arena*' (JP2) caught my attention due to its headline demonising Palestine. It is important to note that this article was an opinion piece. This immediate finding confirmed what I had suspected about the organisation's political stance on the conflict as the position of the op ed exposes their support for Israel. Furthermore, JP's tendency to publish op-eds with clear lines supports how they are aligned to Israel.

After beginning my initial search, I decided to add key words such as 'death' to assess whether I could seek information on how the death tolls were reported. The death toll

stood out as a factor that would allow me to look for polarising and moralising language as I would be able to discover whether Israel downplayed the deaths of Palestinians and exaggerated their own, and vice versa. Unfortunately, nothing new seemed to filter through for JP. However, I found two articles related to 'death' published by AJE: *'Gaza death toll tops 5,000, nearly half of them children: Officials'*(AJE9) and *'More than 10,000 Palestinians killed in Israeli attacks on Gaza'*(AJE12)

I continued to narrow down my search by inserting terms such as 'IDF', ' Hamas', 'attack', 'enemy', terrorist, 'war' and 'conflict' to get a variety of different articles.

In summary, the focus of this dissertation is on how polarisation is done, through 'us vs them' and victim/defence modes of repertoires. I investigate how this alignment is done textually; hence I employ CDA.



## 4. Results and Analysis

The language used to depict October 7<sup>th</sup> throughout my sample period fits with my research question as JP and AJE constructed the event in a way that conveyed an 'us' vs 'them' binary, each representing the opposing side as the cause of the conflict and their side as the victims. This section will analyse how binaries were constructed textually on October 7<sup>th</sup> by analysing how Hamas/Palestine were represented compared to Israel. Finally, the concept of (de)humanisation will be analysed in regard to how the outlets used certain language. These objectives were productive to focus on as they allowed me to uncover how each side position each other within the conflict.

### 4.1 Construction of October 7<sup>th</sup>

#### 4.1.1 How did AJE represent Hamas/Palestine?

Initially, when AJE were reporting on October 7<sup>th</sup>, they depicted it in such a way as to justify Hamas' initial attack. For example, they make the attack appear neutral through their passivation of:

'Israeli forces are massed near the Gaza border, and smaller units have already carried out limited incursions, targeting Hamas and hoping to rescue captives the group took from Israel on October 7'. (AJE9)

Firstly, they have excluded terrorist from 'the group' to downplay the actions of Hamas. Secondly, the verb 'took' is a euphemism for what could have been used alternatively, conveying the attack as a casual affair. The context here is that Hamas took 'captives' from Israel and Israel units are now preparing to retrieve these people. They also

manage to announce that during this retrieval, Israel are 'targeting Hamas.' The journalist victimises the Palestinians despite them initially being to blame. It is also important to note the employment of 'captive' is used a euphemism to describe the Israeli hostages without representing them as innocent civilians.

The use of the passive voice is displayed once again in '*Like a prison: The Palestinians in Hebron living under Israeli lockdown*' (AJE11):

'Following the shocking October 7 **attack** on southern Israel by Hamas' (AJE11)

This strategic employment of the passive voice lessens the act committed 'by Hamas' in Israel, the focus is more on the attack itself as it is in bold and underlined, rather than who was responsible for such attack. However, AJE do not disregard that Hamas played a significant part on October 7<sup>th</sup> hence the acknowledgement is still there. AJE also create another binary here, and through the articles listed below, as the Palestinians are separated from Hamas. They accomplish this by removing Palestinians from the frame and by excluding Hamas' background as Palestinians:

'The attack on Palestine Tower... came hours after Hamas, the group running the besieged Gaza Strip launched a multi- pronged attack' (AJE2)

'After an attack by Hamas inside Israel more than two weeks ago' (AJE9)

'Gunmen from Hamas... rampaged through Israeli towns' (AJE1)

As mentioned, AJE employ several euphemisms throughout this period to downplay Hamas' actions, this can be encapsulated within '*Israel's war on Gaza: Is the West Bank under increased attack too?*' (AJE8):

‘Fighters from Hamas, the Palestinian armed resistance movement governing the occupied Strip, launched a surprise attack on October 7’.

The euphemism ‘fighter’ indicates the members of Hamas were in a battle. In a sense this euphemism justifies their actions, conveying this as a necessary action to win such battle. Furthermore, the description of Hamas as a ‘Palestinian armed resistance movement’ as opposed to ‘terrorist organisation’ is significant here, the euphemism ‘armed resistance movement’ typically has connotations with one seeking justice against an oppressor, fighting for a justifiable cause. The euphemisms therefore elucidate that Hamas have a reason for their ‘surprise attack’ as they view Israel as their oppressors as further alluded to within the noun phrase ‘occupied Strip.’ This is also evidence of the binary surfacing as Hamas view Israel as against them. Overall, there is a slight attachment to the Palestinian people, which is rare across AJE news, it conveys how they are ‘fighting’ for their country.

Interestingly, over time, the Palestinians and Hamas are represented by AJE as having less power which enables the construction of them as victims. In the first articles published following the events on October 7<sup>th</sup> -as seen above- Hamas had power and authority over the Israelis, but since the Israeli retaliation they have been portrayed differently. Gradually, they have become subjects of extreme violence from the Israeli army. This is evident through the adverbial phrases employed in the final article taken from my sample ‘*More than 10,000 Palestinians killed in Israeli attacks on Gaza*’(AJE12), published on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2023:

‘More than 10,000 people have been killed in 31 days of relentless Israeli attacks on the Gaza Strip, according to Palestinian health officials, with no signs of a ceasefire in the besieged enclave.’ And ‘Gaza’s Ministry of Health said the death toll has risen to at least 10,022 Palestinians’.

Overall, the Palestinians are represented as victims through the mass deaths documented. The adverbial phrase ‘according to...’ suggests the exact figure is unknown, implying a significant amount of people have died because of Israel’s ‘relentless attacks.’ To support this statement, the adverbial phrase ‘at least’ is used to state the minimum number of deaths recorded to emphasise how the overall death toll is higher in actuality. Ultimately, AJE frame the civilian deaths as ‘Palestinians’ to keep this detachment from Hamas and thereby preserve their innocence.

Additionally, the adjective ‘relentless’ used to describe Israel’s attack further presents the Palestinians as the victims, they are represented as helpless as the attacks are never-ending. Furthermore, they are unable to fight back as they are ‘in a besieged enclave,’ the transitive verb ‘besieged’ is used here to highlight the control Israel have over Palestine as it means they have completely surrounded them. Moreover, it denotes that the Palestinians are trapped, which emphasises their victim status. Stylistically, the adjectives used portrays the stance of the AJE journalist, from what they have observed this is the language they would use to address Israel.

#### 4.1.2. How did AJE represent Israel?

While AJE do not present Israel explicitly as terrorists, the language used does imply that they committed terror attacks. This is evident from the article headlined '*Israel's war on Gaza: Is the West Bank under increased attack too?*' (AJE8) The active voice here states the actor (Israel) and the victim (Gazan civilians). Immediately, AJE are addressing who they deem is to blame for the conflict uprising, as the possessive form 'Israel's' gives ownership of to them. Furthermore, the inclusion of the noun 'war' indicates the impact Israel's actions have had on Gaza, a war has connotations with mass deaths and extreme violence. It can be recognised that Israel being presented as morally inferior and blameworthy is enough without needing to invoke terrorism discourse.

This stance is replicated throughout, using adjectives:

'Israel's brutal bombardment,' 'Israel's deadliest assault on Gaza', 'The Israeli army has stepped up its deadly raids' and '...has been described as a massacre' (AJE8)

The alliteration of 'Israel's brutal bombardment' is used to emphasise the severity of the attack on the Gazan hospital (Al-Ahli Arab Hospital). The letter 'b' is a voiced bilabial plosive meaning it explodes out of the mouth with force, this alliteration placement of the two 'b' sounds is therefore intentional as it will be read in the same way. Furthermore, it also addresses AJE's stance on the matter- they appear passionate and angry in their reporting. Journalistically, this is interesting as adjectives such as

'brutal' are instances of journalists effectively making value judgements through sensationalist language - therefore showing a lack of objectivity.

The adjective 'deadliest' also has strong links with terrorism as it conveys the mass deaths accumulated from this attack. Similarly to its superlative 'most deadly,' this quote emphasises the attack on the hospital to mean the 'deadliest' attack Palestine has ever witnessed. Furthermore, this implies the existence of previous, less deadly attacks which uncovers that this is an ongoing, repeated transgression of this conflict. The reference to the 'bombing' being described as a 'massacre' also has connotations of mass deaths which can be similar to the aftermath of a terror attack. Furthermore, there could be a moral dimension to 'massacres' as they describe an immoral number of killings.

Overall, AJE are morally demonising Israel in ways that do not rely on 'terrorist' repertoires which is an interesting feature as it suggests their text is enough to reach their points already.

#### 4.1.3. How did JP present Hamas/Palestine?

The JP employed language to describe October 7<sup>th</sup> as one causing immense suffering. In their article '*Horrific October: Israel vows to eradicate Hamas after unprecedented attack*' (JP7) they continuously address Hamas as a 'terrorist group' while applying defence modes of journalism to justify Israel's actions. In the initial paragraph they immediately address the attack in this way:

'A regional military superpower was taken by surprise by a fanatical terrorist group when some 2,000 well-armed Hamas gunmen stormed across the border,

wreaking death and destruction in army bases, towns and Kibbutzim along the length of the Gaza border’.

The contrasting descriptions here are evident, JP present Israel as a strong unit with the adjective ‘superpower’ implying they exert great dominance across the world. Whereas they frame out Palestine, representing instead ‘ Hamas,’ an organisation they deem to be ‘terrorists’ and extremists. The adjective ‘fanatical’ supports this statement as it has connotations with a person or group that are devoted to a passion that is often related to religion, which could make them irrational. They are implying that Hamas are extremists through their devotion to Islam and are acting out on behalf of their religion. This juxtaposition in their language exemplifies who their newspaper publication stands with during this conflict.

Furthermore, they represent October 7<sup>th</sup> as one ‘wreaking death and destruction’ as they establish a ‘terrorist group’ initiated it. This phrase and reference to Hamas is repeated across their articles, which emphasises that they are a threat to humanity as they cause a lot of ‘deaths’ and the noun ‘destruction’ implies they terrorised the Israeli ‘border’. Although the focus throughout this article is on Hamas as the actor and the Palestinians have been excluded from the frame, placing this blame onto Hamas could lead to further support for Israel. This could secure the target on the Palestinians as JP readers will be aware of the history and context of this conflict. Arguably, this can further create and intensify an association with Hamas’ actions as a Palestinian problem.

The verb 'stormed' highlights Hamas' strength and threat to the Israeli's as it follows 'Hamas gunmen,' emphasising how they were armed. JP are also addressing Israeli innocence during this period; the military being taken 'by surprise' portrays Hamas as a terrorist organisation with a clear motive behind the attack that not even the military could have anticipated. Nevertheless, the JP are stressing how this was not a Hamas victory but instead Israel's lapse. Upon reflection, describing the attack in ways that make it seemed unprovoked and unreasonable is a useful strategy within defensive modes of journalism, it allows JP to justify Israel's response of 'destroying Hamas.'

They reinforce this portrayal of the terrorist in their article '*Overwhelmed: The IDF's first hours of fighting the terror waves on Oct 7*' (JP4), as within their final paragraphs there is the exclusion of 'Hamas' and a sole focus on 'the terrorists'. This shift is intentional as it emphasises their status as a threat:

'The terrorists even removed spare tires in order to light them on fire to burn buildings in the communities.

'The goal of the terrorists in several places was to seize buildings take hostages and entrench themselves. Others took hostages back to Gaza, others massacred people. It took time to kill the terrorists in Beerli.'

#### 4.1.4 How did JP represent Israel?

Similarly to AJE, the JP also highlight the mass deaths of their civilians to represent them as the victims within the conflict. It also allows them to convey the Palestinian side as terrorists, invoking suffering to the Israeli's.



‘We hope that with CT and biopsies, we can bring the unidentified down to less than 200. But some people, we will never find. We will never identify them. And people need to be prepared for this.’(JP5)

This extract is of importance within the article as it highlights two major things, one being the mass deaths, but also the tragic ways in which the civilians were murdered. The adjective ‘unidentified’ is used to describe the mass death and the tragedy surrounding this as it conveys how unrecognisable they were and the horror of what was done to them. Furthermore, the employment of the adverb of indefinite frequency ‘never’ indicates the number of victims that will be disregarded forever and the potential impact this could have on the grieving Israeli families. When placing the deaths into this perspective it creates this relatability among others, innocent families are being targeted because of a higher power engaging in war.

In contrast to the victimhood modes of journalism, JP also display defence modes of journalism through their justification of Israel’s actions. Expanding upon this, JP presents everyone other than the civilians as a military force, or of importance, which conveys their capabilities of asserting dominance worldwide.

‘As the preparations for a ground offensive were being finalized, [Defense Minister Yoav Gallant](#) revealed Israel’s war plans and list of objectives for the Gaza Strip.’

This extract taken from *‘Horrific October: Israel vows to eradicate Hamas after unprecedented attack’* (JP7) displays Israel’s ‘war plans’ for Hamas. They address this in reference to their ‘objectives’ which has connotations with a mission or a task that

must be completed. Furthermore, representing these as 'objectives' elides the nature of what these activities are, which is killing people.

Immediately, from the headline, JP are justifying Israel's stance. Through the action determine verb 'vows' Israel are directly addressing Hamas, highlighting how they must now 'eradicate' them due to their attack upon Israel. Juxtaposing Hamas's actions with Israel's 'vow' is what creates this justification. The reader will be aware that this is a necessary action that Israel must take to protect their civilians.

From a personal account taken from an intern within the '*Waking up to terror: How interns in Israel found themselves in a war*' (JP3) article, it is evident that the IDF are presented in a separate way to Hamas. This is also apparent across other JP articles where the IDF are referred to as 'soldiers' as opposed to 'terrorists'.

'My thoughts and prayers go out to all the IDF soldiers who are fighting to keep Israel safe.'

Although, the article was based on an intern's opinion rather than directly from a JP journalist, it arguably proves how people are more obliged to support their own side within a conflict. Notably, the IDF are being presented as 'soldiers' who have connections with war and fighting for a cause by putting themselves at risk. This contrast in representations is imperative in demonising the Palestinian side, portraying this image of terrorist's vs soldiers at war illustrates the Israeli side as perhaps more innocent and less targeted in their attacks.

## 4.2. The relationship represented between Israel and Palestine.

The results will now shift to explore how these elements work together; analysing the language they have employed to detach from each other. This is important as it highlights how JP/AJE want their readers to view the other side.

### 4.2.1. Demonisation of the enemy

Across both newspaper publications, they manipulate language to demonise the other side as the enemy, which creates the binary of 'us vs them'.

In '*Horrific October: Israel vows to eradicate Hamas after unprecedented attack*' (JP7) there is a heavy representation of Israel vs Hamas, with the demonisation of the enemy used to emphasise this.

'The enemy is preparing many things. But we are also preparing things for the enemy.'

This declarative is poetically binary, highlighting how JP and Israel view their opposition and demonising them as the enemy places Israel as the immediate victim. The compound sentence is also employed here to justify Israel's actions, placing their plans after 'the enemies' conveys how it is necessary to act.

In the extract below, taken from '*Fears of ground invasion grow as Israel vows mighty vengeance*' (AJE1), the Hamas military commander directly addresses Israel as 'the enemy', emphasising the destruction they have caused. This statement can also be deemed threatening as it comes from a member of Hamas who has authority within the organisation.

Mohammed Deif, a Hamas military commander, said the time has come “for the enemy to understand... they cannot keep going without consequences.”

#### 4.2.2 Believability factors

Within the pattern of the ‘us vs them’ approach, I found that both sides made the other seem unreliable as sources. By contrast, they used language to construct their own statements as factual.

For example, when AJE acknowledged Israel’s sources there was always hesitation surrounding them. This is noticeable in *‘Israel’s war on Gaza: Is the West Bank under increased attack too?’* (AJE8):

‘So far, at least 1,400 people in Israel have been killed, according to Israeli officials’.

The employment of the preposition ‘according to’ suggests that AJE can not confirm this statement. Furthermore, from a political standpoint, AJE perhaps do not agree with this statement as they do not see ‘Israeli officials’ as credible sources.

Another way in which AJE create doubt around the Israeli’s is by referring to historical contexts. Within their article *‘Israel flattens Palestine Tower amid deadly Gaza bombardment’* they state that:

‘Israel has a track record of conducting hits on residential buildings and towers located within the Gaza Strip, one of the world’s most densely populated areas’(AJE2)

And ‘During an 11-day conflict in Gaza in 2021, Israel targeted four towers, causing the destruction of three of them, including one that housed the offices of Al Jazeera and The Associated Press’(AJE2)

The discourse articulated here takes for granted that Israel are guilty of attacking Palestine as they have a ‘track record. Ultimately, being repeat offenders displays Israel as being to blame in this conflict. Furthermore, the direct reference to a previous attack takes it from an empty statement to one that is deemed dependable. These statements juxtaposing each other represents AJE as a trustworthy source and Israel as a threat to Palestine and not a nation one would want to support.

As opposed to creating doubt around Palestinian sources, the JP are most persistent on presenting Israel’s statements as facts and credible sources, which they do through the employment of adjectives. In particular, the article headlined: ‘*Hamas torture confirmed as Israeli forensics institute identifies victims*’ (JP5) has the most evidence of JP producing believability factors in favour of Israel. Firstly, the active voice in the headline presents Hamas as the violent actor which encourages readers to sympathise with Israel. Secondly, the adjective ‘confirmed’ describes this statement as accurate, one that multiple people have come to the same conclusion over.

Additionally, this article makes multiple references to those in the medical field and trustworthy figures. They inserted sources from professionals, which encourages the reader to believe what is said.

‘Many broke down into tears’ and ‘we disassociate because we need to work but from time to time it gets to you.’ (JP5)

The description of the 'Forensic pathologists, Israeli staffers and volunteers from abroad' reaction appears trustworthy as emotions and body language can convey more than words. Linking back to the concept of objectivity within war reporting, it shows they were pushed to their limit; normally they would report with no attachment to the situation.

#### 4.3. (De)humanisation

Within my analysis I also wanted to investigate who gets humanised within the conflict and who is dehumanised. The publications construct a binary to humanise their own side of the conflict and dehumanise the other. This was visible through the lack of victims mentioned on the 'other' side in comparison to their own or through explicit descriptions that construct the opposition as 'inhumane.'

##### 4.3.1. Construction of innocence

Both publications associate innocence with children as they are the most vulnerable type of social actor. With this strategy in mind, AJE and JP published an article solely related on the effects the conflict has had on children. However, it is apparent that both sides have a focus on their own children with little reference to the opposition's casualties.

AJE's article '*Israel's 'war against Gaza's children' explained*' (AJE7) addresses the idea that children are dying at the hands of Israel. This headline uses the active voice to display Israel as a direct threat to 'Gaza's children.' Furthermore, the verb 'explained'

concluding this headline presents the prior statement as a fact, in this article AJE will provide evidence to support this.

‘A 17-year-old witnessing the current war would have already lived through five wars since 2008’ [Al Jazeera] (AJE7)

This figure emphasises the duration of the conflict and the impact this has on children. Furthermore, the innocence of the child is emphasised as this is not a normal situation to be in, they represented as helpless. This statement is a rare case where the victim can be seen as neutral as it is indirectly addressing children from both sides.

The connection between innocent civilians and children is also made within the JP texts to build empathy with the reader. One example of this is in ‘*Hamas torture confirmed as Israeli forensics institute identifies victims*’ (JP5):

‘The age range of the victims spans from 3 months to 80 or 90 years’ - “many bodies, including those of babies, are without heads”

There is emphasis on the innocent lives being babies through the underlining of ‘babies are without heads’. Additionally, the inclusion of this fact is deliberate to illustrate to the reader what torture is being committed by Hamas. Referring to the death of a ‘3month’ old is perhaps an intensification of the strategy using children as innocent symbols. It is apparent to the reader how helpless and innocent they are in society; placing them as the target of such attacks conveys the cruelty received from the Palestinian side.

#### 4.3.2 Dehumanisation of Palestinians/Hamas

Another key theme I discovered across the publications was that they often used language to depict the opposition as inhumane through their extreme violence.

The JP used similes to dehumanise the Palestinians in the final article I retrieved for my sample published on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2023(JP7):

‘Now numerous buildings have been destroyed, partially burned, and ripped apart, like a tornado had come through here and left a path of destruction. But this was not a natural disaster, this was a human-caused disaster.’(JP4)

This simile is used to describe the severity of the destruction, comparing Hamas’ attack to ‘a tornado.’ However, the journalist does clarify that Hamas are to blame for this ‘destruction’ when they reiterate ‘this was a human-caused disaster.’ Although they initially dehumanise Hamas by implying this state of destruction caused by them is not normal human behaviour, they also humanise them in a sense, by reminding the reader they caused this.

#### 4.3.3 Dehumanisation of Israel

AJE dehumanise Israel through the descriptions of their relentless attacks which can be seen in early subsections. They also dehumanise Israel in mentioning the blockade and restrictions they have conducted as no moral human being could strip basic human rights from another:

‘For weeks, soldiers have prevented families from bringing in gas tanks for cooking and heating’(AJE11)



'Palestinians with medical emergencies are encountering a security apparatus entirely unmoved by their needs'. (AJE11)

Within this article, Palestinians are describing their current homes as 'prisons' which detaches Israelis from their status as human beings and instead depicts them as authoritative guards who are all the same. The collocation 'security apparatus' showcases who/what the Palestinians are up against; presenting the Israeli side by their force as opposed to them as individuals.

## 5. Discussion

Addressing my research question (*How do Al Jazeera and The Jerusalem post use language to depict a binary throughout October 7<sup>th</sup>?*) across the two outlets, it was evident that they used language to create a binary to separate Israel and Palestine within the conflict. Furthermore, it was noticeable that other binaries were created such as Hamas vs Palestine. As seen in my findings, this binary can be created through delegitimising language, victim and defence modes of journalism and (de)humanising language.

The emphasis on language that demonises the other side as the enemy is consistent with previous literature regarding delegitimization and factors that contribute to dehumanisation. Research conducted by Oren and Bar-Tal (2007), discovers that the main way to delegitimise the opposition is by demonising them as the enemy.

Furthermore, this concept also links back to research by Joseph (2014), he states that, 'the construction of a common enemy has become an integral part of political processes' (2014, p.231). Following this, the strategic employment of demonising the enemy appearing across the sample insinuates that this a deep-rooted factor within war reporting and it emphasises how dehumanisation and humanisation is a common technique in the creation of a binary.

Another major finding I discovered was that during the initial attacks from October 7<sup>th</sup>, AJE created another binary between Palestine and Hamas. There was a clear distinction between Hamas as the aggressors and Palestinians as innocent victims. Arguably, AJE did this to stand with the innocent Palestinians, highlighting their detachment from the

terrorist organisation conveys how the Palestinians are not to blame for October 7<sup>th</sup>. Interestingly, from this I gathered that AJE were more objective in their reporting, although they separated Palestinians from Hamas, they still accepted that Hamas were to blame for the initial attack. Furthermore, they referred to the Israeli death toll and Israeli officials as opposed to excluding any oppositional information. Although there was often doubtful language employed when following the Israeli statements, their inclusion still allowed the reader to gather a wide range of the context and to access information from both sides.

On the other hand, JP almost entirely excluded the Palestinians view from their reporting, with their main focus being on themselves as the victim or by taking a defensive approach through juxtaposing their upcoming plans with Hamas' latest attacks. I suggest that AJE were more subjective at times in their reporting, compared to JP who always remained firm in their political stance, as they are catering to a more mixed viewership, so the reader requires greater apparent neutrality. If the JP's audience is polarised already in a particular way, then they would have an incentive to write from that point of view.

Additionally, Ruigrok's (2008) literature offers an explanation as to why these binaries were created, he proposes the concept of 'good vs bad guys' within a conflict. It is an automatic response to view the opposition as the 'bad guys' and 'take sides with what they consider the main victims of the war' (2008, p.295). He also relates this back to Bell's journalism of attachment, suggesting this binary is created when journalists attach themselves to the conflict. Arguably, this is why AJE and JP use language to

demonise the other side or language that victimises themselves, they are members of the community they are reporting on so they will inevitably attach themselves to the conflict. Relating back to previous literature, Hallin's (1986) 'sphere of consensus' is imperative in supporting the idea that war journalists within an 'interpretative community' (Zandberg and Neiger's, 2005) find it harder to detach themselves from a conflict and can therefore, unintentionally create these binaries.

Another discussion point is the victim vs defensive modes of journalism displayed across AJE and JP's reporting. It was clear from my findings that both sides used negative descriptions of each other in their reporting. For example, JP continuously allocate the role of 'terrorists' to Hamas. Creating this semantic field of terror to describe Israel's opposition elucidates that they are an ever-growing threat to Israel. As a result, JP emphasises the Israeli citizens vulnerability. Relating back to defensive modes, the JP journalists often used language to defend themselves, placing Palestine as the social actors. This defensive stance has been displayed in previous conflicts between the two. Thussu and Freedman's (2003, p.143) research concludes that 'from the perspective of the Israeli government, the Palestinian militants are merely terrorists to whom they are 'responding'. Furthermore, this inclusion of marking their opposition as terrorist actors supports the overwhelming results I gathered in my analysis. Their research also conveys the victimisation of the Palestinians as from their perspective, 'they believe that they are resisting an illegal and violent occupation' (Thussu and Freedman, 2003, p.143). This is evident within AJE's reporting as they do not refer to Israeli's as terrorist but instead create this semantic field of war with reference to them as 'soldiers, forces, military and the army', this language is

imperative in allowing the reader to view Palestinians as the victims, insinuating Israel have started a war and are committing extreme violence upon Palestinian civilians.

Within the construction of this binary (Israel vs Palestine) the sympathy is unevenly allocated, meaning the news outlets will attempt to encourage sympathy for their side and not the other. They use sympathetic language because telling audiences intellectually that Hamas/Israel are evil is only one aspect of the conversation, encouraging them to feel those judgements is another task entirely. This way of constructing the binary resembles Wahl-Jorgensen's (2012) 'strategic ritual of emotionality in journalism'. She points out that journalists 'outsource' emotional work to others. A common way in which they attempted this is through the inclusion of children and the personalisation of victims and families.

### 5.1 Representation of Social Actors

Applying CDA through the lens of Van Leeuwen (2008) enabled me to analyse how certain language led to the creation of binaries. From this I can conclude that both news outlets used language to exclude or include certain actors. An example of this is through the inclusion of victims to garner sympathy or by excluding violent language in relation to 'their' side's actions. Furthermore, the active and passive voice was highlighted throughout my results as it was prominent in several headlines.

Meanwhile, through association of Hamas as a terrorist group, AJE and JP were able to create this attachment while also grouping them in such a way as to refer to their function of 'terrorists.' Finally, by exploring the factor '(imp)personalisation' it allowed

me to explore aspects of victim vs defensive modes of journalism through (de)humanisation; proving they are present within reporting on this conflict.

## 6. Conclusion

Through the application of CDA on a sample of news articles retrieved from AJE and JP, this dissertation has investigated how binaries have been created in relation to the October 7th conflict. Through this process I have then been able to explore the relationship the creation of binaries has with other key concepts, in relation to war journalism. For example, I have been able to identify the use of 'us' vs 'them' and victim/defence modes of journalism that are used to enable one side to detach from the other.

Bell's (1995) journalism of attachment theory also proves my research to be substantial. My dissertation may offer an insight into the difficulties of remaining objective whilst reporting on a conflict; it could explain *why* journalists attach themselves. The evidence of binaries within the articles I analysed proves there is some form of attachment from the AJE and JP journalists. Furthermore, as Zandberg and Neiger (2005) explain, when you are apart of an 'interpretative community', there is an unwritten obligation to attach. The Palestinian and Israeli journalists from AJE and JP are a part of this community and therefore attached themselves to 'their' side.

Ultimately, if they instead detached themselves from the conflict and chose to report objectively, this would appear unusual and shocking knowing the history the countries have experienced.

In terms of *how* this binary is created, it can be summarised that victim vs defence modes of journalism - through construction of the innocent and activation/passivation - play a key role, as well as negative descriptions of the other and demonstration of the

enemy. AJE often take a victim stance, following Hamas' initial attack they were focused on representing the retaliation, and their deaths. Although JP do use victim modes of journalism, they create this binary through their declaration to remove Hamas. The JP group Hamas as the enemy but also inadvertently present Israel as a threat, highlighting their strength and power as a country in comparison to Palestine. From an overview of the sampled articles, Palestine do appear the weaker unit, with Hamas being their only form of strength. This concludes what was introduced in the literature review, regarding the bias towards Israel.

#### 6.1 Strengths and Limitations

While my dissertation opens the possibility for future research, it does not offer a large sample size due to the limited time I had to conduct this research. From this, results can not be generalised. Nevertheless, this conflict is ongoing which demonstrates the topics significance.



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## Appendix A: *Al Jazeera* news articles

(They appear in chronological order)

AJE1- Fears of ground invasion grow as Israel vows mighty vengeance.

### Fears of a ground invasion of Gaza grow as Israel vows ‘mighty vengeance’.

The Israeli military is still fighting with Hamas in parts of southern Israel after it launched an attack there.

[image]

Published On 7 Oct 2023 7 Oct 2023

Fears of a huge ground invasion of Gaza are growing after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu promised to turn the besieged Palestinian enclave into a “deserted island” in response to [the worst attack](#) his country has suffered in decades.

The pledge came after gunmen from Hamas, which governs Gaza, rampaged through Israeli towns and killed at least 250 people on Saturday while [retreating with soldier and civilian hostages](#) in the deadliest day of violence for Israel since the Yom Kippur War 50 years ago. The Israeli military responded with devastating retaliatory strikes on Gaza, [killing more than 230 Palestinians](#) in the blockaded strip.

Israeli forces were still bombing Gaza and fighting with Hamas gunmen in parts of southern Israel in the early hours of Sunday and a spokesman for the military said the situation in the country was not totally under control.

Hamas said its unprecedented offensive by land, air and sea was in response to the desecration of the Al Aqsa Mosque as well as Israeli atrocities against Palestinians over the decades. These include the 16-year blockade of Gaza, Israeli raids inside West Bank cities over the past year, increasing attacks by settlers on Palestinians as well as the growth of illegal settlements.

Mohammed Deif, a Hamas military commander, said the time has come “for the enemy to understand... they cannot keep going without consequences”.

Hamas leaders said the assault that began in Gaza would spread to the occupied West Bank and Jerusalem.

Netanyahu, who has declared a “state of war” and called up military reservists, promised to fight Hamas to the bitter end. He told the 2.3 Palestinians in Gaza who are under an Israeli land, air and sea blockade to leave the territory immediately.

“We will take mighty vengeance for this black day,” the Israeli leader said in a televised address. “We will take revenge for all the young people who lost their lives. We will target all of Hamas’s

positions. We will turn Gaza into a deserted island. To the citizens of Gaza, I say. You must leave now. We will target each and every corner of the strip.”

[image]

‘Kill and capture’

In Gaza, residents spent the night in darkness and uncertainty as Israel cut power to the territory and intensified its bombardment of the densely populated enclave. The attacks flattened residential buildings in giant explosions, including a 14-story tower that held dozens of apartments as well as Hamas offices in central Gaza City.

Bottom of Form

Around 3am local time (00:00 GMT), a loudspeaker atop a mosque in Gaza City blared a stark warning to residents of nearby apartment buildings: Evacuate immediately. Just minutes later, an Israeli airstrike reduced one five-story building to ashes.

Gaza’s residents carried their dead and wounded into crumbling and overcrowded hospitals with severe shortages of medical supplies and equipment. The health ministry said 232 people had been killed and at least 1,700 wounded.

Saleh al-Arouri, the deputy chief of Hamas’s political bureau, told Al Jazeera that Hamas was holding a [large number of Israeli captives](#), including senior military officials. He said Hamas had enough captives to make Israel free all Palestinians in its jails.

“We managed to kill and capture many Israeli soldiers,” he said.

While world leaders called for restraint, many observers predicted a major ground assault on Gaza is likely in the works.

“There’s going to be a second act and that is an invasion of Gaza, and I think larger than 2014 when Israel called up 80,000 reserves,” said Yonah Jeremy Bob, a military analyst for the Jerusalem Post.

“Within a day or two, Israel will have a massive force that will be able to overwhelm Hamas forces in Gaza,” Bob told Al Jazeera.

Danny Danon, a member of Israel’s Knesset or parliament, said a response against Hamas is coming.

“The people in Gaza will have to take into consideration they will have to pay a price. Unlike Hamas, we have no intention of hurting civilians, but when we hunt Hamas we will be strong, we will be efficient, and we will do whatever it takes to hunt them down,” Danon told Al Jazeera.

“We will not sit idly by after more than 200 Israeli civilians were butchered, massacred today on our Jewish holiday.”

Meanwhile, in southern Israel, residents had yet to be given the all-clear to leave shelters where they hid from the assailants since the early hours. In the city of Sderot, Israeli forces were attempting to demolish a police station that had been seized by Palestinian fighters earlier in the day.

“It seems the Israeli forces are trying to bulldoze that building to try and avoid any boobytraps. It is not yet clear whether any gunmen are left inside,” said Al Jazeera’s Willem Marx, reporting from West Jerusalem.

“We heard from Israeli military today that all options remain on the table, when asked if this could end in a ground invasion of Gaza. We know that large numbers of reservists, thousands of them, have been called up and large numbers of heavy weaponry, including tanks, have been seen on roads heading south towards Gaza,” he added.

[image]

‘World is watching’

United States President Joe Biden decried the “unconscionable” assault by Hamas fighters and pledged to ensure Israel has “what it needs to defend itself”. He told Netanyahu that the US “stands with the people of Israel”.

“Israel has the right to defend itself and its people, full stop. There’s never a justification for terrorist attacks and my administration’s support for Israeli’s security is rock solid and unwavering,” said Biden.

Biden also warned Israel’s enemies that “this is not a moment for any party hostile to Israel to exploit these attacks to seek advantage. The world is watching”.

Egypt is in talks with Saudi Arabia and Jordan in a bid to defuse Palestinian-Israeli tensions, the Egyptian foreign ministry said.

Across the Middle East, there were demonstrations in support of Hamas with Israeli and US flags set on fire and marchers waving Palestinian flags in Iraq, Lebanon, Syria and Yemen.

In Iran, Israel’s regional archenemy, members of parliament opened their session on Saturday by chanting, “Death to Israel” and “Israel will be doomed, Palestine will be the conqueror”. Iran’s foreign ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani said, “Today’s operation created a new page in the field of resistance and armed operation against occupiers.”

In Lebanon’s Palestinian refugee camps, hundreds also took to the streets to celebrate the Hamas operation.

Ali Abunimah, the co-founder of The Electronic Intifada website, said 80 years of Israeli repression and “massacres” in Palestine was the reason behind the violence carried out on Saturday.

“The Palestinian people are struggling justly for their liberation. An Indigenous people fighting for their existence will fight back with great motivation to decades of living under the boot of this colonial regime whose brutality is being highlighted by the response from Israeli leaders,” he told Al Jazeera.

AJEE-Israel flattens Palestine Tower amid deadly Gaza bombardment.

### Israel flattens Palestine Tower amid deadly Gaza bombardment.

Al Jazeera’s team was reporting live when the Palestine Tower right behind them was struck by an Israeli air strike.

[image]

ds01:55



By [Al Jazeera Staff](#)

Published On 7 Oct 2023 7 Oct 2023

Israeli air raids on the besieged Gaza Strip have flattened a tower in the heart of Gaza City [as large-scale fighting](#) between Palestinian fighters and the Israeli military claimed the lives of hundreds of people.

The attack on Palestine Tower on Saturday came hours after Hamas, the group running the besieged Gaza Strip, launched a multi-pronged attack by firing thousands of rockets and sending fighters inside Israel.

The hit was caught live on camera as Al Jazeera's Youmna ElSayed was reporting from another building nearby.

"The building was totally destroyed and brought to the ground," she said afterwards. "Looking at all the buildings adjacent to it, you can imagine the amount of destruction that is in [the vicinity]."

There was no immediate information about any casualties.

Israel's air force said in a statement its fighter jets hit two high-rise buildings in Gaza, alleging they housed Hamas "military infrastructure".

It was not immediately clear if one of those buildings the air force was referring to was the Palestine Tower.

The moment the tower was hit [Al Jazeera screengrab]

### **Not the first time**

Israel has a track record of conducting hits on residential buildings and towers located within the Gaza Strip, one of the world's most densely populated areas.

These actions, referred to by the Israeli army as "precision strikes" targeting armed groups, frequently occur in densely inhabited areas and have resulted in civilian casualties.

During an 11-day conflict in Gaza in 2021, Israel targeted four towers, causing the destruction of three of them, including one that housed the offices of Al Jazeera and The Associated Press. London-based human rights group Amnesty International has previously raised concerns over Israel's military tactics, asserting that recurring attacks on residential buildings in Gaza demonstrated a disregard for the wellbeing of Palestinian civilians, and could potentially constitute war crimes or crimes against humanity.

AJE3- At least six Palestinian journalists killed as Israel bombs Gaza

[News | Israel War on Gaza](#)

### **At least six Palestinian journalists killed as Israel bombs Gaza**

Press freedom organisations say journalists providing critical reporting from Gaza and Israel to the world should not be targeted.

[image]

Published On 10 Oct 2023 10 Oct 2023

At least six Palestinian journalists have been killed in a matter of days, amid Israel's ongoing [shelling of the besieged Gaza strip](#), media networks and press freedom monitors have said.

Journalist Saeed al-Taweel, editor-in-chief of Al-Khamsa News website, and two other members of the press were killed early on Tuesday as they went to film a building that Israel would soon bomb in Gaza City.

"Unfortunately, they have sent a warning notice to the Hiji building just now that it will be bombed," al-Taweel said in his last words, shortly before being killed, according to a recording obtained by Al Jazeera. "The area has been evacuated entirely. Women, men, the elderly, kids have all completely fled the area."

Al-Taweel, Mohammed Subh and Hisham Alnwajha had been standing at a safe distance, hundreds of metres from the stated target. But the air attack instead hit a different building, much closer to them.

Alnwajha suffered serious injuries and was admitted to the intensive care room at Al-Shifa Medical Complex, the Palestinian news agency Wafa reported.

The crew was wearing flak jackets and helmets clearly identifying themselves as members of the press.

Funerals for Subh and al-Taweel were held hours later at a hospital in Gaza City.

As a tribute to their work, the iconic helmets worn by media workers were placed on their bodies, which were covered in white sheets.

[image]

Mourners, including colleagues, carry the bodies of Palestinian journalists Mohammed Subh and Saeed al-Taweel in Gaza City [Arafat Barbakh/Reuters]

Two other journalists, Ibrahim Mohammad Lafi and Mohammad Jarghoun, were shot dead while reporting on Saturday, according to the Palestinian press freedom group MADA and the Journalist Support Committee (JSC), a non-profit that promotes media rights in the Middle East.

Lafi, a photographer for Ain Media, was at the Gaza Strip's Beit Hanoon crossing, known as Erez to Israelis, as Israel and Hamas locked in a new cycle of escalating violence.

Jarghoun, a reporter with Smart Media, was to the east of Rafah city in the southern Gaza Strip.

Meanwhile, freelance journalist Mohammad el-Salhi was shot dead on the border to the east of Bureij refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip, the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) reported on Saturday.

Two Palestinian photographers, Nidal al-Wahidi from the Al-Najah channel and Haitham Abdelwahid from the Ain Media agency, have been reported missing since Saturday.

Ibrahim Qanan, a correspondent for Al-Ghad channel, was injured by shrapnel in the city of Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip, MADA said.

The Palestinian group denounced “the persistence of the Israeli occupation forces in committing more serious crimes and attacks against journalists and media outlets in Palestine”.

Sherif Mansour of the CPJ called on “all sides to remember that journalists are civilians and should not be targeted”. “Accurate reporting is critical during times of crisis and the media has a vital role to play in bringing news from Gaza and Israel to the world.”

The CPJ called for an investigation into el-Salhi’s death.

About 1,300 people on both sides of the conflict have died since Hamas, which rules the Gaza Strip, launched a surprise attack on Israeli territory on Saturday.

Israeli shelling has also destroyed the homes of Rami al-Sharafi, the director of Zaman Radio, and Al-Quds Today broadcaster Basil Khair al-Din, MADA reported. Media offices, including the headquarters of Al-Ayyam newspaper in the Palestine Tower, Fadel Shanaa Foundation, Shehab Agency, and Gaza FM Radio were also hit, the group said.

The organisation called for an end to the “impunity” enjoyed by Israeli authorities as “the only key to putting an end to the murders of journalists and ... attacks that target freedoms and media outlets in Palestine”.

Members of the press have also reportedly been targeted by authorities in Israel.

According to CPJ, on Saturday a television crew for the privately owned Sky News Arabia said they were assaulted and their equipment damaged by Israeli police in the southern city of Ashkelon.

The channel’s correspondent, Firas Lutfi, said Israeli police aimed rifles at his head, forced him to remove his clothes, confiscated the team’s phones, and made them leave the area under police escort.

Israeli authorities did not reply to CPJ’s requests for comment.

The organisation in May published Deadly Pattern, a report into the Israeli practice of targeting Palestinian journalists.

“No one has ever been charged or held responsible for these deaths,” the organisation said. The May 11, 2022 killing of Al Jazeera correspondent [Shireen Abu Akleh](#) is part of this “deadly, decades-long pattern”, it said.

Over 22 years, CPJ has documented at least 20 journalist killings by members of the Israeli army.

AJE4- Hamas says will kill hostages if Israeli attacks on Gaza civilians continue

## Hamas says will kill hostages if Israeli attacks on Gaza civilians continue

*Human Rights Watch terms Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant's call for a 'complete siege' on Gaza a 'war crime'.*

[image]

Flames and smoke billow during Israeli attacks against Gaza on October 9, 2023 [Mohammed Salem/Reuters]

Published On 10 Oct 2023 10 Oct 2023

The Hamas movement has threatened to kill an Israeli hostage every time Israel bombs a Palestinian home without warning as Israel mobilised some 300,000 reservists and imposed a total blockade of the Gaza Strip, denying the enclave's millions of residents access to food, water and fuel.

The warning from Hamas came on Monday as the death toll from the armed group's surprise weekend attack [climbed to 900 in Israel](#) and revenge attacks by Israeli forces on the besieged Gaza Strip killed more than 700 people and left some 3,700 others wounded.

Residential apartment blocks, hospitals, schools and a mosque have been among the sites attacked by Israeli fighter jets, artillery and drones, according to media reports and witnesses.

Hamas spokesperson Abu Ubaida issued the threat to kill Israelis from the [dozens held captive](#) by the armed group. He said an Israeli hostage would be killed for every Israeli bombing of a civilian house without warning.

Israeli Foreign Minister Eli Cohen said more than 100 people were taken captive by Hamas during the deadly cross-border incursion over the weekend.

As Israeli forces conducted intense retaliatory attacks on Gaza on Monday, Israel's Defence Minister Yoav Gallant drew international condemnation by announcing a total blockade of the densely populated and besieged enclave, which is home to 2.3 million people.

Gallant said Israel would impose a "complete siege" on Gaza. "No electricity, no food, no water, no gas – it's all closed."

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said he was "deeply distressed" by the siege announcement and warned that Gaza's already dire humanitarian situation will now "only deteriorate exponentially".

[image]

A mourner carries the body of Palestinian boy Saad Lubbad, who health officials said was killed in an Israeli attack, during his funeral in Rafah, in the southern Gaza Strip, on October 9, 2023 [Ibraheem Abu Mustafa/Reuters]

Guterres also said some 137,000 people were taking shelter with the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA) at schools across Gaza.

[UNRWA](#) said on Tuesday that almost 190,000 people have been displaced in Gaza amid the Israeli attacks and the figure is expected to grow further as the violence intensifies.

Nearly half a million people have also not received food rations this week in Gaza as UN food distribution centres have been forced to remain closed amid the Israeli onslaught, UNRWA said.

Human Rights Watch said Israel's total blockade on the necessities of life for everyday people in Gaza was a war crime.

"Defense Minister Gallant's statements are abhorrent," Omar Shakir, Israel and Palestine director at Human Rights Watch, said in a statement.

"Depriving the population in an occupied territory of food and electricity is collective punishment, which is a war crime, as is using starvation as a weapon of war. The International Criminal Court should take note of this call to commit a war crime," he said.

Shakir also condemned the threat by Hamas to kill hostages, warning that such action was also a war crime.

"All hostages should be safely released to their families," he said.

On the diplomatic front, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi and his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan called on Hamas and Israel to immediately end violence and protect civilians, the Egyptian presidency said.

Erdogan urged Israel against "indiscriminately" attacking civilians and delivered measured criticism of Hamas, urging both sides to respect the "ethics" of war.

The United Kingdom, French, German, Italian and US governments issued a joint statement on Monday recognising the "legitimate aspirations" of the Palestinian people and supporting equal measures of justice and freedom for Israelis and Palestinians alike.

[image]

[Al Jazeera]

They said they would remain “united and coordinated” to ensure Israel can defend itself.

But the prospect that fighting could spread also alarmed the region and the world.

Lebanese armed group Hezbollah fired rockets into northern Israel in response to at least three of its members being killed in Israeli shelling of Lebanon.

Israel said one of its deputy commanders was also killed in an earlier cross-border raid from Lebanon.

AJE5- Israel-Hamas war: List of key events, day 7

### Israel-Hamas war: List of key events, day 7

*As the conflict between Israel and Palestine enters its seventh day, these are the main developments.*

[image]

Published On 13 Oct 2023 13 Oct 2023

Here is the [situation](#) on Friday, October 13, 2023:

#### **Fighting**

- Israel says it attacked 750 “military targets” overnight in the densely [populated Gaza Strip](#), including 12 high-rise buildings.
- An Israeli ground invasion of Gaza is likely to start over the weekend, former Australian ambassador to Lebanon Ian Parmeter told Al Jazeera, adding that the operation would result in heavy casualties.
- US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said the Israeli government showed him photographs and videos of Hamas atrocities, including of a baby riddled with bullets, soldiers beheaded and young people burned.
- Gaza’s ruling Hamas called on Palestinians to rise up on Friday in protest against Israel’s bombardment of the enclave, urging Palestinians to march to East Jerusalem’s Al-Aqsa Mosque.

- Human Rights Watch accused Israel of using white phosphorus munitions in its military operations [in Gaza](#) and Lebanon.
- Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas condemned violence against civilians.
- Egypt said it was directing international aid flights for Gaza to an airport in Sinai near the Gaza border.
- Al Jazeera's Gabriel Elizondo, reporting from New York, said eight hours of the Israeli military's 24-hour deadline have already apparently elapsed for the 1.1 million people who have been ordered out of northern Gaza.
- "The UN says that they received this [evacuation order] around midnight Gaza time. It's now a little after 8am Gaza time, meaning that if these 24 hours began at midnight, we are now at about 16 hours, that's an important thing to keep in mind," Elizondo said.

[image]

#### **Human impact**

- The UN "considers it impossible for the relocation to take place without devastating humanitarian consequences," UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric said of the Israeli military's call to depopulate northern Gaza.
- "The United Nations strongly appeals for any such order, if confirmed, to be rescinded avoiding what could transform what is already a tragedy into a calamitous situation."
- Israeli [air attacks](#) have made major cemeteries in Gaza too dangerous to reach so mourning families are burying their dead in informal graveyards dug in empty lots.
- Israel's public broadcaster Kan said [the Israeli death toll](#) had risen to more than 1,300, and at least 3,000 wounded.
- Gaza authorities said more than 6,000 Palestinians have been killed and more than 6,000 wounded.

[image]

#### **Diplomacy and international reaction**

- The United Kingdom is deploying two Royal Navy ships and surveillance aircraft to the eastern Mediterranean to support Israel and reinforce regional stability.
- US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has arrived in Jordan where he will meet King Abdullah II and Palestine's President Mahmoud Abbas.

- Israel, the White House and some rival Republican presidential candidates criticised former US President Donald Trump after he described Hezbollah as “smart” and said Netanyahu “was not prepared” for the attack.
- Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan told the German Chancellor Olaf Scholz that a sovereign Palestinian state should be established for a lasting solution to the conflict, the Turkish presidency said.
- French [police used tear gas](#) and water cannon to break up a banned rally in support of the Palestinian people in Paris.
- China’s top diplomat and Foreign Minister Wang Yi said the Palestinian issue is the core of the Middle East conflict, and that crux of the matter was that “justice” had been denied to the Palestinian people.
- Iran’s foreign minister said the continuation of crimes against Palestinians will receive a response from “the rest of the axis” and Israel will be responsible for the consequences

AJE6-What we know so far about the deadly strike on a Gaza hospital

## What we know so far about the deadly strike on a Gaza hospital

*Palestinian officials say nearly 500 people were killed in an Israeli air raid on al-Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza.*

[image]

An injured person is assisted at al-Shifa Hospital after an Israeli air attack hit the nearby al-Ahli Arab Hospital on October 17 [Mohammed Al-Masri/Reuters]

Published On 18 Oct 2023 18 Oct 2023

|

Updated:

15 Nov 2023

08:42 PM (GMT)

Nearly [500 people](#) have been killed in an Israeli air attack on the al-Ahli Arab Hospital in the besieged Gaza Strip, Palestinian officials have said.

The health ministry in Gaza said the blast at the hospital was caused by an Israeli air raid. Israel has attributed the explosion to a misfired rocket launched by the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) armed group. The PIJ has denied the allegation.



## **Hundreds killed**

The health ministry in Gaza says at least 471 people [were killed](#) in the blast, by far the highest death toll of any single incident in Gaza during the current war between Israel and Hamas.

The ministry said hundreds of other victims remained under the rubble.

Hamas said the blast mostly killed displaced people.

The Palestinian Authority's health minister, Mai Alkaila, accused Israel of carrying out "a massacre".

Located [in central Gaza](#), the hospital, which is run by the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem, was struck while it was overwhelmed with thousands of Palestinians seeking shelter amid a campaign of brutal Israeli air attacks across much of the besieged Gaza Strip.

## **How has the world reacted?**

World leaders have [denounced the bombing](#), with leaders from across the Middle East issuing the firmest statements.

Protests have also erupted across the Middle East, including in Jordan and in the Israeli-occupied [West Bank](#) where Palestinian protests have confronted the Palestinian Authority's security forces.

Jordan has cancelled a planned summit in the capital of Amman with United States President Joe Biden and Arab leaders.

Jordan's Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi said the meeting would be held at a time when all present could agree to work towards ending the "war and the massacres against Palestinians".

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, who had also been slated to attend the summit, said he condemned "in the strongest possible terms Israel's bombardment" of the Gaza hospital.

Saudi Arabia also issued a firm statement, condemning "in the strongest possible terms the heinous crime committed by the Israeli occupation forces by bombing [Al Ahli Baptist Hospital](#) in Gaza".

Western leaders did not blame Israel for the strike, with French President [Emmanuel Macron](#) saying in a social media post that “nothing can justify a strike against a hospital” and adding that “all the light must be shed on the circumstances”.

Biden in a statement offered “deepest condolences for the innocent lives lost in the hospital explosion in Gaza”.

#### **What does Israel say?**

Israeli authorities said the hospital was hit by an errant rocket fired by [Palestinian Islamic Jihad](#), which operates inside the Gaza Strip.

“An analysis of IDF [Israel’s army] operational systems indicates that a barrage of rockets was fired by terrorists in Gaza, passing in close proximity to the Al Ahli hospital in Gaza at the time it was hit,” Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in a social media post.

“Intelligence from multiple sources we have in our hands indicates that Islamic Jihad is responsible for the failed rocket launch which hit the hospital in Gaza.”

Israeli military spokesperson Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari told reporters rockets fired by the PIJ passed by the hospital at the time of the strike, which he said hit the facility’s parking lot.

Hagari claimed there was no direct hit on the facility and said military drone footage showed “a kind of hit in the parking lot”.

He said the military did have an Israeli Air Force operation in the area around the time of the hospital blast “but it was with a different kind of ammunition that does not ... fit the footage that we have [of] the hospital.”

#### **What does PIJ say?**

The PIJ has rejected the Israeli allegation that it was responsible for the strike.

“The Zionist enemy is trying hard to evade its responsibility for the brutal massacre he committed by bombing the Baptist Arab National Hospital in Gaza through his usual fabrication of lies, and through pointing the finger of blame at the Islamic Jihad movement in Palestine,” it said in a statement.

“We therefore affirm that the accusations put forward by the enemy are false and baseless,” it added.

Al Jazeera's Imran Khan noted that some observers have questioned Israel's version of events, with some pointing to Israel's history of falsely attributing acts carried out by its own forces to armed Palestinian groups.

"We've seen this type of thing before from the Israelis," Khan said on Tuesday.

"Take for example the [killing of our colleague Shireen Abu Akleh](#). At the initial stages of that report, the Israelis blamed fighters within Jenin camp for her death. It was only later that they admitted it was one of theirs."

AJE7-Israel's 'war against Gaza's children' explained

## Israel's 'war against Gaza's children' explained

October 19th, 2023 ( [Al Jazeera English](#) — Delivered by [Newstex](#) )

One child is killed every 15 minutes in the Israeli bombings of Gaza, according to a Palestinian NGO, highlighting the toll the current war has exacted on children.

More than [100 children](#) have been killed every day since Israel started bombing the besieged Palestinian enclave on October 7 in the wake of the deadly Hamas attack. More than 3,400 Palestinians have been killed in the deadliest Israeli assault in decades.

"We are witnessing a genocide in real time," a spokesperson for The Defense for Children International – Palestine (DCIP) said.

At least 14 children were reportedly also among the 1,400 Israeli victims of the October 7 Hamas attack. About 200 people taken captive by Hamas also include children. Israel has not released data on the demographics of all of those killed in that attack.

Aren't children legally protected in wars?

Yes, they're meant to be. Internationally accepted rules of armed conflict were passed under the Geneva Conventions in 1949, which state children must be protected and treated humanely.

Israel ratified the conventions in 1951, just a few years after one and a half million Jewish children were killed in Europe during the Holocaust.

The disproportionate use of military might in Gaza is being billed by Israel as a legitimate means to destroy Hamas. And so civilian deaths tallied up in the attacks, including children, do not qualify as war crimes, Israel claims.

A third of people killed in Israeli attacks on Gaza are children [Al Jazeera]

What effect is the war having on children?

Parents, like Esra Abu Ghazzah, try to find ways to calm their children from the bombings and destruction around them. The 30-year-old mother her children, aged eight and two, have started to vomit after air strikes, and are also wetting the bed. Both are responses to heightened fear.

The Abu Ghazzah children are part of the 95 percent of Palestinian children in Gaza who are living with the psychological effects of war.

[A research paper](#) written by Palestinian psychologist Dr Iman Farajallah found that children who survive wars do not emerge unscathed and can pay a high price psychologically, emotionally and behaviourally.

Some children display restlessness, regression or violent behaviour.

For Samah Jabr, a 35-year-old mother of four in Gaza City, her eldest son, Qusay, who is 13, is her main worry. 'He is very agitated and lashes out a lot these days. He jumps at any sound,' she said. 'He can't bear anyone speaking loudly, even if they're joking. I try to tell him that this war will end.'

Others may not want to leave their mothers' sight, explains Farajallah. "They won't even leave the room to go to the bathroom or kitchen without their mothers, and I'm talking about teenagers here."

A 17-year-old witnessing the current war would have already lived through five wars since 2008 [Al Jazeera] (Al Jazeera)

How have schools been affected?

With the latest campaign of relentless bombing, education has once again been put on hold, as schools turn into makeshift shelters and survival becomes the only lesson.

The United Nations is now sheltering about 400,000 displaced Gazans in its schools and other facilities, but the UN's agency for Palestinian refugees, the UNRWA, which runs 278 schools in Gaza, has said at least four schools have suffered damage from Israeli bombing in which at least six people have been killed.

The Education Above All (EAA) Foundation, which provides scholarships for Palestinians in need at its al-Fakhoora school in Gaza, was destroyed on Tuesday. The EAA released a statement saying that 'collective punishment, reprisals, and attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure are serious violations of international humanitarian law, and if deliberate they are war crimes'.

How is the lack of food and water affecting children?

Israel's total blockade on Gaza has meant no food or water can enter the territory, but Israeli authorities have said they resumed water supplies to southern Gaza on Tuesday. Palestinians have said without electricity to operate the water pumps, the water crisis continues.

With food and water rapidly running out, Gazans are prioritising whatever little water supplies they have for their children.

Children are more at risk of dehydration, and malnourishment can further speed up the effects of having no water.

A Jerusalem-based nutritionist with the UN food agency also told Al Jazeera that poor water sanitation can lead to children facing high risks of diarrhoeal diseases, which are the most common cause of dehydration and the globally leading cause of child mortality for under-fives.

A lack of food at best affects cognitive function and energy levels, and at worst can lead to starvation and death.

What are the long-term consequences?

For those who don't die in this war, they will have to learn how to survive [without](#) the rest of their family members, explained Ghassan Abu-Sitta, a British Palestinian surgeon working with Medical Aid for Palestinians in Gaza. He has called this war 'a war against children'.

"The repercussions of this war will not only affect the victims we have lost, some of which are still trapped under the rubble of their homes but the psychological impact on us civilians and our children will be catastrophic," Mohammad Abu Rukbeh, senior Gaza field researcher at DCIP, said in a statement on Tuesday.

Is a ceasefire possible soon?

As the bombardment continues, and borders stay sealed, international aid organisations including Save the Children have called for an immediate ceasefire.

UNICEF's statement read: 'An immediate ceasefire and humanitarian access are the top priorities to allow much-needed aid to children and families in Gaza.

'A child is a child. Children everywhere must be protected at all times and must never come under attack.'

AJES-Israel's war on Gaza: Is the West Bank under increased attack too?

## Israel's war on Gaza: Is the West Bank under increased attack too?

At least 76 Palestinians killed by Israeli soldiers and settlers in the past 13 days as Gaza death toll surpasses 3,500.

[image]

A Palestinian wounded in an Israeli army raid on the Nur Shams refugee camp is brought to a hospital in Tulkarem, occupied West Bank, October 19, 2023 [Majdi Mohammed/AP Photo]

By [Zena Al Tahhan](#)

Published On 19 Oct 2023 19 Oct 2023

Ramallah, occupied West Bank – As the world's attention has been fixed on Israel's brutal bombardment of the Gaza Strip for the past two weeks, killings of at least 76 Palestinians by Israeli forces in the same period have barely made it to the headlines.

More than [3,500 Palestinians](#), including over 1,000 children, have been killed in Israel's deadliest assault on Gaza, which began on October 7.

In the occupied West Bank, where Israeli forces have killed an average of one Palestinian a day over the past two years, the number has increased drastically since events unfolded. At least 76 Palestinians have been killed, including eight by armed settlers, across the West Bank and Jerusalem when the latest escalation between Israel and Palestinians began.

Israeli army raids into Palestinian cities and villages have also sharply increased, along with confrontations and protests against the bombing of Gaza.

Tensions are also growing with the Palestinian Authority (PA), which has limited administrative control over a small part of the occupied West Bank and is seen by many as a subcontractor for the Israeli occupation.

What has been happening in the occupied West Bank and Jerusalem?

Israel's latest assault on Gaza began after fighters from Hamas, the Palestinian armed resistance movement governing the occupied Strip, launched a surprise attack on October 7 just outside the besieged enclave on Israeli territory. So far, at least 1,400 people in Israel have been killed, according to Israeli officials.

Since then, the Israeli army has stepped up its daily deadly raids on Palestinian neighbourhoods, villages and cities in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem, where more than three million Palestinians live. Killings of residents by armed settlers have also increased.

These attacks have led to an average of five Palestinians being killed every day in those areas since October 7. The Palestinian Ministry of Health said on Wednesday that more than 1,300 have been injured so far.

Between Wednesday night and Thursday afternoon, Israeli forces and settlers had killed at least 12 people, including at least four children, and injured dozens of others with live ammunition.

Israeli forces carried out a large-scale raid on the Nur Shams refugee camp in Tulkarem on Thursday, killing at least seven Palestinians and causing heavy destruction, the health ministry said.

"We have indications that there are other martyrs that ambulances have not been able to reach," it noted.

Earlier on Thursday, the Israeli army killed two children, who were both shot in the head during confrontations.

The health ministry identified them as 15-year-old Taha Mahameed, also killed in the Nur Shams refugee camp, and 17-year-old Ahmad Muneer Sdooq, killed in the Dheisheh refugee camp in Bethlehem.

Mass arrests

Israeli forces have also arrested at least 850 Palestinians in raids in the occupied West Bank and Jerusalem over the past 13 days, including at least 120 overnight on Wednesday. This is apart

from hundreds of other Palestinians, including labourers, from Gaza who have been arrested inside Israel.

The escalating violence has sparked sporadic and organised protests and confrontations against both the Palestinian Authority (PA) in West Bank city centres and Israeli forces at checkpoints, military bases and settlements.

The protests increased drastically after the bombing of a hospital courtyard in Gaza on Tuesday night killing 471 people, in what has been described as a massacre and spurred worldwide outrage. Palestinians blamed Israel for the hospital bombing while Israel pointed fingers of blame at armed groups.

Images and videos aired by journalists at the scene showed countless bodies strewn across the ground and people carrying the limbs of their slain loved ones in bags, on the 12th day of Israel's relentless bombardment of Gaza.

Some 70 percent of those killed were women and children, the health ministry said on Wednesday, and at least 314 others remain injured, including 22 in critical condition.

What has the PA's response been?

On the night of the hospital attack, thousands emerged in protests across occupied West Bank cities, which the PA cracked down on with live ammunition, teargas and stun grenades.

A young Palestinian girl, 12-year-old Razan Nasrallah, [was shot and killed](#) by the PA security forces in the northern city of Jenin, and dozens of others were injured, including at least one in critical condition.

In Ramallah, where the PA is based, protesters hurled rocks, chairs and other items at PA armoured vehicles attempting to disperse them.

The most common chant in protests has been: "Put the sword before the sword, we are the men of Mohammed Deif," in reference to the commander of Hamas's military wing, the Qassam Brigades, but protests on Tuesday also [included](#) a call for PA President Mahmoud Abbas to step down.

The PA was created under the [1993 Oslo Accords](#) between the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Israel, making it 30 years old this year.

It was formed as an interim, five-year governing body, meant to lead to a Palestinian state comprising of the 1967-occupied territories of East Jerusalem, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

Israel's 56-year military occupation of these territories, including the building of illegal settlements – the majority of which were built either entirely or partially on private Palestinian land – has prevented that prospect.

Under the agreement, the PA is also required to share intelligence with Israel as part of its highly controversial [policy of "security coordination"](#) and to aid in thwarting armed resistance by Palestinians, including by helping with arrests, making it unpopular with most Palestinians.

AJE9-Gaza death toll tops 5,000, nearly half of them children: Officials

## Gaza death toll tops 5,000, nearly half of them children: Officials

*Children make up 40 percent of the dead since Israel started bombing the enclave, according to Gaza's Ministry of Health.*

[image]

A wounded Palestinian woman cries as she holds the hand of a dead relative in Gaza City [Abed Khaled/AP]

Published On 23 Oct 2023 23 Oct 2023

Nearly 5,100 Palestinians have been killed in the Gaza Strip since Israel launched a relentless bombing campaign against the besieged enclave after an attack by Hamas inside Israel more than two weeks ago, according to health officials.

About 40 percent of the 5,087 people killed are children, Gaza's Ministry of Health said on Monday, the day when Israel's army said it carried out more than 300 new air attacks within 24 hours. Palestinian officials said more than 400 people were killed in that period.

Thousands of buildings have been destroyed, and more than one million people displaced in the territory, which has been under siege and largely deprived of water, food and other basic supplies.

Fighting raged unabated overnight after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu promised that Israel would "erase Hamas", an armed group that runs Gaza, as a full-scale ground invasion loomed.

On Monday, the Israeli military said it had hit "over 320 military targets in the Gaza Strip" in the previous 24 hours.

It said the targets "included tunnels containing Hamas terrorists, dozens of operational command centres" as well as "military compounds and observation posts" used by the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, another armed group.



Gaza's government media office said more than 60 people were killed in the raids during the night, including 17 in a single strike that hit a house in northern Gaza, and at least 10 were killed in new strikes on Monday morning.

In the south, Rafah resident Mohammed Abu Sabalah said he had returned home from a mosque after dawn prayers on Monday and "a quarter of an hour later there was a bombing".

"We couldn't see anything because of the thick smoke," he said, adding, "We thank God that we've emerged safe and sound" with "only a few windows and doors destroyed".

Tala Herzallah, 21, who evacuated to the south following Israel's order to leave the northern Gaza Strip on October 13, said last night "could not be "described in words".

"We were literally shaking due to fear. We didn't know if we would wake up alive or not," Tala noted, adding that she woke up in the morning to a "series of bombings" nearby.

Israel has continued bombarding Gaza's south despite telling 1.1 million people in the north of the besieged enclave to relocate there ahead of an expected ground offensive.

"We were displaced from Tal al-Hawa to Rafah at the request of the Israeli army, and this is what happened to us. My son is a 3-month-old martyr," the father of a child killed in an attack in Rafah told Al Jazeera.

Israeli forces are massed near the Gaza border, and smaller units have already carried out limited incursions, targeting Hamas and hoping to rescue captives the group took from Israel on October 7. Israel now puts the number of captives at 222.

In one such operation, a 19-year-old Israeli soldier was killed and three wounded, the army said, adding that the tank operation aimed "to dismantle terror infrastructure ... and locate missing persons and bodies".

Hamas confirmed the skirmishes, saying its fighters encountered an Israeli armoured unit infiltrating east of Khan Younis in southern Gaza. The group said its fighters destroyed some Israeli military equipment.

AJE10- Mass graves, rushed burials: Funeral rites bypass Gaza dead amid Israel war

## Mass graves, rushed burials: Funeral rites bypass Gaza dead amid Israel

### war

*Due to sheer number of casualties every day, Palestinians killed by Israel are quickly buried without processions or large congregations.*

[image]

People pray over the bodies of the al-Hor family who are laid out in the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital courtyard in Deir al-Balah, central Gaza Strip [Ashraf Amra/Al Jazeera]

By [Linah Alsaafin](#) and [Ashraf Amra](#)

Published On 3 Nov 2023 3 Nov 2023

**Deir el-Balah, Gaza Strip** – It was late Friday night, and 28-year-old Amani al-Hor had just returned home when the missile struck her parents’ home right next door.

Amani had spent a couple of hours there that evening, playing a card game with her cousin to take their minds off the sound of the aerial bombings. She had chatted to her siblings and then taken her four children, who she said were “being a nuisance”, back to their own house.

There were eight families spanning three generations under her parents’ roof that evening, in the Nuseirat refugee camp. Amani’s parents, their married children, the grandchildren and other relatives who had been displaced from their homes had all gathered to be together.

Shortly after 8pm, an Israeli air attack targeted the house. At least 40 members of Amani’s family were killed, including her parents, nearly all of her siblings and every one of their children.

The attack also damaged Amani’s house.

[image]

With hospital morgues overflowing, the bodies of Palestinians killed in Israeli attacks undergo rushed funeral rites [Ashraf Amra/Al Jazeera]

“I just found the walls and ceiling falling on us,” she said. “I didn’t hear the sound of the missile. It was like being in a grave. Somehow, I grabbed my four children in the dark and we managed to get out.”

Still in a state of shock, she began counting her family members that had been killed.

“My sister and her four children; my brother, his wife and their four daughters; my other sister-in-law, her son and two daughters – but her husband, my other

brother survived,” she said. “It was a very crowded building and the children made a lot of noise. Most of them are still under the rubble.”

“I wish I could see my father,” Amani said. “I only saw the back of him that night, he was telling my siblings something as I was leaving. My mother’s body is torn into pieces. At the hospital, I only saw her arms, and her intestines had spilled out of her stomach.”

Amani had been very close to her sisters, talking to them every day.

“I wish I was killed with them,” she said.

[image]

A man bids farewell to a member of the al-Hor family, after an Israeli air attack killed at least 40 members in Nuseirat refugee camp [Ashraf Amra/Al Jazeera]

### **No room left in cemeteries**

More than 9,000 Palestinians – the majority of them women and children – have been killed by Israeli forces since they began their offensive on the Gaza Strip on October 7. More than 32,000 more have been wounded.

Hundreds of Palestinians have been killed every day and night since the bombing began, overwhelming hospitals, which are now in a state of collapse due to the total blockade imposed by Israel. Electricity, clean water and fuel have all run out, and there are no medical supplies or lifesaving treatments. At least 15 hospitals and medical centres have been forced to stop operating, meaning that patients have to be transferred to the remaining hospitals, which are already overcrowded.

The sheer number of casualties over the past 28 days has resulted in expedited funeral rites and burials, with the added anguish of laying family members to rest in mass graves.

“Before the war, funerals had rituals that were followed,” said Mukhtar al-Hor, 57, and a relative of Amani. “Dozens or hundreds of people would pray over the deceased before carrying them to the cemetery to be buried. Now, there are barely a handful of people available to pray over their loved ones.”

[image]

The cemetery in Deir el-Balah has run out of room and as a result, mass graves are being dug for necessity [Ashraf Amra/Al Jazeera]

Mukhtar said that at least 18 bodies had so far been pulled out from under the rubble in the Nuseirat refugee camp, but some of them were body parts that could not be identified.

“I cannot describe what it is like to bury your family in a mass grave,” he said. “They are devoid of the funeral rites that we were used to during ordinary times.”

Diab al-Jaru, the Mayor of Deir el-Balah, said that the town has seen at least 20 major attacks carried out by Israel over the past four weeks against its residents and displaced people who have sought shelter there.

“So far, more than 400 people have been killed in Deir el-Balah alone,” he told Al Jazeera. “The large number of people killed means that we have run out of room in the cemetery, which was already full, as before the war we would bury two to three people from the same family in one grave.”

Now, the mayor said there is no other option than burying people in mass graves, usually separated by gender.

“Friday night alone saw 150 people killed. We had no choice but to bury them all together,” al-Jaru said.

[image]

The mayor of Deir al-Balah said that the town has seen at least 20 massacres carried out by Israel [Ashraf Amra/Al Jazeera]

### **Shrouded, prayed over and buried**

Palestinians often refer to those killed in Israeli attacks as “martyrs” and their funeral processions usually hold a deep meaning for the people of their communities.

But the current, exceptional assault on Gaza has cut short not just these processions, but also the burial rituals which usually followed.

In normal circumstances, after being washed, the body of a loved one is taken to the family home where women are able to bid a final farewell. Then the body is taken to the mosque to be prayed over by the men, before being transported either in a vehicle or carried by people in a large congregation to the cemetery.

Abu Ammar is the supervisor for washing bodies according to Islamic rituals at the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir el-Balah. He said he has been receiving hundreds of bodies on a daily basis since the assault began nearly four weeks ago.

Now, the funeral prayer is performed on hospital grounds immediately after the body is washed, attended by only a smattering of people or anyone who is available, before being taken to be buried in a mass grave without headstones instead of a single grave with a marble headstone.

“Before the war, the bodies of adults would be wrapped in three different shrouds,” he said.

[image]

Abu Ammar, who washes the bodies of dead people at the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital, said he has never seen such mutilated bodies before [Ashraf Amra/Al Jazeera]

“We would wash them with water and soap twice, and on the third time, we would use camphor. But under these current circumstances, we don’t have the time or means to do that. Instead, we shroud them immediately in one piece due to the shortages we are facing, and try to wipe away the blood from their faces.”

Torn body parts, he added, are wrapped first in a plastic covering and then covered with a shroud, in order not to stain it.

Due to the sheer number, the hospital’s administration has been forced to lay out some of the bodies outside in the courtyard.

Ammar, who has a quiet demeanour, said he has seen a shocking number of mutilated bodies.

“I have received bodies burned beyond recognition, bodies with torn limbs, skulls emptied and broken, bodies reeking of chemical smells,” the 45-year-old said.

“The most violent weapons, made by the US, are being used against us,” he added. “This aggression has crossed all red lines and violated every international human rights law. The world must stop this barbaric war against us.”

[image]

More than 400 people have been killed in Deir el-Balah alone since the start of Israel’s offensive on the Gaza Strip on October 7 [Ashraf Amra/Al Jazeera]

SOURCE: AL JAZEERA

AJE11-‘Like a prison’: The Palestinians in Hebron living under Israeli lockdown

**[‘Like a prison’: The Palestinians in Hebron living under Israeli lockdown](#)**

Newstex Blogs

Al Jazeera English

November 5, 2023 Sunday 2:30 PM EST

November 5th, 2023 ( [Al Jazeera English](#) — Delivered by [Newstex](#) )

Hebron, occupied West Bank – Across the neighbourhoods of the H2 area of Hebron – the 20 percent of the Palestinian city where some 700 Israelis live in illegal settlements and the Israeli military has full control – the streets are mostly empty of H2's approximately 35,000 Palestinian residents.

Patrolling the streets and manning the rooftops, instead, are Israeli soldiers and armed settlers in military uniform on the lookout for any movement from Palestinian homes. Besieged, Palestinian families describe conditions in which they are **attacked**, deprived of vital supplies and services, and have had their livelihoods cut off.

'This has never happened before where a full lockdown is implemented, even during the second Intifada,' said Bassam Abu Aisha, 61, vice president of a local drivers' union and former president of the popular committee for Tel Rumeida, a hill and neighbourhood in the H2 area. '[Back then] we would have the liberty to go buy things and be in the street. But now no one can do that.'

Several residents who spoke to Al Jazeera said the same thing: 'It's like we are in a prison.'  
Soldiers by day, settlers by night

Following the shocking October 7 **attack** on southern Israel by Hamas, Israeli soldiers came without warning to Palestinian shops in Hebron and ordered their owners and workers at gunpoint to close shop and stay home.

In online community chat groups, word trickled across the neighbourhoods of H2: Any Palestinians found outside their homes would be shot.

H2's 35,000 Palestinians are nowhere to be seen now. Shown here is a view of Shuhada Street [Al Jazeera]

Palestinians in H2 were completely unable to leave their homes for the first four days, living off whatever supplies they already had. Now, they can only leave their homes and cross checkpoints at a designated hour in the morning and an hour in the evening on Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Residents also describe a flurry of **attacks** and threats that began immediately after October 7. Local activist Issa Amro, 43, was apprehended by soldiers and settlers dressed in military uniform, telling him he was under arrest.

Amro explained over the phone that he was taken to the military base in Tel Rumeida. Cuffed and tightly blindfolded, Amro said he was beaten and spat at for hours, with settlers shouting slurs at him. After 10 hours, they let him go.

Over the next few days, Amro said settlers in military uniform **attacked** his home, stealing his house keys at one point. On October 20, soldiers forced Amro from his home, declaring it a 'closed military zone', insisting it was for his 'protection'. Amro, who is now staying with friends in the H1 area, has not been able to return to his home and is still recovering from injuries to his back, legs and hands.

'This is my first live experience to be tortured,' said a shaken Amro.

I was detained and torture today. [pic.twitter.com/hwnkGiFgzO](https://pic.twitter.com/hwnkGiFgzO)

- Issa Amro عيسى عمرو (@Issaamro) [October 7, 2023](#)

With regular military forces moved to Gaza and the Lebanese border, the city's reserve battalion has taken on primary security responsibility in H2 as well as much of Area C, the 60 percent of the West Bank under full Israeli military control.

'During the day they are soldiers, and at night they are settlers,' said Emad Hamdan, executive director of Hebron Rehabilitation Committee (HRC), a Palestinian NGO based in the Old City of Hebron. 'So they have the same attitude.'

Palestinian residents say soldiers aim guns at anyone who goes up to their roof or even peers through their window, shouting at them to stay inside.

When they do go outside during the allotted time, residents still risk **attacks** and threats from settlers, who now wear military uniforms.

'The settlers try to touch our women and daughters,' said Abu Aisha. 'They hit us; they say all kinds of horrible words in order to provoke a reaction so they have an excuse to murder us.'

In one confrontation on the street, a reserve soldier – a local settler and paramedic who Abu Aisha has encountered before – was cocking his gun as if to shoot Abu Aisha. A video recorded by a neighbour shows the man fumbling to put a bullet into the gun before it drops to the ground.

Israeli settlers in an army uniform raided my houses yard two times in the last 48 hours, they damaged my free Palestine sign, and other staff, they tried to break in to the house, I refused to open.

Yesterday I was detained and **attacked**, I am not allowed to leave the house now.

[pic.twitter.com/9ZzWxQ0JZS](https://pic.twitter.com/9ZzWxQ0JZS)

- Issa Amro عيسى عمرو (@Issaamro) [October 16, 2023](#)

'The children are constantly afraid'

While the military recently began allowing students to walk outside and cross checkpoints for an hour in the morning and another hour in the afternoon during the school week, parents are not allowed to accompany their children. As a result, children have largely been unable to go to school, due to both the movement restrictions and because their parents fear **attacks** from armed settlers.

A woman from the Jabari family, who resides in Wadi Hussein, a stretch of Palestinian land in H2 that lies between the Israeli settlements of Givat Hava'ot and Kiryat Arba – where Israel's far-right National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir lives – said the 11 children in the family compound are growing restless. They wish they could go to school or at least to a shop to buy sweets, she said.

While some families have tried online learning, the internet connection has been too poor for lessons, she added.

The Jabari family say they have been targeted by settlers for years. Among other violent incidents, a family member had been **attacked** with an iron pole, leaving him with severe head injuries, a female family member told Al Jazeera.

The community believes that settlers see the Jabari home as key to ultimately dismantling the Palestinian neighbourhood and connecting the two settlements.

A video of a confrontation between Bassam Abu Aisha and soldiers and settlers dressed in military uniforms [Al

Jazeera]

The Jabaris say that other than to get food, they have been unable to go out since settlers recently placed couches across from their home, where they sit in wait.

The woman from the family, who did not wish to be identified, said that while they try to tell the children not to worry, they 'know something dangerous is happening here'.

In one instance, a child in the family was chased down the street by a settler, she said. Another time, a five-year-old girl in the family saw a settler on the street and immediately ran in fear, falling and injuring herself.

'The children are constantly afraid,' the family member said. 'They live in fear.'

For weeks, soldiers have prevented families from bringing in gas tanks for cooking and heating from H1 (the area of Hebron under the Palestinian Authority) into H2. Following lobbying from

local and international organisations, the military recently agreed to allow gas tanks in under supervised distribution.

'Absolutely surreal' – soldiers deny access to medical care

The onerous movement restrictions mean residents cannot access basic services or medical treatment, even when they desperately need it.

With both the Doctors Without Borders (Medecins Sans Frontieres, or MSF) mobile health clinic and the local clinic in Tel Rumeida shuttered – and residents unable to reach them even if they were still open – Palestinians with medical emergencies are encountering a security apparatus entirely unmoved by their needs.

A view from the Jabari family night camera shows soldiers moving around outside [Al Jazeera]

In the Jaber neighbourhood, a pregnant Palestinian woman woke up at 5am one morning in pain. According to the woman's mother and a family friend for several hours. At around 11am, they managed to leave in a private car. Doctors at the hospital discovered internal bleeding – the baby had died.

In another case, a woman required an injection at a clinic only 20 metres away from her home. Despite prior attempts at coordination, guns were pointed at her when she tried to leave her home. Despite the insistence of medical professionals, a soldier at the scene decided the injection could wait until the next day.

According to the Jabari family member, another member of the family who had been injured while working waited for an ambulance for three and a half hours. It was held up because of the restrictions. In the end, relatives had to carry him all the way to the nearest checkpoint, worsening his leg injury.

'Decisions are being made over what is medically urgent or not by poorly trained military reservists,' said a humanitarian worker in the area. 'It is absolutely surreal.'

No income, savings running out

But what might be most pressing for these families is their dwindling cash reserves. Even in the other areas of Hebron, which are suffering because of a movement bottleneck into and out of the city, as well as because of business closures, Palestinians report dramatic income losses that have pushed families to the brink.

In H2, the economic situation is particularly dire.

'Most of the families in these areas, they are regular labourers, they are blue-collar people,' said Hamdan of HRC.

'If they don't work, they have no income. So how can they cover expenses if they cannot go to work?'

Families in H2 describe having to dip into whatever savings they have to buy food and supplies.

'The families help each other in this time,' said the Jabari family member, explaining how neighbours sneak between their houses in her area, comprised of about 100 families, to share food and supplies.

But with little to no income, neighbours can help each other for only so long.

'We are [financially] better off than some of our neighbours,' said Abu Aisha in Tel Rumeida.

'But we don't know how even we can sustain ourselves for more than a few weeks.'

Already, NGOs are privately discussing possible aid measures if the severe restrictions continue.

'They are depriving us of life'

Monitoring of the situation has been spotty, with international monitoring group the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI) leaving when war broke out and remaining civil society organisations finding it difficult to reach families under the movement restrictions.

Residents report having their phones confiscated, and photos and videos of incidents are routinely deleted from them by soldiers and settlers. One neighbour was detained for several days for recording soldier activities, according to Abu Aisha.



Settlement materials on Shuhada Street [Al Jazeera]

Residents say some families who had elsewhere to live have left, though no one knows how many have gone.

In the meantime, residents and humanitarian organisations report that settlers are taking advantage of the situation to occupy vacated properties in the Tel Rumeida area. Abu Aisha shared a video of Israeli settlers harvesting olives from trees owned by Palestinian families in the area.

Families have been unable to pick olives during the all-important harvest season, which runs until mid-November. No harvest this year would be economically catastrophic for some families.

Unable to go to school, work or play, the Jabaris try to keep their spirits up by reading religious scripture or telling the children stories at night.

'Like all Palestinians, we hope for a better reality than what we really live,' said the female Jabari family member.

But what's going on at home and on their televisions keeps them up at night.

'We're not able to really live life,' said Abu Aisha, who has nine people and three children staying in his home. 'Eating, drinking, going about our daily lives is difficult because all we can do is just sit in front of the television and take in these horrific images from Gaza.'

Family members sleep in shifts, terrified of what might come next.

'Settlers could come into our house and kill everyone, and no one would be able to do anything about it,' said Abu Aisha.

'It's a reflection of what's happening in Gaza,' said the Jabari family member, who also shared videos of nighttime raids around the family home this week.

'We are being deprived of basic freedoms. They are depriving us of life.'

AJE12-More than 10,000 Palestinians killed in Israeli attacks on Gaza

## More than 10,000 Palestinians killed in Israeli attacks on Gaza

*The latest Health Ministry figures come as Israeli bombardment of the besieged territory intensifies.*

[image]

Palestinians mourn relatives killed in the Israeli bombardment of the Gaza Strip in front of the morgue in Deir el-Balah on November 6, 2023 [Hatem Moussa/AP Photo]

Published On 6 Nov 2023 6 Nov 2023

More than 10,000 people have been killed in 31 days of relentless Israeli attacks on the Gaza Strip, according to Palestinian health officials, with no signs of a [ceasefire](#) in the besieged enclave.

In a statement on Monday, Gaza's Ministry of Health said the death toll has risen to at least 10,022 Palestinians, including 4,104 [children](#), with many

victims still trapped beneath the rubble and an Israeli siege drying up access to vital goods like fuel, food and electricity.

“The number [death toll] is expected to go up as at least 2,000 people remain under the rubble. The problem is, with lack of heavy equipment and machinery, the rescue teams on the ground are unable to remove and pull out these bodies from under the rubble,” Al Jazeera correspondent Hani Mahmoud reported from Khan Younis in southern Gaza.

The number of those wounded since the October 7 start of the bombardment has risen to 25,408, a Health Ministry spokesperson said, adding that Israel had conducted 18 attacks in the past hours, killing 252 people.

The “shocking milestone” was a result of Israel’s indiscriminate bombardment of civilian homes, hospitals, refugee camps, and schools, said Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP), a United Kingdom-based organisation,

“How many more deaths will it take for this assault to be brought to an end – 50,000, 100,000?,” said Fikr Shalltoot, the group’s Gaza director. “As we witness our homes, hospitals and schools turned to rubble, we are crying out for a shred of humanity from world leaders.”

While Israel has promised to destroy the Palestinian armed group Hamas, which carried out attacks on southern Israel on October 7 that Israeli authorities said killed more than 1,400 people, most of them civilians, humanitarian conditions in Gaza have reached a critical point under constant [Israeli bombardment](#).

[image]

Running low on fuel supplies, 16 of Gaza’s 35 hospitals have been forced to [suspend operations](#) as the number of people wounded increases and the United Nations said that more than 1.5 million people, which is more than half of Gaza’s population, have been displaced.

As conditions in Gaza have increasingly deteriorated and the death toll continues to rise, calls have grown for an end to the fighting. In late October, the UN General Assembly voted overwhelmingly in favour of a resolution calling for an immediate [humanitarian truce](#).

Both Israel and its most powerful ally, the United States, have rejected calls for a ceasefire, saying that an end to the fighting would allow Hamas time to regroup. The US has said it would support a brief pause in the fighting to allow more assistance to enter Gaza, but Israel has shown little enthusiasm for this idea.

As Israel steps up [ground operations](#) inside Gaza and continues its campaign of air strikes, Palestinians fear there is no end in sight.

“Are you enjoying this ... horror movie?” Zak Hania, a resident of the al-Shati refugee camp, asked world leaders in an interview with Al Jazeera.

“How many people need to die, [need] to be killed, for the people, for the world, for the world leaders to move to do something? We asked for a ceasefire. We are all civilians.”

## Appendix B: The Jerusalem Post

JP1-Pro-Palestinian demonstrators revel in London as Israeli’s are murdered.

### Pro-Palestinian demonstrators revel in London as Israelis are murdered

While Israeli men, women, and children are kidnapped, tortured, and killed, pro-Palestinian demonstrators appear to celebrate in the streets.

By SAM HALPERNOCTOBER 8, 2023, 05:38

[image]Pro-Palestine protesters hold a banner, as they demonstrate outside Downing Street in London, Britain, June 12, 2021.(photo credit: REUTERS/HENRY NICHOLLS)  
As Israelis are being murdered in the hundreds, demonstrators celebrated and waved Palestinian flags [in the streets of London](#), footage posted to social media on Saturday and Sunday appears to show.

One video shows people standing in the middle of the street and in their cars, brandishing Palestinian flags as they honked their horns.

“Acton, half an hour ago,” one social media user, Rachel Riley MBE wrote in the X (formerly Twitter) post in which the video was posted. “Popped into a cafe for some baklava with the kids and our Ukrainian friends. People have been [brutally murdered](#), [kidnapped](#) and there are people in London dancing. Just had a reassuring call with the police, if anyone is scared, please call them.”

Another video posted to X shows a car with a Palestinian flag draped out of the window of the rear passenger door. A motorcycle in front of the car flies a Palestinian flag on a rod attached to the seat.

In this video as well, vehicles rhythmically honk their horns.

“Absolutely disgusting to see the murder of innocent Israeli citizens celebrated on the streets of London. We need firmer action against the perpetrators. I am sick of excuses for this type of anti-Jewish hate.”

Absolutely disgusting to see the murder of innocent Israeli citizens celebrated on the streets of London. We need firmer action against the perpetrators. I am sick of excuses for this type of anti-Jewish hate. [pic.twitter.com/UfpdBr0TMJ](https://pic.twitter.com/UfpdBr0TMJ)

— Bella Wallersteiner (@BellaWallerstei) [October 7, 2023](#)

### **History of pro-Palestinian demonstrations as Israelis are targeted**

This is not the first time that a wave of violence against Israelis has resulted in pro-Palestinian demonstrations in support of said violence taking place in London.

In another post from Saturday, a video purporting to show a scene from 2021 looks down at the street to show a group of vehicles with Palestinian flags plastered across their hoods and Palestinian flags flying from sunroofs.

A man on a loudspeaker can be heard saying, “F\*\*k all of them! F\*\*k their mother, f\*\*k their daughters, [unintelligible] in support for Palestine. Shut them up, r\*pe their daughters. We have to send a message [unintelligible.]”

A post from the [Metropolitan Police](#) X account on Sunday states that police are aware of “a number of incidents... in relation to the ongoing conflict in Israel” taking place in London. It adds that, in response, the Met Police has “increased policing patrols across parts of London” and urges those who experience threatening behavior to contact the police.

Pro-Palestinian celebrations were highlighted by social media reports in other countries as well.

Es lebe der Widerstand des palästinensischen Volkes. Verteilen von Süßigkeiten auf der Sonnenallee in Berlin zur Feier des Sieges des

Widerstands [#Fromtherivertothesea](#) [#Palestinewillbefree](#) [pic.twitter.com/oNqYSrCX6E](https://pic.twitter.com/oNqYSrCX6E)

— Samidoun Deutschland (@samidoun\_de) [October 7, 2023](#)

"Long live the resistance of the Palestinian people," captioned a photo posted to X on Saturday appearing to show a man wearing a Palestinian flag as he hands out treats to passersby. "Distributing sweets on Sonnenallee in Berlin to celebrate the victory of the resistance."

JP2-Hamas’s war crimes: a strategic weapon for Israel in the international arena-opinion

## Hamas's war crimes: a strategic weapon for Israel in the international arena - opinion

For once, the world understands just what sort of an enemy we're dealing with: better take advantage of it - and fast.

By ORI WERTMAN OCTOBER 9, 2023 06:03

[image]Palestinian students supporters of the Hamas movement wave the movement's flag during a rally at Birzeit University, near the West Bank city of Ramallah, May 19, 2022(photo credit: FLASH90)

The State of Israel is at war. The horrific attacks by the terrorist organization Hamas – in which hundreds of Israelis, soldiers, and innocent civilians alike were murdered, while dozens of others were kidnapped to the Gaza Strip – is [the 9/11 of the Jewish state](#). For years, Israel avoided overwhelming Hamas; its strategic logic was to maintain Hamas as an effective civilian government in the Gaza Strip while weakening it militarily.

Thus, the strategic purpose of military operations against Hamas, from Operation Cast Lead in 2008 to Operation Guardian of the Walls in 2021, was to severely damage their military capabilities and preserve it as the address responsible for managing the lives of the population in the Gaza Strip. Another Israeli goal was to create two rival Palestinian entities – the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank and Hamas in the Gaza Strip – which in practice would weaken the Palestinian system.

From a historical point of view, the attack by Hamas, precisely at this time, is not surprising. [The prospect of normalization between Israel and Saudi Arabia](#) constitutes a significant and painful strategic blow for the Palestinians. For years, they asserted – and managed to convince many in Israel and the Western world – that without a solution to their problem, normalization between Israel and the Arab world would not transpire.

Normalization with Saudi Arabia was widely held to be the last nail in the coffin of the “Palestinian taboo,” after which the Palestinians would be more isolated and poorer than ever, especially if their leadership decided not to jump on the bandwagon of peace and be part of the historical transformation occurring in the Middle East.

**Saudi normalization would have been a blow to the "Palestinian taboo"**

Similar to the 1970s, when planes were hijacked by Palestinian terrorists, and the Second Intifada erupted following the Palestinian refusal at the Camp David conference in 2000, instead of joining the peace wagon, the Palestinians once again chose the path that has always raised their status in the world: launching terror attacks.

[image]Members of Qassam Brigades choir attend a rally marking the 35th anniversary of the Hamas movement's founding, in Gaza City December 14, 2022. (credit: IBRAHEEM ABU MUSTAFA/REUTERS)

While the Palestinian Authority is completely futile, Hamas aims to ignite the Palestinian territories in the West Bank, with direct aid from Iran, in order to arouse the Palestinian people, who, in recent years have hardened their stance toward Israel. They no longer perceive the Palestinian Authority as an entity that represents them but as an Israeli ally.

Thus, Hamas strives to ignite the Palestinian population, which strongly opposes normalization between Israel and Saudi Arabia. As long as there is no resolution to the Israel-Palestinian conflict, the Palestinian Authority will have no choice but to support the violence and terrorism, otherwise, it will lose support on the street.

As far as Palestinians are concerned, the surprise attacks carried out by Hamas and the possible outbreak of a third intifada, will reinforce the notion that they are the weak side fighting for independence against Israel, the occupying and brutal force. The severe confrontations between Israel's security forces and the Palestinians, which would inevitably flow from a third intifada, would only serve to further illustrate this. In addition, the Palestinians hope that a third intifada would lead to sharp criticism against Israel from around the world for acting harshly against the Palestinians. Even the signatories of the Abraham Accords, including the new entrant Saudi Arabia, would not be able to stay silent were this to happen, for fear of losing support on the street. Thus, the Palestinians will try to engineer a third intifada as a tool to embarrass Saudi Arabia – and other Gulf countries that are signatories to the Abraham Accords, including Jordan and Egypt, which are very sensitive to public opinion – for betraying the Palestinian cause and once again abandoning the Palestinian people to their cruel fate.

Yet, this time, Hamas made a strategic mistake by embarking on [a murderous campaign of innocent civilians](#). As a hybrid terrorist organization that controls territory and uses, among other things, psychological warfare, Hamas even documented its actions with the aim of creating more animosity toward Israel.

However, the recent videos and photos circulating on the Internet, in which innocent civilians are slaughtered by Hamas terrorists, only serve to weaken their support among the international community. In the Western world, such horrific images coming from the Gaza Strip are reminiscent of the cruelty meted out by ISIS in Iraq and Syria. These horrific videos and images that illustrate the barbaric behavior of Hamas give Israel full legitimacy to end the Gaza problem. The enlightened world cannot now fail to understand the extreme barbarism of the terrorist organization that the State of Israel is facing. Better take advantage of it – and fast.

The writer is a research fellow at the Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security (JISS), and a research fellow at the University of South Wales, UK. His recent book is *Israel: National Security and Securitization* (Springer, 2023).

JP3-Waking up to terror: How interns in Israel found themselves in a war

## Waking up to terror: How interns in Israel found themselves in a war

No one who came to Israel to do a Masa program could ever have imagined, in their wildest dreams, that they would be living through a state of war of this kind.

By URIEL PEIZER OCTOBER 13, 2023 19:57

[image]IDF soldiers are seen holding supplies sent by MASA fellows.(photo credit: Uriel Peizer)

On the morning of October 7, I was woken up by the sound of sirens and explosions blasting from outside my window in Tel Aviv.

As I got closer to the window and opened it to see what was happening, I soon realized it was something grave. The second I opened the apartment door, all chaos broke loose.

People were running around all over trying to hide under the stairs, unsure of what to do, unaware of what was going on. Some Israelis yelled in Hebrew that this is like the Yom Kippur War. Many girls in the apartment were crying hysterically and screaming.

I am 24 years old, and I came from the United States to Israel to study. I finished my master's degree in Holocaust studies at the University of Haifa and decided to extend my time in Israel with a Masa program. The program helps young Jewish professionals find internships in Israeli companies. I chose a journalism internship at *The Jerusalem Post*, working for over a month before the war broke out.

When you sign up for Masa, you get the option to live in a Masa building with other people from around the world who are also doing an internship. No one who came to Israel to do our program could ever have imagined, in their wildest dreams, that they would be living through a state of war of this kind.

[image]DOING GOOD: The writer (C) with Masa program organizer Nathan Naiderman (R) and

Amit Ratzon, now actively fighting in the IDF. (credit: Uriel Peizer)

After seeking refuge in the staircase for what seemed to be an eternity, as the sounds of missiles and loud booms echoed, I couldn't help but think, "This is not happening; this is not happening to me."

HOW CAN something like this happen in 2023?

I remembered that 50 years ago my aunt was studying in Israel when the Yom Kippur War broke out. How ironic, I thought.

My Jewish family has survived terrible tragedies.

My grandparents and great-grandparents escaped pogroms in Eastern Europe and fled the Nazis during World War II. I have always heard of terrible past tragedies. One never expects that such tragedies would occur in the present.

Soon, I started hearing about the Hamas terrorists who had infiltrated Israel and how this wasn't a usual attack from Gaza.

Then we heard that the terrorist units had invaded Israeli territory, and saw videos of them driving cars and motorcycles into Israeli cities, shooting and murdering every civilian they could. This sent everyone in the building into a state of panic.

I saw videos on social media of Hamas terrorists breaking into civilian homes, taking hostages, decimating families – men, women, babies, and the elderly. We soon heard on the news that some Hamas units had attacked young people at a nature party in the South, shooting at everyone they saw. Many parents are still looking for their missing children, in limbo.

The terror continued as Hamas controlled many southern cities for more than 12 hours, filming themselves and sharing some of their horrible actions online.

We learned that Hamas had taken some of the Israeli cities surrounding Gaza. They broke into civilian homes; those that they couldn't break into were burned, forcing residents to come outside, where the terrorists then slaughtered them.

This was not a horror movie. This is the reality right now in the Jewish state.

The terror units of Hamas call themselves “freedom warriors,” and there are hundreds of online videos showing them celebrating around citizens' dead bodies – including the elderly, women, and children.

These images, soon seen all over social media, sent everyone into a state of fear, shock, and hysteria.

I was told not to open the doors to anyone, as there were accounts of terrorists who had made it all the way to Tel Aviv and had machetes in their hands. At this point, Israel has been invaded by land, sea, and air. We realized there was no turning back now.

My sister, who is currently in the US, told me she has friends, IDF soldiers, who were captured and have disappeared. My mother, who is currently in Argentina, began telling me of a family friend being held hostage in a southern kibbutz.



Later that night, we found out she was saved by soldiers. But the dread in everyone's voice was evident, bracing for what was yet to come.

I SPOKE to other Masa participants about their experiences.

**Olga Vujević, 23: Scared, yet hopeful**

Olga Vujević came from Serbia to do a Masa internship program at the Combat Antisemitism Movement (CAM) in Tel Aviv.

“This reminded me [of what I learned about] the Yom Kippur War, since I just finished my bachelor's in international relations. I have friends who are currently in the IDF who told me that it's a matter of time until something chaotic with the Palestinians would commence.

“At first, I didn't want to believe my friends because I thought it was possible for a peaceful solution to occur in the future for Israelis and Palestinians. But now my mind has changed. I no longer think that given the current circumstance in this war, with innocent Israeli civilians being killed and held hostage, that a peaceful solution can occur.

“But I remain hopeful that we can find a way to stop the terrorists and put to an end to the violence here in Israel. I am scared for my friends who are currently in the West Bank and near Gaza at this moment. My thoughts and prayers are with them and their families. I stand with Israel!”

**Matthew Kolovsky, 27: Praying, and staying**

Matthew Kolovsky of Montreal is participating in a Masa internship program at SimilarWeb, a Tel Aviv hi-tech company.

“I woke up at the break of dawn, still half asleep, to the sound of sirens. Thinking that it was an ambulance passing by, I disregarded it and didn't go to the shelter at the bottom of the staircase in my apartment complex.

“Later, a staff member from my program checked on me, knocked on my door, and notified me that the missile sirens and alarms had gone off. I was shocked that I did not wake up to the sounds of war.

“That evening, another siren went off and, while hiding in the shelter of our building, the missile attacks made me feel like a Londoner during the Blitz of World War II. It was at that moment I realized my life was in danger, and that I could face death at any moment.

“After the ordeal, my family in Canada and Israel reached out to see if I was okay. Initially, my parents were extremely nervous about the situation and wanted me to get on the first flight out of the country as soon as possible. As I came to the realization that flights were being grounded and not entering the country, I had to accept that I was staying in Israel.

“In the media, I saw a UN tank driving through the south of Lebanon with local Hezbollah supporters blockading the roads while shouting and yelling ‘Allahu Akbar.’ I wondered how people could support the murder of innocent civilian lives.

“I am worried and praying for three of my family members who are in the IDF and are currently deployed in the North. My thoughts and prayers go out to all the IDF soldiers who are fighting to keep Israel safe.”

OLIVER, 24 and from London, U came to Masa to do an internship at Equitech, a venture capital firm in Tel Aviv.

“I woke up around 6:30 a.m. and heard some banging and thought it was construction. But then I heard something that sounded like wind and realized they were sirens.

“I was not accepting that this was happening, but then I heard people leaving their apartments and running toward the sheltered area at the bottom of the stairs. Standing near the doorway, I watched them all run down the stairs in disbelief. I was confused as to what I should be doing.

“After other sirens sounded, I went to wake up my roommate. The next time that sirens went off, we proceeded to go to the shelter. I felt my heart racing, and I wondered if this was the end. The first people I contacted were my parents. My mom was confused by the situation, and my father reassured me that everything would be sorted out.

“I checked Twitter [X] and saw dead Israeli soldiers and the bodies of Israelis being paraded around on social media. I saw the massacre of elderly people, babies in cages, women being rounded up, piles of dead bodies, and the two Israeli tourists who were shot and killed in Egypt by a Muslim police officer, along with videos of the support for Palestine in other nations, even in the United Kingdom.

“I began to feel upset and a bit worried, and felt sick, angry, and in disbelief that there are people out there who are doing such horrific attacks. How can other people see these videos and support terrorist groups?

“I reached out to my cousins who live in the Golan Heights and Tel Aviv; some of them are currently in the IDF and are deployed to the South. I worry for them, and I hope everyone will be okay. Since my cousins are my age, I feel like this could have been me out there on the battlefield. I fully support Israel’s right to defend itself and want peace for everyone and all the innocent lives [spared].”

AFTER HEARING these accounts, I knew that I wanted to do more than just report on the issue. That’s when I decided to talk to our Masa program organizer, Nathan

Naiderman. I told him that I wanted to help raise funds through Venmo and PayPal from people in Israel and abroad, to support our troops with supplies, food and clothing.

We were able to raise \$3,000 in less than 24 hours after the war broke out. Naiderman and I got into his car and drove to Holon, and at various supermarkets bought socks, underwear, toothbrushes, toothpaste, soap, shampoo, flashlights, portable chargers, and many other essential items.

Everyone who stayed behind had written notes of support to our troops. We then packaged the supplies and food into boxes with the notes. One of Naiderman's friends, Amit Ratzon, who is currently fighting in the IDF, picked up the supplies and brought them to his unit in the South.

We all stand with Israel, and its right to defend itself and its citizens in this time of war. Am Israel chai!

JP4-Overwhelmed: The IDF's first hours fighting the terror waves of Oct 7<sup>th</sup>

## Overwhelmed: The IDF's first hours fighting the terror waves on Oct 7

Israel believes this will be a long war. Many questions remain about the response at the border. By SETH J. FRANTZMAN OCTOBER 16, 2023 22:05 **Updated:** OCTOBER 17, 2023

01:28

[image]Israeli soldiers seen in Kibbutz Be'eri, near the Israeli-Gaza border, in southern Israel, October 11, 2023.(photo credit: Chaim Goldberg/Flash90)

The yellow gate of [Kibbutz Beeri is burned](#). It is half open now and IDF vehicles flow back and forth. What was once a thriving community is now empty of civilians. The fields are full of gear, backpacks, and other necessities for war. It's also calm here. The winter months are coming and the clouds above give a crisp air, to this otherwise sweltering hot area near the Gaza border.

It was here that waves of Hamas members and other terrorists from Gaza burst through into Israel on the early morning of October 7. Kibbutz Beeri, Kfar Aza, and several other Israeli communities became ground zero for the massacre that took place.

The IDF fought at numerous sites along the border on that morning, trying to stem the tide of the attack. Golani soldiers from the 51st and 13th battalions fought along 30km of the border at numerous points and took heavy casualties between October 7 and 9. Dozens of the soldiers from these units were killed, the IDF website for the fallen lists seventy soldiers from Golani as victims in the battles of the first days of the war.

They [fought to stop the terrorists](#) and helped prevent worse horrors from unfolding. However, even as they fought this delaying action and bases and outposts were overrun, more than 1,000 civilians were massacred in various places.

[image]Israeli soldiers seen next to burnt cars at the entrance to Kibbutz Be'eri, near the Israeli-Gaza Border, southern Israel, October 9, 2023. (credit: YOSSI ZAMIR/FLASH90)

### **Scenes of horror in the south**

To get to this site of horror we drove down from Urim, a small community near Ofakim. There are checkpoints near Ofakim and many communities have police at their entrance, a sign that the terror threat remains.

It is day ten of the war. The overwhelming might of the IDF is now here. However, ten days ago this was a scene of chaos and slaughter. This whole road that leads down to [Kibbutz Re'im](#), and then runs along the Gaza border, inland several kilometers from the border itself, was a road of death and massacre on October 7.

It was here that Hamas sent men on motorcycles and trucks to surround concertgoers at the Nova festival. Shelters near the bus stops, decorated and donated with support from abroad, became centers of death as terrorists tossed grenades into them and shot the people sheltering in them.

The commanders on this frontline faced a long sector to defend. It was divided into two pieces, the northern and southern sectors under the Gaza division, anchored at fortified areas along the line such as Kissufim and Nahal Oz.

A battalion of men, several hundred fighters, held each sector.

This spread the soldiers thin. It was Simchat Torah and Shabbat a weekend that was supposed to be quiet. The 51st battalion of the Golani had a Seyeret or recon unit at Kerem Shalom as well, near the Egyptian border. There was another unit at the Yiftach base near Zikim. The Home Front has a base at Zikim as well.

### **Dead surprise attack**

The soldiers had no indication of the attack. They were not warned or put on alert. If they'd had just an hour to prepare they could have brought forces to bear where necessary against the impending threat and neutralized some of it.

They could have called in air force assets to decimate the 2,900 terrorists gathering near the border at five in the morning. Those terrorists would come in three waves. The first wave was well-armed and they struck 29 points on the border. They neutralized observation towers using drones and use motorbikes to penetrate into Israel, They crossed a billion-dollar fence that was supposed to stop them.

The Golani soldiers witnessed the rocket fire that awakened the border at 6:30. The battalions were dispersed. One unit, for instance, had to hold an area behind which were five kibbutzim, such as Kissufim, Ein HaShlosa, Magen, Nirim, and Nir Oz.

The soldiers had several tanks in each area along the border and they brought the tanks up to their berms to be able to confront attackers. The company commanders of the battalion summoned their fighters to try to control the damage. But there were black holes of information. Units were overrun, and areas such as Nir Oz lost touch with their commanders. The Gaza division camp at Reim was attacked.

It took time for each sector commander to understand the extent of the attack. Israel has trained and prepared for infiltrations. However, the belief was that each infiltration point was the major point of contact, not that the enemy had hit 29 places at the same time.

Each unit, and many of the Kita Konehut or security volunteers of the local kibbutzim, fought lonely battles, unable to see the full extent of the battle. Where the IDF and local forces were successful, they beat back the attack and the terrorists did not penetrate communities. However, at places like Beeri, the terrorists were able to pour in.

Commanders and members of the unit who were on leave came back to their units. It took several hours to organize a real defense at the border. And they had just begun to contain and destroy the enemy. It would take another fifty hours of tough battles.

The enemy would be reduced from 29 points of infiltration to nine places and then zero. The air force had difficulty carrying out strikes because the terrorists were mixed in with civilians, in communities and other areas. There were also Israeli forces in many places. This chaos nullified Israel's technological advantages. The terrorists also had a large supply of weapons, such as RPGs and also kornet anti-tank missiles.

The terrorists also penetrated beyond the first line of contact into a second line of border communities. This presented an added difficulty. Terrorists were confronted by police in places like Sderot, Ofakim, and also at the Nova festival. 54 police were killed in the fighting.

After an hour or so many of Israel's elite units responded. This included the Lotar counter-terror unit, which went into Sderot and other areas, as well as Shayetet 13, Shaldag, Seyeret Matkal, Duvdevan, Yasam police units, and other units of paratroops and commandos.

The [terrorists had trained for this](#). They not only had maps of the communities they were attacking, but they also brought trucks and vehicles with weapons, gear, and other capabilities. In Beeri, we saw one terrorist pick-up truck with a "technical" machine gun setup on the back. The gun has been removed. The terrorists even removed spare tires in order to light them on fire to burn buildings in the communities.

The goal of the terrorists in several places was to seize buildings take hostages and entrench themselves. Others took hostages back to Gaza, others massacred people. It took time to kill the terrorists in Beeri. Now numerous buildings have been destroyed, partially burned, and ripped apart, like a tornado had come through here and left a path of destruction. But this was not a natural disaster, this was a human-caused disaster.

Israel believes this will be a long war. Many questions remain about the response at the border. The battalions that were stationed here paid a heavy price and had many heroes who stood against the enemy. However, they needed more support and lessons must be learned about this response.

## Hamis torture confirmed as Israeli forensics institute identifies victims

Forensic pathologists, including Israeli staffers as well as volunteers from abroad, were visibly disturbed by the evidence before them.

By AARON PORIS/THE MEDIA LINE OCTOBER 20, 2023 07:34 Updated: OCTOBER 22, 2023 13:03  
[image] Dr. Nurit Bublil, head of the DNA laboratory in Israel's National Center for Forensic Medicine, stands next to a blood-stained baby's mattress, Oct. 16, 2023 (photo credit: Aaron Poris/The Media Line)

Stifling the urge to retch became a difficult task as I walked through the lower levels of Israel's National Center of Forensic Medicine (Abu Kabir) in Tel Aviv. The smell of rotting human remains, much of which was completely unrecognizable as human due to the [brutality of the attack, was at times too much to bear.](#)

For more stories from The Media Line go to [themedialine.org](http://themedialine.org)

In light of the growing international interest in (and denials of) the Palestinian terror group [Hamis' October 7 massacre in southern Israel](#), representatives of the global press were invited to see the horrors for themselves.

Forensic pathologists, including Israeli staffers as well as [volunteers from abroad](#), were visibly disturbed by the evidence before them. Despite every effort to remain objective and detached—as called for by the profession—many broke down into tears throughout the day. During the initial press conference, the forensics team showed images from their investigations. Among the images were those of charred hands with marks that revealed where the victims' hands were bound behind their backs with metal wire before being burned alive. Perhaps the most disturbing image in the slideshow was a completely charred mass of flesh, which at first glance could not be seen as ever having belonged to a human. It was only after a CT scan was done that experts could see the inhumanity of the image.

[image] Israeli soldiers remove bodies of Israeli civilians in Kibbutz Kfar Aza, near the Israeli-Gaza border, in southern Israel, October 10, 2023. (credit: CHAIM GOLDBEG/FLASH90)

Two spinal cords—one belonging to an adult, one to someone young—a parent and child bound together by metal wires in a final embrace before being set alight.

"When you do this job downstairs, you get detached," Dr. Chen Kugel, the head of Abu Kabir, told The Media Line. "But then you learn the stories and connect to the people. It's hard not to feel the tragedy. It's so big. And when I go to the Shura camp [where deceased bodies in Israel are first collected] and see containers like you'd see at the port—but they're all full of bodies... And you hear the stories—that behind their charred bodies, something terrible happened—it's very difficult. I've seen many things in my 31-year career, but the magnitude and the cruelty [here] is terrible," Kugel added.

"The proportion of bodies we've received who are charred is high," Kugel explained. "Many have gunshot wounds in their hands, showing they put their hands up to their faces in defense. Many were burned alive in their homes. ... We know they were burned alive because there is soot in their trachea, their throats—meaning they were still breathing when [set on fire.](#)"

Victims likely died from carbon monoxide, soot inhalation

The single mercy, Kugel said—if there is one to be found—is that the burned victims likely died from carbon monoxide and soot inhalation before the fire killed them.

Kugel also explained that the age range of the victims spans from 3 months to 80 or 90 years old. Many bodies, including those of [babies, are without heads.](#)

Asked if they were decapitated, Kugel answered yes. Although he admits that, given the circumstances, it's difficult to ascertain whether they were decapitated before or after death,

as well as how they were beheaded, “whether cut off by knife or blown off by RPG,” he explained.

Kugel was far from the only one who got emotional when discussing the evident travesty. “We disassociate because we need to work, but from time to time it gets to you,” Dr. Nurit Bublil, head of Abu Kabir’s DNA laboratory, told The Media Line.

“Yesterday, I opened evidence from a house in a southern kibbutz, and there was a popular recipe book covered in blood. ... I have this same book, and it makes you take a moment and think, it could have been my kitchen, my children, my parents, me. You can’t avoid it,” she said. Additionally, Israel’s small population gives rise to the fact that no one is far removed from the wake of the massacre. “My sister has a close friend of hers who is [still missing](#),” said Bublil, as she stood beside a blood-stained mattress from a baby’s crib. The DNA from the mattress will be used to try and identify a brutally disfigured and unaccounted-for infant.

“I got the message today from my neighbor,” Bublil continued. “She asked if I could help because her good friend’s husband, father, two nephews, and father-in-law’s wife were all murdered too and have yet to be identified.”

This is the crux of the forensic pathology center’s current mission in which roughly 200 experts are participating. Forensic pathologists, anthropologists, radiologists, and more from Israel as well as from the US, Switzerland, New Zealand, and elsewhere around the world have come not simply to determine the victims’ causes of death but to identify the bodies for burial. Fighting back tears, Israeli forensic pathologist Dr. Hagar Mizrahi explained that “as you know, the Jewish people must bury their dead as soon as possible.” But as of this writing, nearly two weeks have passed since the massacre, and some 350 bodies remain unidentified. “So, the people here at Abu Kabir are doing their best to help and identify the most severe cases that arrive.”

#### Identifying bodies

Four places around the country are currently working to identify and release bodies for burial. The Israel Police headquarters in Jerusalem is handling all the antemortem samples and personal items for DNA comparisons. The Israel Defense Forces is working on 1-1 DNA comparisons using their data on soldiers, including fingerprints, dental records, and DNA. In addition, Abu Kabir is working to collect DNA samples and identification for the most severe cases. It’s also where all the DNA samples from other locations come for additional testing. And the Shura camp near Ramla, in central Israel, is where all the deceased are initially collected. Shura currently has some 950 body bags in its possession.

The word “bags” is written here instead of “bodies” because it’s not clear how many victims there are within them.

“More than one person’s remains may be in a single bag,” Kugel explained, “and one person’s remains may be in multiple bags.” When looking at remains, he added, “We know there are multiple people because we see double. For example, if you see two bones from the left maxilla, then it couldn’t be from the same person.”

And in many cases, bones without so much as a speck of extractable DNA are all that’s left. For that reason, Kugel said that some victims’ families would be right to fear the worst.

“We hope that with CT and biopsies, we can bring the unidentified down to less than 200. But some people, we will never find. We will never identify them. And people need to be prepared for this.”

Speaking personally, Bublil said that she wants the world to know that “generally, Hamas enjoyed the killing.”

According to Bublil, “This was not combat, or a military conflict, or a state conflict, or a political conflict. [Hamas] enjoyed the murders so much that they did everything they could do to

celebrate the killing. They celebrated burning houses with civilians inside who didn't do anything to them. They enjoyed grabbing an 18-year-old girl from a party, a festival, dragging her to a car, and taking her to Gaza. And who knows what happened [to her] in between. They enjoyed and celebrated the death. ... These are monsters. They're not human... They weren't merciful to anyone. No one who was alive and encountered them remained alive. No one."

JP6-1,000 child psychologists trauma experts urge the release of captive children

[1,000 child psychologists, trauma experts urge the release of captive children](#)

"Every day, every hour, every minute spent in captivity leaves its lifetime mark on the souls and bodies of the children," the authors of the letter say.

By [JERUSALEM POST STAFF](#) OCTOBER 29, 2023 19:47 Updated: OCTOBER 30, 2023 15:15

[image] Demonstrators hold banners as they form a human chain outside the Qatar embassy in a protest calling for the release of the Israeli hostages being held by Hamas in London, Britain, October 29, 2023. (photo credit: REUTERS/Maja Smiejkowska)

More than a thousand experts and practitioners from the fields of child psychology, child welfare, childhood trauma, and the rights of children have signed an open letter to [Secretary-General of the UN Antonio Guterres](#) calling on the international community to demand the immediate release of all children kidnapped by Hamas on October 7 and held captive in the Gaza Strip.

Of the 230 hostages in Gaza, about 30 are children, the letter noted. "Six of these children are babies, some of them still nursing." The letter noted that "some of the abductees are in need of medication, special nutrition, or treatment."



"Among them are Kfir, a 9-month-old baby still breastfeeding, and Avigail, a 3-year-old who witnessed the savage murder of her parents."

"Time is swiftly slipping away," the experts write, "each passing day posing an imminent, existential peril to the lives and wellbeing of these vulnerable infants and children." The children are now exposed to post-traumatic disorders, emotional problems, harsh behavioral problems, and cognitive damage, the experts say, calling these outcomes "non-reversible."

[image]UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres holds a press conference, ahead of G20 Summit in New Delhi, India, September 8, 2023. (credit: REUTERS/ANUSHREE FADNAVIS)

'Every minute leaves its lifetime mark'

"Every day, every hour, every minute spent in captivity leaves its lifetime mark on the souls and bodies of the children," the authors of the letter say, "and deepens their injury into continued and irreparable damage. The longer these children are being imprisoned, the harsher the outcomes that will adversely impact their lives."

The experts noted that "Any injury to children in warfare is terrible and intolerable," and that "this applies to children in Israel and in Gaza, who have all suffered from the conflict for years." But, they note, the children kidnapped by Hamas were targeted deliberately, which marks "an entirely new level of violence."

This also marks a unique level of illegality under international law, the authors say, to which the international community is obligated legally, not just morally, to respond to.

"The widespread, intentional, and systematic attack on civilians constitutes a crime against humanity," they note. "Abduction and arbitrary, incommunicado detention constitute a violation of every relevant standard set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, whose core applies to non-state actors like Hamas."

Hamas's actions are also in violation of agreements to which Palestine (as a UN non-member observer state) is a signatory, the experts note. They name specifically the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child, articles 6, 9, and 19, which concern the right to life and development, non-separation from parents, and protection from violence of all kinds, respectively. The letter also cites the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention Against Torture, and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

"We beseech leaders worldwide to unite in the common cause of releasing these kidnapped children," the letter concludes. "Will we forsake them to endure torment, fear, and harm beyond repair or will we rise to the occasion and rescue them from this dire predicament?"

UN has not condemned Hamas by name

The letter is addressed to UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres. So far, the United Nations has called for the "immediate and unconditional release" of all civilians held captive by all parties to the conflict, but no resolution has passed condemning Hamas by name. Many of the [tens-of-thousands-strong protests](#) in support of the Palestinian cause in cities around the globe have also declined to condemn the Hamas attack or to call for the release of Israeli hostages.

The proper response to the hostage crisis is [a matter of controversy](#) within Israel. An organization representing the families of those held captive met with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu last night, and [called for an 'all-for-all' exchange](#) of Israeli captives in return for Palestinian prisoners in Israel.

JP7-Horrific October: Israel vows to eradicate Hamas after unprecedented attack

### Horrific October: Israel vows to eradicate Hamas after unprecedented attack

The difficult questions will be addressed in time. But for now, the task at hand is to destroy Hamas.

By MARK WEISSNOVEMBER 3, 2023 18:53

[image]Explosions are seen following Israeli airstrikes in Gaza City on October 10(photo credit: MOHAMMED SALEM/REUTERS)



Jerusalem Report logo small (credit: JPOST STAFF)

The events of [Saturday, October 7, 2023](#) will forever be seared in Israel's collective memory. The trauma will last for generations to come, along with the heroism of the few who were left to fend for themselves, waiting for hours before the army sent reinforcements.

A regional military superpower was taken by surprise by a fanatical terrorist group when some 2,000 well-armed Hamas gunmen stormed across the border, wreaking death and destruction in army bases, towns, and kibbutzim along the length of the Gaza border.

At least [1,400 Israelis were killed](#), the majority of them civilians, many murdered with sadistic brutality.

#### **Intelligence failure worse than Yom Kippur War**

The intelligence failure was worse than the [1973 Yom Kippur War](#). At that time, warnings signs were given but largely ignored. The massacres of October 2023 occurred seemingly without any prior warning.

[image]Defense Minister Yoav Gallant meets soldiers in a field near Israel's border with the Gaza Strip on October 19, 2023 (credit: RONEN ZVULUN/REUTERS)

[Hamas](#) had convinced Israeli decision-makers that they were not seeking an escalation in their conflict. According to the misconception, as long as money from [Qatar](#) flowed

and [Gazan day laborers](#) were allowed to work inside Israel, the border would remain quiet.

But it was all a ruse. For more than a year, the terror group had been planning a well-coordinated attack down to the last detail. Israel had no idea.

As the gruesome events unfolded on the morning of Simchat Torah, it was clear that what had happened was a mega event in the history of the modern Middle East. Nothing will be the same again. Despite the shock, the horror, and the grief, the nation rallied, determined that Hamas must be totally destroyed and its military and political leaders hunted down and killed. Hamas must be toppled from power and a new order must be created that removes forever the danger for Israelis who live close to the border.

The [bombing of Gaza](#) in the fortnight after the Hamas attack was at an unprecedented level. Some [360,000 reservists were mobilized](#) – the largest call-up in the country’s history – many scrambling for [flights from abroad to join their units at the front](#).

The Israel Security Agency, Shin Bet, has set up a designated task force to find and kill every member of Hamas’s Nukhba unit who participated in the October 7 attack and returned to Gaza.

More than a million residents of the northern Gaza Strip were ordered by the IDF to leave their homes and head south for their own safety. Most heeded the warning. [IDF Chief of Staff Lt.-Gen. Herzl Halevi](#) met with IDF troops and expressed his confidence in their ability to carry out the mission they have been tasked with. “We will go into the Gaza Strip and destroy Hamas operatives, Hamas infrastructure, and we will remember the photographs and the sights of the fallen we witnessed two Saturdays ago. Gaza is complicated; Gaza is crowded. The enemy is preparing many things. But we are also planning things for the enemy. I really believe in you. With pride. With strength, you will emerge victorious.”

### **Kibbutz Be’eri, one of those hit hardest on October 7**

[Kibbutz Be’eri](#), a few miles from the Gaza border, was one of the 22 border communities overrun by Hamas terrorists, and one of those hit hardest on October 7. The IDF opened the kibbutz farming community to the media a few days after the attack for the world to see the carnage firsthand.

The first thing that struck me was the stench. It was a smell I wasn’t familiar with: It was the smell of death. Even though the army had removed most of the bodies, it was believed that some remained buried under the rubble. The smell was overpowering.

A particularly heavy rocket barrage at 6:30 on the Saturday morning had sent residents fleeing to their bomb shelters or secure rooms. Half an hour later, some 90 well-armed Hamas terrorists who had infiltrated across the Gaza border reached the kibbutz. They killed the security guard at the entrance of the kibbutz and went door to door, killing entire families.

Be’eri’s five-man security team, hearing the gunshots, ran to engage the infiltrators but stood no chance against so many.

Men, women, and children were shot or stabbed to death. If families locked themselves in secure rooms designed to withstand rocket fire, the militants set the house on fire, choking those inside or forcing them to flee – easy targets for the waiting gunmen.

The charred remains of some homes stand next to other buildings where fierce exchanges of gunfire took place. They have been almost totally destroyed. The scene is one of utter destruction.

“The symbol of Saturday’s massacre is where we are standing now,” said Maj. Doron Spielman from the IDF spokesman’s unit, standing in front of the destroyed buildings. “We found in this area bodies of children and babies that were grotesquely dissected. The madness, the rage, and the inhumanity of Hamas caused this. This nation is now going to put on military uniforms and do what we have to do make sure this is never going to happen again.”

On October 7, an IDF Special Forces team arrived a few hours after the terrorists reached the kibbutz, but they were soon pinned down. Many hours later, fresh reinforcements arrived. It took a full day of fighting to eliminate all the terrorists. A number of residents – adults and children – were seized and taken to Gaza as hostages. At least 112 Be’eri residents were killed. The survivors have relocated to Dead Sea hotels or to the center of the country. It’s not clear when, or if, they will return.

One of those [murdered in Be’eri](#) was eight-year-old Emily Hand. Her father, Irish-born Thomas Hand, entered his bomb-proof, secure room at 6:30 on Saturday when the sirens sounded. Emily was at a sleepover at a friend’s house on the kibbutz. Then he heard shots.

“I could hear the gunfire getting closer. I called my ex-wife on the kibbutz to make sure she was in a safe room and had locked the door, and I told her to call the family where Emily was sleeping.”

[image]Judith Tai Raanan and her daughter Natalie Shoshana Raanan, US citizens who were taken as hostages by Palestinian Hamas militants, walk while holding hands with Brig.-Gen. (Ret.) Gal Hirsch, Israel’s Coordinator for the Captives and Missing, after they were released by the militants. (credit: Government of Israel/Handout via REUTERS)

After eventually emerging from his safe room, he was escorted by a senior kibbutz member to a room where a doctor was waiting, together with a psychiatrist and a social worker, and informed him that Emily had been killed. Thomas’s reaction was remarkable.

“I literally punched the air and shouted “Yes!” like I’d just scored a goal. Can you imagine the reaction of the panel: ‘Did he just say that?’”

Thomas explained why he was so “happy” to hear such tragic news.

“I knew the alternative for my daughter. I knew she’d either be found dead or kidnapped and taken to Gaza. And the thought of a little eight-year old child in the hands of those animals, those cowardly barbarians, being pushed around, yelled at in Arabic which she doesn’t understand. She’d be terrorized out of her life. My God, I can’t imagine what would have been going through her head, locked up in a small dark room with hardly any water or food. Can you imagine the sheer horror for an eight-year-old child? Yes, they’d be there for years. Who knows? I couldn’t have lived with that. Locked up like in the train wagons they used to deport the Jews to the concentration camps.”

Thomas said that the Hamas terrorists were very well organized.

“Hamas were there to kill and mutilate and kidnap,” he explained. “They caught the whole of Israel with their pants down. It’s shameful, to be honest. There was one team

that kidnapped people and handed them over to another team on motorbikes who drove them back to Gaza.”

At least 220 hostages remain in captivity in Gaza. They include 30 children and 20 older people. Hamas released two hostages on Friday, October 20 – American citizens mother and daughter Judith and Natalie Raanan – who had been seized from Kibbutz Nahal Oz.

Hamas described the release as a humanitarian gesture, but Israeli officials interpreted the move as a transparent attempt to pressure Israel to delay a ground offensive and enter into negotiations over the release of more hostages in return for Palestinian security prisoners held in Israeli jails.

### **Gallant revealed Israel's war plans, objectives for Gaza Strip**

As the preparations for a ground offensive were being finalized, [Defense Minister Yoav Gallant](#) revealed Israel’s war plans and list of objectives for the Gaza Strip.

Speaking at a meeting of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, Gallant outlined Israel’s three-phase plan.

“We are currently in the first phase, which involves a military campaign aimed at targeting terrorists and disrupting Hamas’ infrastructure with precise air strikes,” he said.

“The second phase will be an interim period of lower-intensity war with a focus on eliminating pockets of resistance. The third and final phase will entail the establishment of a new security framework in Gaza, relinquishing Israel’s responsibility.”

A number of far-right coalition Knesset members have made no secret of the fact that they would like to renew Israel’s presence in Gaza, which ended with the 2005 disengagement when all troops withdrew and the 21 settlements were evacuated and demolished.

While Israel’s security cabinet has decided not to decide for now on the fate of the Gaza Strip after Hamas is toppled, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and National Security Council Director Tzahi Hanegbi both promised US President Joe Biden, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, and British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, who all visited Israel on solidarity visits, that Israel does not intend to control Gaza. Hanegbi reportedly told the visiting leaders that the most likely possibility was transferring control of Gaza after the war to the Palestinian Authority.

While the focus remained on Gaza, Hezbollah and Palestinian groups in south Lebanon escalated attacks on Israel’s northern border. The IDF retaliated with airstrikes and artillery fire, reportedly killing at least 30 Hezbollah operatives and destroying some of the organization’s military assets in southern Lebanon. Both sides have refrained from taking action that might lead to a full-scale war, but the IDF sent reinforcements to the border and warned Hezbollah against opening a second front and risking a much wider and much more dangerous regional conflagration that could drag in Iran and the US.

### **US deployed thousands of military personnel**

The US redeployed thousands of sailors, warplanes, and two aircraft carriers to the eastern Mediterranean in an effort to keep a powder keg from exploding across the Middle East.

“To any country, any organization, anyone thinking of taking advantage of the situation, I have one word: Don’t!” Biden said. “Let there be no doubt: The United States has Israel’s back.” Becoming the first US president to visit Israel in wartime, he asked Congress to approve a \$14 billion aid package as US Air Force planes began a round-the-clock airlift.

[image]Palestinians gather at the site where Palestinian houses were destroyed by Israeli strikes, as the conflict between Israel and Palestinian Islamist group Hamas continues, in the northern Gaza Strip October 27, 2023 (credit: REUTERS/Anas al-Shareef)

There was also a significant increase in [violence in the West Bank](#).

More than 70 Palestinians were killed across Judea and Samaria during the first two weeks of the Gaza war. Troops arrested more than 375 Hamas fugitives.

And there was also an attack on Israel from an unexpected quarter when a US Navy warship intercepted missiles that had been fired by Iranian-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen.

During the first two weeks of the war, Israel’s defense minister, the army’s chief of staff, the director of IDF military intelligence directorate, and the Israel Security Agency Shin Bet director all accepted responsibility for their part in the events of October 7.

Absent from the list was Benjamin Netanyahu. A poll on October 20 showed an overwhelming majority of the Israeli public – 80% – believed that the prime minister must also accept responsibility for what happened on Black Sabbath.

The catastrophe of October 2023 will be Benjamin Netanyahu’s legacy.

It is unconscionable that the man who was leading the country when the attack took place and has been prime minister for the last 14 years almost uninterrupted will be able to continue as Israel’s leader.

Some called on him to resign immediately and hand over the conduct of the Gaza war to others. However, this is a minority view. The overwhelming consensus among Israelis at this juncture is that now is the time to focus on toppling the Hamas regime in Gaza. The ramifications of the colossal failure surrounding the events on Saturday, October 7, will have to wait until the end of the military operation.

A poll on October 20 indicated a seismic political shift: in the event of new elections. Current coalition parties would receive only 43 seats in the 120-seat Knesset parliament as opposed to 68 for current opposition parties, with nine seats for Hadash-Ta’al and the United Arab List.

For the duration of the war, unity is the order of the day.

The centrist National Unity Party, led by former top general Benny Gantz, agreed to join the government, and all other issues, including the controversial judicial overhaul, are on hold.

Gantz and his party lawmaker Gadi Eisenkot, another former IDF chief of staff, joined Netanyahu and Gallant in the war cabinet.

“We put all other considerations aside, as the fate of our country hangs in the balance,” Netanyahu said.

“This isn’t a political partnership, this is a shared fate. We are lending a shoulder and are enlisting in the war that is being prosecuted [implemented] by the prime minister and the defense minister,” said Gantz.

The leader of the opposition, former prime minister Yair Lapid, head of the centrist Yesh Atid, refused to join the unity coalition after Netanyahu rejected his call to exclude far-right ministers Bezalel Smotrich and Itamar Ben-Gvir from the government. “Let’s kick out... the extremists who won’t let the war be waged, and we will join forces in a sane, broad, strong government that can make decisions effectively,” Lapid said. “Until then, we will continue to back every action that leads to the eradication of the loathsome Hamas terrorists, until total victory.”

Yisrael Beytenu also remains in the opposition, and party leader Avigdor Liberman said he would only join the unity government if he is offered a seat in the war cabinet.

The unity government will only last for the duration of the conflict.

The bad blood between Netanyahu and Gantz remains and will likely never disappear.

At the conclusion of the war, the National Unity Party will return to the opposition and join the call for answers from the political, military, and intelligence echelons.

The Commission of Inquiry set up after the Yom Kippur War, when the invasion by the Egyptian and Syrian armies took Israel by surprise, eventually led to the resignation of prime minister Golda Meir.

The trauma of Black Sabbath is much worse, considering that this time the bulk of the fatalities were civilians, many who were left to fend for themselves and were killed in the most horrific circumstances. And there is also the fact that the terrorists managed to seize more than 200 civilians.

The difficult questions will be addressed in time. But for now, the task at hand is to destroy Hamas. ■