

Thursday, October 1st, 2026

IDF Response to the Film "NAZA"

The film "NAZA" presents a distorted, misleading, and disingenuous picture of the IDF's target planning and striking process.

The film's narrative is based on substantial factual errors stemming from a misrepresented and manipulative depiction of reality (see below for the IDF's detailed responses to key claims in the film). It consists of testimonies of anonymous individuals who, generally, describe experiences from a limited and initial stage of a process that entails many more stages. The result is an incorrect and highly misleading description of reality. The filmmakers also omit context essential to understanding the war in Gaza and the IDF's conduct during it, in order to fit the narrative the film promotes. The film deepens this distortion of reality through manipulative editing of interviews and alluding to historical atrocities, while falsely and baselessly attributing malicious intentions to the IDF that the purported "evidence" in the film does not substantiate. While interviewees raise serious dilemmas posed by asymmetric warfare, the film's simplistic account does not treat them with the seriousness they deserve.

The film inverts reality in various ways, beginning with its title. "NAZA" is the acronym of the Hebrew term "Nezek Agavi" – "collateral damage" in English. This is a professional term commonly used by every law-abiding military worldwide, and has been used for many years in the IDF as well to describe incidental harm to civilians resulting from a strike on a military objective. Paradoxically, the film presents the exceptional effort and detail the IDF devotes to estimating such harm in strikes as evidence of indifference to civilian lives. In reality, assessing expected civilian harm in strikes is a requirement under international law. The IDF conducts that assessment so commanders can determine whether a strike is lawful, direct additional precautions, modify the strike plan or cancel it, all to mitigate the possibility of harm to civilians to the greatest extent feasible, as IDF commanders did many times during the war.

The IDF is open to hearing genuine criticism of its conduct and attaches importance to learning from substantiated allegations and continually improving its practices. It is bound by and committed to international humanitarian law, its operational procedures are designed to implement those legal obligations, and it operates dedicated units and mechanisms to mitigate civilian harm. Suspected violations of the law or IDF orders are examined and, where warranted, addressed through disciplinary action, criminal investigation or other measures.

Contrary to accepted practice, the filmmakers did not submit their allegations to the IDF for examination and response before publication, and did not provide a copy of the film after its screening, although the IDF requested it. They also supplied no details that would enable the individual incidents alleged in the film to be identified. To assess the film's contents, the IDF relied on a detailed account by a representative who attended a public screening, as well as other public accounts and the filmmakers' own public statements.

This response has two parts: the first addresses overarching problems with the film's content and production; the second addresses key allegations in the film. The list does not cover every false and distorted claim in the film.

Part I: Overarching Flaws in the Film and Its Production

1. Interviewees addressing matters beyond their knowledge and competence

The anonymous interviewees addressing the IDF's targeting process are described as having served in intelligence roles. Their accounts generally focus on limited, initial stages dealing with intelligence, rather than the much broader process of planning and approving strikes, which is the responsibility of operational bodies that manage and conduct targeting rather than the IDF's intelligence corps. The film treats these accounts as though they establish decisions ultimately made about strikes. Even assuming the interviewees served in these roles and intended to describe faithfully what they witnessed (or, more problematically, heard from others), many of their claims show insufficient knowledge or understanding of the later stages of the targeting process beyond their assignments. The result is substantial errors and misrepresentations of IDF targeting policy (specific examples follow in Part II).

For example, an interviewee may recall a general, preliminary estimate of civilians present in an area around a military objective considered for striking and mistakenly believe this was the final estimate on which a strike was carried out. But that figure does not account for precautions decided later in the process and does not establish how many civilians were expected to be harmed by the strike eventually planned. Focusing the strike on particular parts of the target, adjusting the weapon or timing, and obtaining updated information about civilian evacuation following IDF warnings can significantly change the assessment of how many civilians are at risk.

For each proposed strike, IDF procedures require commanders to assess proportionality in advance and ensure that expected incidental harm to civilians and civilian objects would not be excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated. They must also direct feasible precautions to prevent or mitigate civilian harm. Professionals assess the scope and nature of expected harm and propose less harmful means and methods. Professionally independent military legal advisers provide legal review as part of the planning process and provide conditions and recommendations concerning strikes. During the war, commanders imposed further restrictions, changed strike plans, returned proposals for further planning or refused approval because of expected civilian harm, sometimes during planning and sometimes in real time, often after unexpected civilian presence was identified shortly before a strike.

Testimony confined to preliminary stages does not establish the final assessments on which commanders relied, the conditions they imposed, the precautions taken during execution, or the strike's actual effects. Nor can the testimony of a working-level intelligence analyst reliably represent the IDF's full targeting process, in which other professionals take part, or the IDF's full targeting policies and directives, which are not an integral part of such analysts' professional responsibility. Such testimonies therefore cannot be treated as a complete account of the policies at hand, the decisions made and what ultimately happened. Nevertheless, that is precisely the inference the film invites viewers to draw.

2. Major errors resulting from flaws in investigative methodology and fact-checking

The filmmakers could have identified and avoided the substantial errors apparent in the film had they conducted adequate verification and corroboration in good faith. The end result shows they did not. Beyond anonymous accounts by people whose precise roles and first-hand knowledge are unknown, they cite no military directives, contemporaneous records or other corroborating evidence. Accounts of alleged strikes identify no specific target, date, place or reported casualties, leaving the claims general and unverifiable. This also deprives viewers of the ability to check the claims independently. Contrary to accepted investigative journalistic practice, the filmmakers chose not to submit their allegations to the IDF before publication. That omission calls into question their willingness to test their narrative against explanations and evidence that might contradict it.

3. Downplaying context essential to assessing the IDF's conduct

The film does not give due weight to context essential to assessing the IDF's conduct in the war, including the October 7th Massacre, Hamas's military embedment within Gaza's civilian population and the steps the IDF took to protect civilians under those conditions.

- a. The context of the October 7th Massacre is essential – not to balance the suffering of two sides, but to enable an uninformed viewer to

understand the grave security threat Hamas posed to Israel, which materialized in that attack, and the security reasons for Israel's subsequent military operations against Hamas in Gaza. The film does not give due weight to the October 7th Massacre and, consequently, its filmmakers completely mischaracterize Israel's objectives in the war.

- b. Hamas systematically and extensively embedded military operatives, weapons and military infrastructure within and beneath civilian areas, exploiting hospitals, UN facilities, schools and mosques for military purposes, as documented many times. Hamas used civilians to shield military activity, and its operatives conducted military activity in civilian clothing. This context is essential to understanding the issue that stands in the center of the film: the challenges of identifying military objectives concealed within civilian surroundings, determining where civilians are present and assessing how an attack on the enemy could affect them. It also explains why combat took place in urban areas and adversely affected civilians, as a result of Hamas' choice, not Israel's.
- c. The film omits concrete steps the IDF took to mitigate civilian harm. To name only a few –many proposed strikes were cancelled or never approved because of the risk to civilians. Strikes were planned using methods and means intended to mitigate civilian harm to the greatest extent feasible. The IDF devoted substantial personnel and resources to civilian protection, including a dedicated Civilian Harm Mitigation Cell that issued warnings and monitored civilian presence across Gaza. The IDF employs many independent legal advisers to support compliance with the law. Through COGAT, Israel coordinated humanitarian activity and facilitated the entry of humanitarian supplies and civilian goods into Gaza (more than 3.9 million metric tons of food since October 2023). These actions refute the film's portrayal of the IDF as indifferent to civilian harm.

Part II: Assessment of Key Allegations in the Film

The following responses address key allegations in the film and explain the relevant factual and legal context. This list does not cover every false and distorted claim in the film.

Claim: There was approval for 500 civilians to be killed in a single strike.

The IDF has never planned, approved or carried out a strike in Gaza in which 500 civilians, or anything close to that number, were expected to be killed. Nor has anyone seriously alleged that an IDF strike caused that number of deaths or anything close to it. The filmmakers prominently featured this allegation, including in the film's official trailer, even though they necessarily could not have verified it and had no evidence to prove it.

Claim: Junior operatives listed in "Lavender" could be struck with up to 20 expected civilian casualties; for senior commanders, whole-neighborhood strikes with 200 expected civilian casualties.

This claim rests on at least two errors: it treats a general policy threshold requiring approval at a senior level as permission to strike, and a database as a list of targets. IDF regulations have never granted automatic authorization for strikes against targets that place a fixed number of civilians at risk.

Under IDF regulations, for each strike the commander deciding on it must assess individually whether it is expected to be proportionate under international humanitarian law – meaning, whether the expected civilian deaths and injuries and damage to civilian objects would be excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated. Depending on military considerations and changing circumstances, IDF regulations may allocate decision-making authority among different command levels and require higher approval where estimated civilian harm exceeds certain thresholds. This is standard practice in Western militaries, which usually incorporate additional layers of targeting regulation and oversight for strategic, operational and tactical reasons that are not necessarily legal in nature.

IDF regulations never relieve any commander of the duty to make an individual proportionality assessment. The interviewee appears to confuse an approval-authority threshold with actual approval of a strike (indeed, according to the filmmakers, he is an intelligence analyst, not an operational officer in charge of targeting). Such an authorization threshold is not a permitted number of civilian casualties; it determines only who has authority to approve a strike.

Specifically, no approval-authority threshold of 200 casualties for a strike against a military objective has ever applied or existed. Thresholds for striking military objectives under IDF regulations concern much lower numbers. No strike against such a target was approved or carried out in Gaza, and no credible claim has been made that a strike on any military objective caused a comparable number of casualties.

“Lavender” is not a list of targets approved to strike. As the IDF [previously explained publicly](#), it is a database with the purpose of cross-referencing intelligence sources, in order to produce up-to-date layers of information on operatives in terror organizations in the Gaza Strip. A person’s inclusion in “Lavender” does not identify that person as a target, let alone authorize a strike against him. This mischaracterization also appears to stem from interviewees unfamiliar with the entire targeting process.

For further information on IDF targeting policy, see the IDF’s detailed response to The New York Times article published on January 26, 2025: [“IDF Targeting Methods During the First Weeks of the Hamas-Israel War.”](#)

Claim: The IDF “NAZA” count (collateral damage estimation) does not distinguish between adults and minors.

That is what international humanitarian law requires: a civilian is a civilian regardless of age, and no civilian life is assigned a lesser value. Collateral damage estimates are considered by commanders before deciding whether a strike may proceed, and throughout the war, the presence of different categories of civilians, and children in particular, led commanders to cancel, postpone or replan strikes.

Claim: Actual civilian casualties from strikes were not checked afterward.

Several IDF units review strike outcomes, including by monitoring reports of civilian harm. The interviewees, who according to the filmmakers served in certain intelligence units, do not appear to belong to those units and are not positioned to testify on this matter. Generally, IDF soldiers are not present near locations struck from the air, and the IDF's ability to verify casualty reports or obtain complete information about them is limited. Within those limits, the IDF monitors open sources and, where necessary, uses other means. This review has prompted debriefs into hundreds of incidents during the hostilities and serves as a basis for lessons learned. Separately, every suspicion of a violation of the law or IDF directives must be reported, and these reports are examined. Depending on the findings, further fact-finding may follow. The Military Advocate General decides whether a criminal investigation or other action is warranted.

Claim: Artificial intelligence autonomously generated tens of thousands of human targets that were attacked.

In the IDF, artificial intelligence does not determine whether an object or a person is designated as a target, nor whether a target is struck. Intelligence-based targets are identified by human analysts under defined procedures and approved by at least one authorized intelligence officer. They then move to a broader strike planning and approval process involving additional officers from different professions, which results in a decision on the strike by an operational commander, subject to the rules of international humanitarian law. Data-processing tools are used at a sub-stage of target identification process, to assist in cross-referencing intelligence databases that intelligence analysts have previously gathered and assessed, in order to focus analysts on information likely to be relevant to their ongoing research. These tools cannot independently identify and select targets to strike in the IDF. Hamas maintains tens of thousands of military operatives and conceals its military assets within the civilian environment; that concealment requires a significant intelligence effort before a person or object can be determined to be a valid target to strike. The tools are intended to make that effort more precise, in line with international humanitarian law, not to replace human agents. The claim in the film may stem from the interviewees' unfamiliarity with the full chain of approvals and the broader targeting process.

For further information on this topic, see the IDF's published statement of June 18, 2024: [The IDF's Use of Data Technologies in Intelligence Processing](#).

Claim: Soldiers fired on civilians near humanitarian aid distribution sites.

IDF directives prohibit targeting civilians. Allegations of misconduct, including in relation to shooting incidents in proximity to aid distribution centers, were referred for inquiry. The IDF treats allegations of misconduct by its forces seriously: its procedures require an initial examination of every report, complaint, or credible allegation of misconduct it receives. Where the information raises a reasonable suspicion of misconduct warranting a criminal investigation, the Military Advocate General (MAG) orders a criminal investigation, and indictments are filed where the evidence so warrants.

Specifically, the rules of engagement conveyed to forces operating in the vicinity of aid distribution sites permitted fire only against military operatives and suspects posing an immediate threat. The IDF worked to allow and facilitate the operation of these distribution sites so that food would reach civilians, in line with international humanitarian law and humanitarian values. The sites operated in an active war zone, in which armed militants operated while deliberately blending in with the population, and IDF soldiers were exposed to risk.

In response to several tragic incidents involving civilian deaths in or around distribution centers, operational debriefs were conducted, lessons were learned and implemented, and additional instructions were issued. The IDF also employed various means to improve the operational environment near the sites, including marking its areas of operation, placing physical obstacles and signs to restrict access to combat zones, and opening additional access routes ([IDF publication of June 30, 2025, with photographs of the signs, barriers and access routes](#)). Reports of casualties near the sites do not, by themselves, establish who was responsible or how the casualties occurred. These questions require an examination of the evidence in each incident. Reported exceptional incidents were referred to the General Staff Fact-Finding and Assessment Mechanism (FFAM) for examination.

For further information on examination and investigation of exceptional incidents, see the IDF statement published on February 24, 2024 (and subsequently updated): [“Addressing Alleged Misconduct in the Context of the War in Gaza.”](#)

Claim: Buildings were bombed “according to the algorithm” in neighborhoods where a quarter of the residents remained, on the basis that previously they had been warned to leave.

The basis for IDF strikes is the identification of military objectives. IDF directives make clear that a warning does not permit civilian presence to be ignored when deciding on a strike and does not by itself authorize a strike. An algorithm has never decided on a strike. Estimating expected civilian harm begins only after a structure has been identified as a military objective; absent that identification no strike is planned, regardless of the proportion of civilians remaining. The extent to which residents had left an area was one factor, alongside intelligence and surveillance, in the assessment by relevant IDF personnel of civilian harm expected from a strike. Where civilians were expected to be affected, the rules of international humanitarian law prohibiting disproportionate attacks and requiring precautions to mitigate civilian harm were implemented.

The film’s description of attacks on ‘neighborhoods’ is misleading. There were cases in which Hamas used entire clusters of buildings, or significant parts of them, as combat compounds: some buildings held command posts, others weapons, others observation or anti-tank positions, and others tunnel shafts, while an underground tunnel network often connected the buildings to each other and to other locations. Each structure struck in such cases was required to be individually assessed and designated as a military objective. Even then, because the IDF was aware of civilian presence, each such strike was subject to a proportionality assessment, and the IDF worked to narrow and refine the area to be struck, in accordance with the law and beyond what it requires, to what was strictly necessary operationally, in order to mitigate civilian harm.

Claim: A belief spread in the IDF that there are no uninvolved civilians in Gaza.

The distinction between military operatives and civilians is fundamental to the IDF, its commanders and its binding directives during the fighting in Gaza. This distinction is unequivocally expressed in every protocol or directive that address targeting processes in the IDF. The directives prohibit intentionally directing strikes against civilians or carrying out strikes expected to harm civilian in a disproportionate manner and require feasible precautions to mitigate incidental civilian harm from strikes on nearby military objectives. Maintaining this distinction, in the war the IDF took countless documented actions and implemented methods to mitigate civilian harm, including warnings, appropriate strike planning and strike cancellations in light of civilian presence. An interviewee’s assertion regarding the existence of an approach according to which there are “no uninvolved civilians in Gaza” may reflect his personal feelings or assessments, but it does not represent in any way the approach of the IDF and its commanders, its binding directives, or its activities to mitigate civilian harm throughout the war, that were documented and publicized many times.

Claim: An interviewee was asked whether this was genocide, and said yes.

The allegation of ‘genocide’ is outrageous and unfounded, and the State of Israel has categorically rejected it. The filmmakers’ choice to ask people who are not experts on the matter and do not know the internationally accepted definition of the term for their personal views on it, is manipulative, misleading and irrelevant. Immediately after October 7, before Israel had launched a substantial military response, an international political campaign was launched falsely seeking equate the casualties and destruction of war with ‘genocide’ and mislead the public about its meaning. The personal views of interviewees who did not participate in the relevant command decisions cannot establish the existence of genocidal intent. The film invites viewers to reach a legal and factual conclusion that its material neither supports nor could support.

The defining element of “genocide” under international law is the specific intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group as such. The interviewees could not testify to, or produce evidence of, such an intent, because none ever existed.

The IDF’s operations in Gaza pursued concrete objectives set by the political echelon, particularly dismantling Hamas of its governing and military capabilities and creating conditions for returning the hostages. Harm to Gaza’s Palestinian population was never their purpose. The IDF issued warnings, cancelled strikes, facilitated humanitarian aid and took many other steps to prevent civilian harm. These were concrete measures to protect the very population the filmmakers accuse Israel and the IDF of seeking to destroy.

Closing

The film falsely portrays a military that seeks to cause civilian harm.

The film omits the people behind the targeting process: professionals responsible for operational planning intended to mitigate civilian harm, legal advisers reviewing proposed strikes and commanders responsible for approving or rejecting them, in a military committed to the law and its own values.

Several interviewees describe, in their own words, the moral weight that comes from participation in targeting procedures. That weight is real, and the IDF does not dismiss it: decisions that may cost civilian lives are among the hardest soldiers and commanders face, and the IDF expects its soldiers to feel that weight and act accordingly. Yet that moral burden is not evidence that decisions were unlawful or indifferent to civilian lives; it reflects the seriousness with which they were made.

The processes and decisions omitted by the film show what the IDF's effort to protect civilians meant in practice: additional intelligence required, plans changed, strikes cancelled and military opportunities forgone. These decisions restricted the use of force because of assessed risks to civilians. The film ignores them.

The tragic consequences of war do not justify distorting the facts. Serious discussion of civilian harm requires a serious account of how decisions were actually made. That is precisely what the film fails to provide. The film seeks to create the impression that the IDF acts in an inhumane manner. In reality, the only way the filmmakers can create that impression is by distorting facts, omitting essential context, ignoring previous IDF publications and explanations, and adding emotional manipulation and scripted effects. The IDF has acted and continues to act humanely, even if the filmmakers have done everything they can to conceal that fact.