

'New York Times' Teams Up with Israel to Smear Slain Medic Razzan al-Najjar as 'Complex,' Not Innocent

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The New York Times today [printed a long article](#) giving credence to Israeli claims that Razzan al-Najjar, the young medic killed by an Israeli sniper a week ago, was not innocent. The article takes at face value Israel's desperate efforts to taint the young woman, whom the army has previously maintained it killed by accident.

The first paragraph announces the Times's service to Israel:

The Israeli military published a brief video on Thursday aimed at showing that a Palestinian medic [killed by Israeli forces](#) last week was not the neutral health care worker she has been portrayed as.

The article parrots Israeli hasbara, or propaganda, about al-Najjar: that in a video interview of the medic that the Israelis passed along she described herself as a "human shield."

Not till paragraph 20 of 22, does the Times state what Jonathan Ofir [reported yesterday](#), the Israeli video cut short al-Najjar's actual statement in an effort to misrepresent her.

In the longer video, the comment that the military translated as "I act as a human shield" was part of a sentence in which Ms. Najjar said, "I'm acting as a human rescue shield to protect the injured inside the armistice line."

Nonetheless, Times author Herbert Buchsbaum, a desk editor in New York, chimes in: al-Najjar "may have been a more complex person than either side is making her out to be."

What can the Times mean by "more complex"? That is, she was not only saving lives, but was part of the protest. Apparently there is something "complex" about this and therefore Israel isn't really guilty of lying, just oversimplifying.

That is obfuscation. Everyone knows what this woman was doing: protesting and saving lives. Calling this "complex" is just the NY Times saying she wasn't really sweet and innocent. If Russia did this the Times would call it the cynical slander and lie that it is. But since it is Israel they have to make this into a he said/she said debate. There is a "battle" of narratives about al-Najjar, the Times says.

There is no debate. Israel has lied about the al-Najjar case repeatedly. The NYT wants to give some sort of face-saving excuse for this and all they can come up with is this subtle endorsement of the slander about her lack of innocence. The video, Buchsbaum writes, is “an effort to chip away at Ms. Najjar’s image of fresh-faced innocence.”

If the Times really wanted to find out more about Najjar, it would not ape propaganda. It would send out reporters to interview her family and friends. Or they could call B’Tselem to ask its opinion. No, the Times has a deskbound New York man parroting Israeli talking points.

Calling al-Najjar a human shield is a serious charge. Shouldn’t they have asked her mother for a reaction? The family would surely tell you: This is despicable.

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