

Russian Propagandists Are Dancing on the Bones of Israel-Hamas Victims

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Palestinians carry belongings as they leave al-Ahli hospital, which they were using as a shelter, in Gaza City. **Abed Khaled / AP / TASS**

The conflict between Israel and Hamas has dominated the media's attention for almost two weeks now. Russian media has been no exception. However, it has taken a unique approach, not shying away from manipulating the truth and spreading outright lies in order to show President Vladimir Putin's regime in the best light possible.

Russian television channels at first reacted to the violent Hamas attack with indignation and disgust. But criticism of Israel soon began to dominate their talking points. Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant's remark that his country was fighting against "["humanoid animals"](#)" gave Putin's propagandists the opportunity to get on their high horse and condemn all sides of the conflict. "Israel has abolished all the rules of war. The Israeli army continues to level neighborhoods in the Gaza Strip," said presenter Olesya Loseva during a talk show on Channel One on Oct. 11.

A week later, the anti-Israeli rhetoric from Moscow intensified. The explosion at the Al-Ahli hospital in Gaza is still under investigation. But Russian propagandists did not hesitate to blame Israel, claiming Hamas lacked shells that were powerful enough.

During the first week of the war, Russian propagandists latched onto confusion in the Western media to discredit their past reports of Russian atrocities in the war in Ukraine. On Oct. 10, journalist [Nicole Zedek](#) from the Israeli outlet i24NEWS said IDF officers told her about 40 babies beheaded by militants in a massacre in Kfar Aza. The story spread all over the world, even though the information was not fully verified. According to other journalists present at the scene, the exact number of civilian deaths is unknown. Despite the general confirmation of the crime from soldiers and other journalists on the spot, Russian propagandists clung to the "40 beheaded babies" claim, attempting to accuse the Western media of creating fake news with the account.

"Just one day after the start of the IDF operation, the Western media began to spin stories of another bloody 'rampage' where Hamas militants allegedly killed dozens of babies," Loseva said. Comparisons with the massacre of civilians in Bucha, Ukraine were repeated on Russian TV with clumsy persistence. According to pro-Kremlin spin doctors, if the Western media told a lie once, then everything else they say about the Russian army's actions in Ukraine can be discredited.

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Just like they have done with Ukraine, Russian propagandists are using lies and manipulation to distort the words of a country that they do not like. During an [interview](#) with Sky News, a journalist asked former Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett about the fate that would befall Palestinian civilians. Bennett responded sharply, asking "What is wrong with you? Are you seriously asking about Palestinian civilians?"

Russian propagandist Dmitry Drozdenko [distorted](#) Bennett's words, first claiming that Bennett was asked about the "babies who are going to die in Gaza." Drozdenko then said Bennett responded "You're kidding me! So they die. What's the big deal?" Anyone who watched Drozdenko's segment would be left with the impression that Israel had openly adopted a cannibalistic policy against peaceful Palestinians. There was no mention of babies in the original interview.

Another fabrication emerged at the very beginning of the conflict in the Middle East. In the conditions of the ongoing war in Ukraine and the looming end of the Ukrainian Armed Forces' summer counteroffensive, propagandists rejoiced at the possibility of putting an end to Western support for Ukraine's war effort. "One way or another, this conflict is still reflected in what is happening in Ukraine. Many have begun to understand that Ukraine is like gangrene for Europe. In order to avoid infection, the affected area must be removed," Loseva told viewers on Oct. 10.

On the same day, "Meeting Place" host Andrei Norkin tried to promote another false narrative that Hamas uses Ukrainian weapons bought on the black market. "Hamas has a huge amount of weapons, which they should not have. They have Javelins and some old samples of Soviet

weapons," he said. The propagandist reinforced his assertion with a tweet from far-right U.S. Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene, who [wrote](#) that weapons could have come to Hamas from Afghanistan or Ukraine. Russian propagandists presented this statement as the official position of the United States, even though the White House has not commented on these rumors and Taylor Greene is a notorious supporter of conspiracy theories.

The second piece of supposed evidence used by propagandists was the claim that Western media reported grenade launchers with Ukrainian markings being found near the Israeli city of Ashkelon. However, the BBC quickly [said](#) they never reported that. The Ukrainian Defense Ministry's press center [warned](#) that "Russian propagandists are distributing a video in which representatives of the Hamas terrorist group allegedly show off Ukrainian weapons. In particular, it is claimed in Arabic that Ukraine sold Western weapons to terrorists. The video lasts only 12 seconds and raises many doubts."

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In addition to pushing outright fakes, Russian television is playing a more subtle rhetorical game, dubbing the war between Israel and Hamas a personal defeat for the United States and its allies. "This is certainly the collapse of today's unipolar world order. The fear of the United States has simply disappeared!" [said](#) Ruslan Kurbanov, a Russian political scientist and a regular guest on propaganda talk shows.

Some of the guests and presenters even began to build conspiracy theories around the idea that the conflict is beneficial to Britain. However, there is no coherence to their claims. Their theories are built on hatred of the Western world and the exaltation of Putin and Russia. According to these propagandists, Russia and China will create a new world on the wreckage of Washington's international reputation. But until that world comes, it will be necessary to continue spitting bile at the United States.

The mood was [summed up](#) by Channel One's Ruslan Ostashko at the start of "Time Will Tell":

"No conflict in the world is without Washington's involvement now," he declared, adding that the United States had long tried to achieve its objectives by encouraging divisions between peoples and nations. "Having failed to get quick results from fomenting the conflict in Ukraine, they have ignited the conflict in the Middle East as well."

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