

Israel-Palestine War: Why Is the Media Ignoring Evidence of Israel's Own Actions on 7 October?

The BBC and others keep revisiting Hamas crimes that day, but fail to report on growing evidence that Israel killed its own citizens

By [Jonathan Cook](#)

Global Research, December 18, 2023

[Middle East Eye](#) 15 December 2023

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [Intelligence](#), [Law and Justice](#),
[Media Disinformation](#)

In-depth Report: [PALESTINE](#)

All Global Research articles can be read in 51 languages by activating the Translate Website button below the author's name (only available in desktop version).

To receive Global Research's Daily Newsletter (selected articles), [click here](#).

Click the share button above to email/forward this article to your friends and colleagues. Follow us on [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#) and subscribe to our [Telegram Channel](#). Feel free to repost and share widely Global Research articles.

Barely a day has passed since the [7 October attack](#) by Hamas when the western media has not revisited those events, often to reveal what it claims are new details of astonishing atrocities carried out by the [Palestinian](#) group.

These disclosures have served to sustain public indignation in the West, and kept Palestinian solidarity activists on the back foot.

In turn, the outrage has smoothed [Israel's](#) path as it has levelled vast swaths of [Gaza](#); killed more than 18,700 Palestinians, most of them women and children; and denied the enclave's population of 2.3 million access to food, water and fuel.

Critically, it has also made it far easier for western governments to throw their weight behind Israel – and arm it – even as Israeli leaders have repeatedly engaged [in genocidal talk](#) and carried out ethnic cleansing operations.

Israel's intense bombing campaigns have herded nearly two million Palestinians into a small section of Gaza, pressed up against its short border with [Egypt](#), while [starvation and fatal disease](#) start to take their toll.

Many of the claims about 7 October have been shocking beyond belief, such as stories that Hamas [beheaded 40 babies](#), baked another [in an oven](#), carried out mass, [systematic rapes](#), and cut a foetus [from its mother's womb](#).

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken even [described in graphic detail](#) – and wholly falsely – a Hamas attack on an Israeli family:

“The father’s eye gouged out in front of his kids. The mother’s breast cut off, the girl’s foot amputated, the boy’s fingers cut off before they were executed.”

Little Evidence

Atrocities were undoubtedly committed that day by Hamas and other gunmen in Israel, as groups like Human Rights Watch [have been documenting](#).

They have continued to occur in Gaza every day since, not least through Israel’s continuing and relentless bombing of civilians, and through Hamas’ refusal to free the remaining Israeli hostages without an exchange of Palestinians held in Israeli prisons.

But in respect of the more shocking allegations against Hamas promoted by the western media – which have bolstered the case for Israel’s two-month rampage in Gaza – often little or no evidence has been forthcoming beyond claims made by Israeli officials and highly partisan and [unreliable first responders](#).

Last week the [BBC](#) and others led again with stories of [systematic Hamas mass rapes](#) on 7 October. Efforts by the United Nations to investigate these claims are being [obstructed by Israel](#).

Nonetheless, once more, coverage of the growing devastation in Gaza was sidelined.

Media readiness to re-examine 7 October long after those events took place has operated within strict limits, however. Only claims that support Israel’s narrative about what happened that day are being aired.

A growing body of evidence suggesting a far more complex reality, one that paints Israel’s own actions in a far more troubling light, is being ignored or suppressed.

This deeply dishonest approach from the western media indicates that they are not, as they declare, fearlessly pursuing the truth. Rather, they are regurgitating talking points being fed to them by Israel.

That is not only unconscionable – particularly given Israel’s long track record [of promoting lies](#), both small and large – but it violates all basic journalistic codes.

And, worse still, the media’s credulous amplification of Israel’s version of 7 October continues to breathe life into the Israeli case that wrecking Gaza to eliminate Hamas is morally justified.

Active Cheerleaders

Unknown to most western audiences, there has been a steady trickle of evidence from Israeli sources over the past two months implicating Israel’s own military in at least some of the killings attributed to Hamas.

This week the Israeli military finally [conceded](#) that it had killed its own civilians on October 7 “in immense and complex quantity”. Given the large numbers, it added with transparent non-logic: “It would not be morally sound to investigate these incidents.”

How is it possible, given their continuing interest in scrutinising the events of 7 October, that

none of the western media has picked up on any of this distressing evidence, let alone investigated it?

It is hard not to conclude that the western media are only interested in stories – and largely indifferent to whether they are true or false – that portray Hamas, but not Israel, as the bad guys. That would mean the media are not dispassionate reporters, but have been recruited by Israel as its active cheerleaders.

Israel's official story, echoed by the western media, is that Hamas had long planned a crazed, barbaric rampage through communities in Israel – driven by a mix of primitive, religious bloodlust and Jew hatred.

The group's chance to realise this goal came on 7 October, according to the Israeli narrative, when Israel let down its guard momentarily and Hamas broke through the hi-tech fence meant to keep it and Gaza's other 2.3 million inhabitants permanently imprisoned.

During the breakout, Hamas focused on the [slaughter of civilians](#), killing babies by beheading them and using rape as a weapon of war and defilement. They fired into the homes of neighbouring Israeli communities, often leaving them in ruins and burning their victims alive.

Admittedly, the claim about 40 beheaded babies has [been quietly shelved](#), because there is precisely zero evidence for it. According to Israel's [own published figures](#), only two infants died that day.

Nonetheless, the [media rarely challenge](#) Israeli spokespeople, or western politicians, when they make this long-discredited allegation.

But many of these other allegations are no less evidence-free and need scrutiny too.

Although they are rarely given a voice, Palestinians have their own, alternative narrative of what happened that day – and parts of it are being bolstered by accounts from Israeli sources.

Challenge to Official Story

In this telling, Hamas long [trained for its breakout](#), and with a strategic aim in mind. The goal was to launch a commando-style assault on four military bases surrounding Gaza to kill or take hostage as many Israeli soldiers as possible, and a similar assault on local Israeli communities to seize civilian hostages.

The aim, according to this narrative, was to trade the hostages for Palestinian prisoners, thousands of whom are in Israeli jails, including women and children, often held without a military trial or even charges.

To the Palestinian public, these prisoners are no less hostages than the Israelis held in Gaza.

Hamas stormed military bases and the Israeli communities of [Be'eri and Kfar Azza](#). That is why about a third of the 1,200 Israelis killed that day were soldiers, police or armed guards – and why many of the 240 hostages were serving in the [Israeli military too](#).

According to most accounts, even Israeli ones, Hamas [accidentally stumbled](#) on to the Nova music festival, which had been relocated to an area close to the fence with Gaza. There were unexpected clashes with security guards, while the attack on festivalgoers turned especially chaotic and gruesome.

So why did Hamas depart from its plan by killing so many civilians? And why did it do so in such a savage, gratuitous and time-consuming fashion that involved burning Israelis alive, using its firepower to blast their homes into ruins, and setting fire to [hundreds of cars](#) on the highway near the music festival?

What did Hamas have to gain from expending so much energy and ammunition on horror-show theatrics rather than its plan to seize hostages?

For many western leaders and journalists, it appears no rational answer is needed. Hamas – and possibly all Palestinians – are simply barbarians for whom murdering Israelis, Jews or maybe all non-Muslims comes as second nature.

But for those whose minds are less bent by racist assumptions, an alternative picture of events has been steadily cohering, prompted by the testimonies of Israeli survivors and officials, as well as reporting from the Israeli media.

Because they contradict Israel's official story, these testimonies have been studiously ignored by the western media.

Burned Alive

Surprisingly, the person whose statements have most confounded the official narrative is Mark Regev, the spokesman for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

In an interview on MSNBC on 16 November, Regev noted that Israel had reduced the official death toll by 200 after its investigations had shown that the charred remains it had counted included not just Israelis but [Hamas fighters too](#). The fighters, burned alive, had been too disfigured to easily identify.

Regev told MSNBC host Mehdi Hasan:

“There were actually bodies that were so badly burned we thought they were ours. In the end, apparently, they were Hamas terrorists.”

There was an obvious problem with Regev's disclosure that went unchallenged by the MSNBC interviewer, and has been ignored by the media since. How did so many Hamas fighters end up burned – and in exactly the same locations as Israelis, meaning their remains could not be identified separately for many weeks?

Did Hamas fighters carry out some strange ritual, self-immolating in cars and homes alongside their hostages? And if so, why?

There is a likely explanation, confirmed by an Israeli survivor of the 7 October events, as well as by a security guard, and a variety of military personnel. But these accounts starkly undermine the official narrative.

Shelled by Israel

Yasmin Porat, who fled the Nova festival and ended up hiding in Be'eri, was one of the few to survive that day. Her partner, Tal Katz, was killed.

She has repeatedly explained to the Israeli media what happened.

According to [Porat's account](#) to Kan radio on 15 November, the Hamas fighters in Be'eri barricaded themselves into a house with a group of a dozen or so Israeli hostages – either planning to use them as human shields or as bargaining chips for an exit.

The Israeli military, however, was in no mood for bargaining. Porat escaped only because one of the Hamas fighters vacated the house early on, using her as a human shield, before giving himself up.

Porat describes Israeli soldiers engaging in a four-hour firefight with the Hamas gunmen, despite the presence of Israeli civilians. But not all of the hostages were killed in the crossfire. Israel ended the clash with an Israeli tank firing two shells into the house.

In Porat's account, when she asked why this had been done,

“they explained to me that it was to break the walls, in order to help purify the house”.

The only other survivor, Hadas Dagan, who was lying face down on the lawn in front of the house during the firefight, reported to Porat what happened after the two shells hit the house. Dagan saw both of their partners lying near her, killed by shrapnel from the explosions.

A 12-year-old girl, Liel Hatsroni, who had been screaming inside the house throughout the firefight, also fell silent.

Hatsroni and her aunt, Ayalan, were both incinerated. It took weeks to identify their bodies.

Notably, Liel Hatsroni's charred remains have been one of the [emotive pieces of evidence](#) cited by Israel for accusing Hamas of killing and burning Israelis.

In reporting the deaths of Liel, her aunt, her twin brother and her grandfather, the Israeli news [website Ynet stated](#) that Hamas fighters “murdered them all. Afterwards, they set the house alight”.

Confused Pilots

Porat's testimony is far from the only source showing that Israel is likely to have been responsible for a significant proportion of the civilian deaths that day – and for the burned bodies.

The security coordinator at Be'eri, Tuval Escapa, effectively confirmed Porat's account to [the Haaretz newspaper](#). He said:

“Commanders in the field made difficult decisions – including shelling houses on their occupants in order to eliminate the terrorists along with the hostages.”

The burnt-out cars at the Nova festival and their occupants appear to have suffered a similar

fate. Worried that Hamas gunmen were fleeing the area with hostages in cars, it seems, helicopter pilots were told to open fire, incinerating the cars and all the occupants.

There is a likely explanation for this. The Israeli army has long had a secret protocol – known as the Hannibal directive – in which soldiers are instructed to kill any captured comrades to avoid their being taken hostage. It is less clear how this directive applies to Israeli civilians, though it appears to have been [used in the past](#).

The goal is to prevent Israel from facing demands to release prisoners.

In at least one case, an Israeli military official, Col Nof Erez, has stated that “the Hannibal directive was apparently applied”. He called the Israeli air strikes on 7 October “[a mass Hannibal](#)”.

Haaretz [has reported that](#) police investigators concluded that “an IDF combat helicopter that arrived at the scene and fired at terrorists there apparently also hit some festival participants”.

In [a video released](#) by the Israeli military, Apache helicopters are shown randomly firing missiles at cars leaving the area, presumably on the assumption that they contained Hamas fighters trying to smuggle hostages back into Gaza.

The Ynet news website cited an Israeli air force assessment of its two dozen attack helicopters in the skies above the Nova festival:

“It was very difficult to distinguish between terrorists and [Israeli] soldiers or civilians.” Nonetheless, pilots were instructed “to shoot at everything they see in the area of the fence” with Gaza.

“Only at a certain point did the pilots begin to slow their attacks and carefully choose the targets,” [the outlet reported](#).

Another Israeli publication, [Mako](#), noted that

“there was almost no intelligence to assist in making fateful decisions”, adding that the pilots “emptied the ‘belly of the helicopter’ in minutes, flew to re-arm and returned to the air, again and again”.

In another Mako report, the commander of an Apache unit [is quoted stating](#):

“Shooting at people in our territory – this is something I never thought I would do.” Another pilot recalled of the attack: “I find myself in a dilemma as to what to shoot at.”

Secrets to the Grave

Quite extraordinarily, in reporting the devastation of ravaged houses and burnt and crumpled cars, reporters have completely ignored the visual evidence staring them in the face and simply amplified the [official Israeli narrative](#).

There are plenty of more-than-obvious questions no one is asking – and for which no answers are ever likely to be forthcoming.

How did Hamas wreak such widescale and intense devastation when its fighters’ own videos

show them mostly bearing light arms?

Were those carrying basic RPGs capable of accurately tracking and hitting hundreds of fast-moving vehicles fleeing the festival – and doing so from ground level?

Video footage from Hamas body-cams shows cars leaving the Nova festival with both gunmen and hostages inside. Why would Hamas risk incinerating its own people?

Given Hamas' keenness to film its triumphs, why is there no footage of such actions? And why would Hamas waste its most prized ammunition on random attacks on cars rather than save it for the far more difficult task of attacking Israeli military bases?

Israel appears not to be interested in investigating the burnt-out cars and wrecked homes, possibly because it already knows the answers and fears that others may one day find out the truth too.

With religious organisations demanding that the cars [be hurriedly buried](#) to preserve the sanctity of the dead, the metal skeletons will take their secrets to the grave.

Grotesque Fables

What seems certain from this growing body of evidence – and from the trail of visual clues – is that on 7 October many Israeli civilians were killed either in the crossfire of gun battles between Israel and Hamas or by Israeli military directives to stop Hamas fighters returning to Gaza and taking hostages with them.

This week, an Israeli commentator in the Haaretz newspaper [called](#) the testimonies “earth-shattering”, and added: “Was the Hannibal directive applied to civilians? An investigation and public debate need to happen now, no matter how difficult they are.”

But as the army has made clear, it has no intention to investigate when its whole genocidal campaign against Gaza is premised on lurid claims that appear to bear a limited relationship to reality.

None of that justifies Hamas' atrocities, especially the killing and taking hostage of civilians. But it does paint a very different picture of that day's events.

Remember, Israel and its supporters have sought to compare the Hamas attack on 7 October with the Nazi Holocaust. They have concocted grotesque fables to present Palestinians as bloodthirsty savages deserving of any fate that befalls them.

And those fables have served as the basis for western indulgence and sympathy for Israel as it has carried out ethnic cleansing and genocide in Gaza.

The truth is it would have been much harder for western governments to sell Israel's rampage in Gaza to their publics had Hamas' crimes been seen, sadly, as all too typical of modern militarised confrontations in which civilians become collateral damage.

What western governments and institutions should have done is demand an independent investigation to clarify the extent of Hamas atrocities that day rather than echo Israeli officials who wanted an excuse to trash Gaza and [drive its inhabitants into neighbouring Sinai](#).

The western media's performance has been even more dismal – and dangerous. It professes to be a watchdog on power. But it has repeatedly amplified the Israeli occupier's evidence-free claims, peddled libels against Palestinians with little or no scrutiny, and actively suppressed evidence challenging Israel's official narrative.

For that reason alone, western journalists are entirely complicit in the crimes against humanity currently being perpetrated in Gaza – crimes being committed right now, not two months ago.

*

Note to readers: Please click the share button above. Follow us on Instagram and Twitter and subscribe to our Telegram Channel. Feel free to repost and share widely Global Research articles.

Jonathan Cook is the author of three books on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and a winner of the Martha Gellhorn Special Prize for Journalism. His website and blog can be found at www.jonathan-cook.net

Featured image: An Israeli man whose cousin was taken hostage during the 7 October attack visits family house in Kibbutz Nir Oz on 5 December, 2023 (Source: MEE)

The original source of this article is [Middle East Eye](#)

Copyright © [Jonathan Cook](#), [Middle East Eye](#), 2023

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Jonathan Cook](#)

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca
www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca