

Double Speak from Benjamin Netanyahu

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The New York Times' Isabel Kershner [reporting](#) from Jerusalem on March 20th described Israeli government rage at a comment made by the European Union's foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton relating to the killing of three Jewish children in Toulouse France on the previous day. Ashton decried the killing but then tied it in to equally unfortunate deaths of children in other places, including Gaza. Her comment caused Netanyahu to explode, saying he was "infuriated" by the "comparison between a deliberate massacre of children and the defensive, surgical actions" of the Israeli Defense Forces hitting "...terrorists who use children as a human shield." Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman quickly joined in, saying that Ashton should instead be thinking about the "children of southern Israel who live in constant fear of rocket attacks from Gaza."

Where to begin? Israel's surgical attacks have killed thousands of Gazans, including many children, and the stories about children as human shields comes from – you guessed it – Israeli government sources. The Goldstone report uncovered no evidence that there had been any use of civilians by Hamas militants. Israel has deliberately attacked schools and refugee camps, with little regard for who ends up dying. In its most recent bombings of Gaza, Israel has killed 26 Palestinians, including two children. No Israelis were injured when the Palestinians responded with homemade rockets. In 2011, 105 Palestinians were killed in Gaza, at least 37 of whom were undeniably civilians. This was up from 68 killed in 2010.

In Operation Cast Lead in January 2009, the Israelis killed at least 1100 Palestinians, using phosphorous shells and other weapons considered to be forbidden under international law. Ten Israeli soldiers died as well as 3 civilians, a Palestinian-to-Israeli rate of mortality approaching 100 to one.

The fact that Netanyahu and Lieberman can be taken seriously and reported in the New York Times when they rant about how humane the Israeli Army is demonstrates that there is an operating assumption in the media that the American public can believe just about anything when it comes to Israel. It recalls the foppish French "philosopher" Bernard Henri-Lévy's assertion that the Israeli Army is the world's most moral. After years of being subjected to intense propaganda, maybe it's true that the public in Europe and America have been completely brainwashed when it comes to Israel's bad behavior.

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