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December 4, 2023



*Hamas brandishing their weapons in Gaza City. In service to a pre-ordained fake “narrative,” media outlets blindly swallow and regurgitate lies fed them by the Hamas terror group, often giving them equal—or even greater credibility—than hard evidence provided by Israel.*

## Media promote false anti-Israel narrative, parroting Hamas lies

Dear Friend of Israel, Friend of FLAME:

As if we needed more proof, the Israel-Hamas War has

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given mainstream media countless opportunities to amplify its manifestly false narrative that Israel is an oppressor, attacking Hamas and the Gazan people, who are underdogs struggling for liberation.

On October 17<sup>th</sup>, an explosion occurred at Al-Ahli Hospital in Gaza City. The *New York Times* immediately issued the headline, “Israeli Airstrike Hits Gaza Hospital, Killing 500, Palestinian Health Ministry Says.” Other international news outlets issued similar headlines blaming Israel for the blast.

Within days, however, Israel presented voluminous evidence—videos, ballistics analysis, tapped phone conversations—confirming that, in fact, a rocket misfired by the Islamic Jihad terrorist group hit the hospital parking lot, not an Israeli airstrike. In the end, no more than 50—and perhaps fewer—were killed.

News organizations sluggishly issued “corrections,” and *Times* editors note allowed they “should have taken more care” in their coverage of the event.

This is just one example of the slavish submission of the media to a “politically acceptable” anti-Israel narrative. Though Hamas over the years has proven itself to be a singularly unreliable source, the media continue to rank their “facts” as equal in value—or even more credible—than Israel’s reports, which have a sterling track record for accuracy.

The media’s tendency to take whatever Hamas tells them at face value indicates they are more interested in supporting their biased narrative than reporting facts: Israel must always be portrayed as the aggressor, the Palestinians always as innocent victims.

Another glaring example was the media’s coverage of the absurd farce at Gaza’s Al-Shifa Hospital. There, Hamas, hospital administrators and the media conjured a fantasy in which the hospital was only that—an innocent medical facility saving lives—even in the face of photographs, videos, architectural mock-ups and Palestinian testimony presented by Israel that inside

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and beneath Al-Shifa was a rat's nest of Hamas command centers, weapons depots and miles of secret tunnels.

Rather, the *Times* painted a picture in which Palestinian civilians were suffering as the mighty Israeli war machine advanced towards the hospital, with headlines like "Plight of Gaza's Main Hospital Worsens as Israeli Forces Close In." All hard evidence that Israel presented of perverse dual use—a war crime—was perfunctorily denied by Hamas and parroted by the *Times*.

**Indeed, the media insist on treating Hamas's notoriously unreliable information feed as fact.** Conversely, they refuse to give precedence to proven, reliable sources of information, such as the Israeli or U.S. governments, the latter of which confirmed Al-Shifa's use as a Hamas headquarters. Israel presents photographs of Hamas blocking exit highways, so Gazans cannot leave the war zone . . . but Hamas denies it, says NPR. Such is the inane, "he-said, she said" pabulum we are fed by the media.

**The media also steadfastly refuse to ask the questions demanded by the story—and by any curious reader, listener, or viewer.** When reporters interview Palestinians on the street or doctors in hospitals, the viewer cries to know: "Do you ever see any Hamas guys around here? Have you seen any tunnels?" But never does the reporter ask this, let alone questions like, "Do you support Hamas? Do you think there should be a Palestine next to Israel? What do you think about the October 7<sup>th</sup> attack on Israel?" These are obvious queries that responsible, curious, fact-hungry journalists would and should normally ask their sources. But they never do. Why?

The short answer is that if they asked these questions, the stories they tell wouldn't fit the narrative they are trying to sell—the narrative in which the Palestinians are an oppressed people, Israel is an evil, colonial aggressor, and Hamas is a product of legitimate Palestinian resistance.

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**To sell their perverse narrative, international media swallow the wildly inflated death-toll numbers cranked out by the Gaza Health Ministry.** For this reason, the media simply repeat the daily growing casualty figures Hamas gives them.

Reuters reports, for example, that as of November 22<sup>nd</sup>, Gaza's Hamas-run government says at least 13,300 Palestinians have been confirmed killed, including at least 5,600 children. But Luke Baker, a former Reuters bureau chief who led the organization's coverage of Israel and the disputed territories from 2014 to 2017, said on X (formerly Twitter), "Hamas has a clear propaganda incentive to inflate civilian casualties as much as possible."

Moreover, the media almost never give a breakdown of the casualties. They don't say how many were Hamas terrorists or how many were human shields, killed in residences schools or hospitals where Hamas were hiding. They never tell how many were killed—not by Israeli forces, but by Hamas and other terrorist groups—because of misfired rockets, or by Hamas shooting at Palestinian civilians heeding Israeli orders to evacuate.

In addition, it's probable that a significant number of the "children" reported killed or wounded by Hamas are youths aged 13 to 18, who were located in Hamas facilities or even took an active part in the fighting.

**The media narrative is not only false, it is malicious and maligns the world's only Jewish state** as it fights for its existence against the forces of Islamist jihad that openly seek to destroy it. What the media miss, however, is that Israel is fighting for liberal, Western values—the same liberties that protect major Western media. No American media outlet could function for a minute under a repressive government like Hamas, where no freedom of press exists.

Today's media hypocrisy—and malpractice—is so pronounced, so undisguised, that no thinking reader, listener, or viewer can miss the bias. No surprise that a 2022 Gallup poll found "Americans' Trust in Media

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Remains Near Record Low”—with only 34% expressing a fair amount or a great deal of confidence in the media.

Please make the point when speaking with family, friends, colleagues—or in letters to the editor—that if the media refuse to get their facts straight, it’s up to us to hold them accountable for the unethical journalism they are practicing.

I urge you to take action: Write to the media outlets. Demand they get their facts straight and stop blindly accepting Hamas lies. Let them know that if they continue to promote a false narrative that unfairly smears Israel, you will get your news elsewhere.

Best regards,

Jason Shvili, Contributing Editor  
Facts and Logic About the Middle East (FLAME)


P.S. The events of October 7 have changed our world forever—and especially the world for Israel and the Jewish people. Likewise, the words “Never Again” will never be the same for us. October 7 has shown us that despite all promises of equity and commitments against hate on campus and on our streets, we can never depend on it. We will likely never be free of the scourge of antisemitism, fueled by the most outrageous slanders. I hope you’ll agree that we opponents of Hamas and its savage massacre—and of all who support Hamas, against all humanitarian values—need to speak out. FLAME’s new *hasbarah*—explanatory message —“**Hatred of Jews Erupts in Full Fury**”—enumerates five of the most vicious lies against Israel and the Jewish people. I hope you’ll review this convincing, fact-based editorial, which FLAME intends to publish in the *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post*, *New York Post*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Houston Chronicle*, *Star Tribune* and *Los Angeles Times*. This piece will also be sent to all members of Congress, Vice President Harris and President Biden. If you agree that this kind of public relations effort on Israel’s behalf is critical, I urge you to **support us** with a donation.

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