

The Film “NAZA” - Manipulation on Eight Levels

written by Prof. Kobi Michael | 17.09.2026

Key Points

- The film “NAZA” is presented as an investigative journalistic work and a moral inquiry. Yet an examination of its narrative and methodological framework shows that it offers a one-sided account that severs events from their operational, historical, and strategic context.
- The film almost entirely ignores the Hamas attack of October 7 and the exceptional characteristics of the Gaza battlefield, including the use of civilians as human shields and of civilian and humanitarian facilities as terrorist infrastructure.
- The film uncritically adopts figures issued by the Hamas-controlled Gaza Ministry of Health, even though studies have identified statistical manipulation, the classification of terrorists killed as civilians, and duplicate or false records.
- The film portrays junior intelligence personnel as decision-makers and disregards the role of senior commanders, military legal advisers, operations research, and the measures taken by the IDF to minimize harm to uninvolved civilians.
- The film avoids comparison with other urban wars, even though such a comparison is essential to assessing the claim regarding the extent of collateral damage in the fighting in the Gaza Strip.
- The decision to launch the film abroad rather than first submit its findings to professional and public scrutiny in Israel, together with its creators’ political and activist backgrounds, reinforces the impression that this is not constructive criticism but an effort intended to malign Israel and the IDF.

Introduction

The documentary film “NAZA” by Yuval Abraham and Rachel Shor won the Jury Prize at the Venice Film Festival, generating widespread attention in Israel and, as a result, probably in the international arena as well. Yet even an initial

examination of the film's narrative and methodological framework reveals a malicious and carefully calculated manipulation.

Under the guise of "investigative journalism" and moral documentation, the film presents a one-dimensional picture that severs events from their historical and operational context and violates the most basic rules of critical and balanced discourse. It is difficult to escape the impression that the film is heavily influenced by its creators' political outlook and that its purpose is to malign the IDF and the State of Israel, fuel international criticism of Israel, and advance the effort to turn it into an ostracized pariah state.

A War Imposed on Israel: The Context and the Urban Battlefield

The war in the Gaza Strip did not erupt in a vacuum. It was forced upon the State of Israel by Hamas's murderous, brutal, and fundamentally genocidal terrorist attack on October 7, 2023. This war scarred Israel's collective consciousness. Despite the ceasefire declared on October 10, 2025, the war continues, albeit in a different and less intensive form. It remains an open wound for Israeli society as a whole.

War is a tragic and violent event, charged with emotion and shrouded in constant uncertainty – the "fog of war." It is conducted by human beings, and mistakes that exact a heavy and inconceivable human price are inevitable. There is no doubt that this war, too, included events that could – and should – have been prevented. But any attempt to present a broad and comprehensive picture must address the battlefield's unique characteristics. The Gaza Strip became the most heavily fortified area in the world, with an extensive tunnel network hundreds of kilometers long and thousands of shafts located inside private homes, hospitals, schools, mosques, clinics, UN facilities, and even cemeteries. Hamas's ruthless use of civilians as human shields and its cynical use of civilian and humanitarian infrastructure for terrorist purposes, combined with exceptional urban density, created a battlefield of unprecedented complexity.

The False Casualty Narrative and Its Amplification

International media outlets, international organizations – including the United Nations – and even governments tend to adopt casualty figures reported by the Hamas-controlled Gaza Ministry of Health. Scholarly and methodological examination of these figures documents a pattern of statistical manipulation

intended to create a false appearance of “genocide” and shape international perceptions. For example:

- **Debunking the 70 Percent Narrative (Women and Children):** For many months, Hamas and the United Nations fed the international media the claim that women and children accounted for 70-72 percent of those killed. In-depth Washington Institute studies published in 2024 and 2025, together with detailed analyses by independent researchers such as Salo Aizenberg and publications by the author of this paper, demonstrated that this was a serious methodological distortion. The figures were based largely on media reports and Google Forms without identity verification. When the Hamas Ministry of Health was required to produce identified lists containing complete personal details, the proportion of women and children fell dramatically to approximately 50 percent – their share of the population.
- **Omitting Combatants and Concealing Adult Men:** Hamas deliberately avoids distinguishing between civilians and terrorists killed. The Washington Institute’s methodological analysis emphasized that thousands of Hamas combatants killed in deep ground operations or in tunnels were omitted entirely from the reports or recorded as ordinary civilians. Moreover, examination of the data revealed absurd phenomena, such as the “disappearance” of adult men from casualty categories and reports showing the number of dead men declining over time – an impossible statistical outcome caused by manual manipulation of the database.
- **Including Casualties from Failed Launches and the Civilian Population:** As the explosion at Al-Ahli Hospital early in the war demonstrated, Hamas immediately added 471 purported fatalities from a failed Palestinian Islamic Jihad launch to the death toll attributed to the IDF (although only about 30 people were actually killed) and did not correct the figure even after the truth emerged. In addition, Gaza’s counting mechanism includes people who died of natural causes and disease among the war dead in order to obtain allowances and assistance.

Academic analyses and professional field studies demonstrate that once Hamas’s manipulations are removed and the actual – or more plausible – figures are presented, the civilian-to-combatant ratio in the Gaza fighting is unprecedentedly

low compared with any other urban warfare of recent decades. The omission of these facts from the film is not an innocent information gap, but a wholesale adoption of the terrorist organization's false narrative.

Manipulation on Eight Levels: A Chronicle of Deception

The filmmakers produced a work intended to construct an incriminating narrative that maligns the IDF and the State of Israel through manipulation on eight levels:

1. **Absence of Context and Circumstances:** The film does not adequately address – if it addresses at all – the circumstances that led to the outbreak of the war and Hamas's unprecedented terrorist attack, thereby severing the IDF's response from its direct trigger.
2. **Absence of Comprehensive Data:** The film refrains from presenting aggregate, official figures for the number of people killed in the Gaza Strip – even according to its own approach – or from making the necessary distinction between terrorists and civilians and calculating the actual collateral-damage ratio.
3. **Avoidance of Historical Comparison:** A professional comparison with collateral-damage ratios in other urban wars of recent decades – such as the battles of Mosul, Raqqa, or Fallujah – would necessarily lead to the conclusion that the collateral-damage ratio in the Gaza Strip is the lowest ever recorded in the history of dense urban warfare.
4. **Disregard for the Characteristics of Urban Warfare:** The film frames civilian harm as a deliberate and intentional decision while completely ignoring the characteristics of combat in the world's most densely populated, extensively tunneled, and heavily booby-trapped battlefield. It also disregards the fact that Hamas perfected the practice of using the population as human shields and turned almost every civilian and public institution into part of its war machine, with hundreds of kilometers of tunnels connected by thousands of shafts to homes, public buildings, humanitarian facilities, UN and UNRWA installations, and the facilities of other civilian aid organizations.
5. **Disregard for the IDF's Preventive Measures:** The film does not address the unique and unprecedented measures taken by the IDF to minimize harm to uninvolved civilians, including evacuating civilians from combat zones, making warning phone calls, employing the "roof-knocking" tactic, and dropping millions of leaflets from the air.

6. **Distortion and Disregard of the Target-Approval Procedure:** The intelligence personnel interviewed in the film – however capable they may be – are not the decision-makers and do not possess the full picture required to assess overall collateral damage. Operational decisions are made by senior commanders, with the guidance and approval of military legal advisers from the Military Advocate General's Corps, in accordance with battlefield conditions, the specific type of munition, and detailed operations research.
7. **Absence of Factual Corroboration:** The filmmakers failed to present facts substantiating the interviewees' claims. No attempt was made to connect their statements to verified events on the ground or to demonstrate that their assertions have a basis reflected in actual operational outcomes.
8. **Avoidance of Critical Discussion in Israel:** The filmmakers had no genuine intention of stimulating a searching and constructive domestic discussion in Israel with the aim of remedying a problem they had identified. The evidence is that they chose not to present their findings to the competent authorities in Israel, or even to the Israeli public, preferring instead to launch the film at international festivals abroad.

The Filmmakers' Background: The Agenda Behind the Camera

When these failings are considered together with the background of Yuval Abraham – one of the filmmakers – and his ongoing, provocative activity in Judea and Samaria, including confrontations with and violence toward IDF soldiers, the full picture emerges. The motive behind the film is not neutral investigative journalism or a pure concern for human rights, but a clear political agenda intended to malign the State of Israel and the IDF in the international arena. This context is carefully concealed from foreign audiences, who lack the tools and knowledge needed to understand the work's built-in bias.

Conclusion

War is a complex, violent, and cruel human event that exacts a heavy toll in blood, including from uninvolved civilians. Mistakes also occur in war, and some things happen inadvertently. The IDF does – and probably must do even more – to investigate incidents thoroughly and hold soldiers accountable in cases where they acted contrary to military orders or international law. The data show that

despite the battlefield's complexity and Hamas's patterns of using civilians as human shields and civilian and humanitarian facilities as terrorist infrastructure, the IDF employed a series of measures unmatched by any other Western military to minimize collateral damage. The data also show, under any comparison, that the collateral damage over three years of fighting in the Gaza Strip is lower than in any other urban war of recent decades.

A cinematic work that purports to address morality and human life cannot permit itself to select facts selectively. "NAZA" betrays the historical and operational truth: it ignores the aggressor, disregards the complex battlefield conditions, and distorts both the IDF's combat procedures and the casualty figures on the ground. The filmmakers' deliberate decision not to raise the issue or present their investigative findings to the competent authorities in Israel and within Israeli public discourse, while preferring to present a half-truth in the international arena, is not constructive criticism - it is manipulation in the service of a one-sided political agenda.

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