

Israel and Its Spokespeople Can “Justify” Only Through Lies and Deflections

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Chris Hayes’ incredulous tweet on the killing of Palestinian paramedic [Razan al-Najjar](#) in Gaza is being echoed everywhere it seems on social media. Hayes hosts All In with Chris Hayes, a weekday news and opinion television show on MSNBC.

On June 7, 2018 he tweeted:

“The wording of that [Israel Defense Forces] IDF [video](#) is so bizarre. Hamas “incited” a woman to...provide medical care to the wounded? That’s incitement?”



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10:22 AM - 7 Jun 2018

I wish to God it were only the wording that is bizarre in this latest chapter of the Palestinians’ long-running tragedy since the ungodly arrival of the Zionist Jewish state of Israel among them.

To decry the killing of Razan al-Najjar on the basis that she was unarmed and did not pose a threat, as some are provoked to do by the IDF tripe at which Hayes marvels, plays right into Israel’s “narrative” of defense rather than the reality of the aggression it needs to continue to exist as the exclusionist colonial-apartheid polity it is.

It means you cannot state that an armed Palestinian resisting the IDF who is then killed by them is also an unjustified killing.

Apologists and propagandists [who try to justify](#) Razan al-Najjar’s killing are the same as those who justify Israel’s violent existence as a Jewish state in Palestine against the will of its indigenous people.

Israel’s repression of Palestinians is never justified. To Israel, such repression is [standard operating procedure](#)—because we exist and because we are not Jews. The exact

circumstances are irrelevant hogwash.

The fact is that the mere existence of Palestinians is a threat to Israel—a so-called [demographic threat](#). By and large, Israel justifies any and all resistance to its settler-colonial presence in the Arab world by pointing to its security and the sanctity of its [non-existent borders](#).

Our existential threat to them is their justification for killing us—i.e., we don't need to be armed to be killed or shoved into prison or ethnically cleansed. All we have to do is exist and procreate in a spot [needed to build housing](#) for Israel's Jewish population.

They can and have been justifying their unconscionable actions against us through denial and deflection, turning the tables on us and feigning empathy where necessary, as described in the Al-Jazeera [video clip](#) [2:33 minutes]: How Israeli Propaganda Works: The Luntz Document/ Al-Jazeera.

'If you want to understand how the propaganda works you need to read the Luntz document—"The key, [Frank] Luntz says, is the claim that the fight is over ideology, not land. About terror [Islamist terror in the form of Hamas, Iran or Hezbollah], and not territory."

Israel never fails to [crank up](#) its PR Machine whenever it fails to work as it is meant to do:

Groping for a convenient solution to its public relations problems, the Israeli government has turned to hasbara. The literal meaning of this Hebrew word is "explanation," but when put into practice, most informed observers recognize it as propaganda. The more the State of Israel relies on force to manage the occupation, the more it feels compelled to deploy hasbara. And the more Western media consumers encounter hasbara, the more likely they are to measure Israel's grandiose talking points against the routine and petty violence, shocking acts of humiliation and repression that define its treatment of the Palestinians.

And it isn't just the 1967 occupation that is the problem with Israel for Palestinians; it is the whole racist and cruel Zionist idea of a settler-colonial Jewish state in Palestine dominating the Arab world in general.

As Steven Salaita [writes](#):

Many of the people who defend Israel are consciously racist (clearly), but others dehumanize Arabs and Muslims by reproducing unexamined assumptions about Israel's moral or civilizational superiority.

Beyond racism (Arabophobia), lies and deflection, there is Israel's classic justification for its very existence as a settler-colonial Zionist Jewish state in Palestine, namely the "liberation" of the Jewish people. This central Zionist [fabrication](#) has long gained Israel impunity on the Western international front:

Writing in The Electronic Intifada, Ilan Pappé [says](#), in 'Finding the truth amid Israel's lies':

... [Palestinian] children were considered as part of the enemy, who had to be cleansed for the sake of a Jewish state or as Carmel put it—a day after he finished his Galilee tour—for the sake of liberation.

[Moshe Carmel is the author of Northern Campaigns—first published in 1949, in which he describes the events of the Nakba thus: “Great sadness and suffering flooded the roads—convoy upon convoy of refugees making their way [to the Lebanese border’]]

,... Revisiting them [such books as Carmel’s], 70 years on, reveals an elementary truth: it would have been possible to write the “new history” of 1948 [i.e., a history of ethnic cleansing of Palestinians, colonization and Jewish Zionist usurpation by European Jews] without a single new declassified document, but only if these open sources, as I call them, had been read with non-Zionist lenses.

The crimes perpetrated during the Nakba and Israel’s ongoing crimes today are callous and unconscionable and equally unbearable for us Palestinians. They are connected by a thread no hasbara in the world can break.

In the first instance (the Nakba), we have a violent ethnic cleansing perpetrated against a mostly agrarian population in Palestine, whose aftermath is still with us today in the shape of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, six million Palestinian exiles and refugees and, of course an Apartheid, Zionist, Jewish state, armed to the teeth, including with nuclear weapons.

In the second instance (Israel’s ongoing crimes today), we have a beautiful young woman (21), a paramedic wearing a uniform that identified her as such, [fatally shot](#) while evacuating and tending to the wounded east of Khan Younes.

In describing her funeral, Haaretz [refers](#) to Razan’s “hometown of Khuza’a” in the Gaza Strip, rather than her true hometown of Salama, five km east of Jaffa, now documented by Visualizing Palestine in their updated [infographic](#) “Short Walk Home, Long Walk to Freedom”.

If you deny Razan’s fundamental human right to return to her hometown and call her protest a “riot”, if you believe that the existence of a Jewish state in Palestine trumps all else, no matter the price Palestinians must pay in dispossession and exile, then, like US Ambassador to Israel David Friedman, you can justify all violence against Palestinians by pointing to Israel’s security and simply debating how much violence is “justified” when pushing protesting Palestinians back into their camps (over 70% of the Palestinian population in the Gaza Strip are refugees). If a little violence doesn’t work, then by all means, [use deadly violence](#):

Friedman said experts had told him tear gas, water cannons and other nonlethal means of crowd dispersal would not have been effective during the weeks of riots... “If what happens isn’t right, what is right? What do you use instead of bullets?” he asked rhetorically.’

Standard practice is [to lie](#) glibly about the Great March of Return, as this Fox news outlet does:

The Gaza protests are being organized by the territory’s militant Hamas

leadership and are aimed at drawing attention to the decade-long Israeli-Egyptian blockade on the territory. The protesters are also demanding the “right of return” for Palestinian refugees from the 1948 war and their descendants.

Note how the Palestinian inalienable and internationally recognized right of return is in quotation marks. Note that the blockade is mentioned with no reference to the [horrible conditions](#) it has engendered in the Gaza Strip. But most of all, note how “militant Hamas leadership” are said to have organized the protests, when it is, [in fact](#),

a grassroots movement calling for the right of return of Palestinian refugees to their homes, as per UN Resolution 194, from which they were expelled in 1948 when the state of Israel was created.

As Toufic Haddad, activist, academic and author of *Palestine Ltd: Neoliberalism and Nationalism in the Occupied Territory*, [says](#) in an interview, Hamas’ decision to abstain from governance opened the path

for popular forces, and particularly a younger generation of activists, to take the initiative and see what could be done to change the situation.

The tragedy, as Shane Wesbrock [comments](#) on a post by Steve Salaita on Facebook, is that subliminal hasbara “justification” of Razan’s and all IDF killing is pervasive even on entertainment media outlets in the U.S.:

I just finished reading about Razan al-Najjar last evening and decided to watch some Netflix to redirect. I open up the page and there is a big advertisement for a “Netflix Original” where the Israeli hero is hunting the evil Palestinian “terrorist.” Talk about superior narratives! Its bloody invasive, not to mention aptly timed.

Israel and its Western allies want the whole world to celebrate Israel’s achievements as they define them and to hide its devastating failures and its crimes against humanity [yes, Palestinians are human]. Their advocates get angry when they realize that Palestinians will not lie still under the Zionist yoke—not 70 years hence, not a million years hence.

Because the Zionist cause is unjust and racist, Israel and its spokespeople can “justify” only through lies and deflections.

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