

US Media Framing Israel's Attacks on Palestinians as Retaliation

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When Israel attacked Palestinian targets following the discovery that three kidnapped Israeli teenagers had been murdered, the way TV outlets characterized the Israel actions on their July 1 newscasts was instructive.

ABC World News and NBC Nightly News adopted the same language:



Framing Israel's actions as a form of retaliation is problematic, since the airstrikes, arrests and house raids are directed at people who had nothing to do with the murders. Israel has named two suspects in the crime, Marwan Qawasmeh and Amer Abu Aisha. As the New York Times ([7/1/14](#)) and [other outlets](#) have reported, these two West Bank residents may not have a significant connection with Hamas, despite the official Israeli insistence that the Hamas government in Gaza should be held responsible for the killings.

It should go without saying that the killings of the Israeli youths do not justify the killing of innocent Palestinians, any more than the [six Palestinian children](#) killed by the Israeli military so far this year legitimize the murder of the Israeli teens.

But the US networks nonetheless framed Israel's attacks as retaliation. "The response by Israel was quick and powerful," NBC anchor Brian Williams [declared](#), saying the series of airstrikes in the Gaza Strip were "in apparent retaliation."

An ABC World News report ([7/1/14](#)) by correspondent [Alex Marquardt](#) began with this: "Striking back. Israel hitting hard overnight with 34 precision airstrikes on a Hamas compound."

As FAIR has noted in the past (Action Alert, [4/4/02](#)), the US media tends to overwhelmingly prefer a narrative of Palestinian *attacks* and Israeli *retaliation*. As FAIR noted:

This disparity is meaningful. The term "retaliation" suggests a defensive stance undertaken in response to someone else's aggression. It also lays responsibility for the cycle of violence at the doorstep of the party being "retaliated" against, since they presumably initiated the conflict.

In this case, the brunt of the Israeli “reaction” is being borne by Palestinians who had nothing to do with the crimes that were committed.

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