

# Annotation guidelines/difficult cases

## General framework

We define "bias" in terms of ***explicit use of elements from the pro-Palestinian and pro-Israeli narratives*** about the war on Gaza: texts that use elements from the pro-Palestinian narrative are considered "biased against Israel" and conversely, texts that use elements from the pro-Israeli narrative are considered "biased against Palestine".

For each narrative, we also defined a list of frames (see below) that fit that narrative. These frames were then used as a tool for identifying which narrative (if any) was being used in a particular text. Here, a "frame" is loosely defined as a piece of conceptual information that forms the building block of a narrative. For example "Hamas is a terrorist organization" is a frame of the Israeli narrative, while "Israel is committing genocide" is a frame of the Palestinian narrative. We established a list of frames before the annotation work was started; aware that our list of frames is not exhaustive, we also allowed annotators to annotate bias even if no applicable frame is present in a given piece of text.

Texts that describe the events of the war without explicitly using either of the two narratives are considered "unbiased". Note that this does not have to mean that they actually are unbiased; bias can also take the form of choosing to report certain events over others, emphasize the role of certain participants over others, or quoting certain sources over others; or even by simply reporting false information that fits with a particular narrative. However, here, we focus purely on the text itself, without considering the context (which we don't have enough information on). Hence, "unbiased" should be understood as "lacking an explicit textual bias".

## Notes on specific labels

- **Unbiased:** The label unbiased is used when the text is reporting on events, or does not show clear bias. There can be certain lexical choices in a text that show a point of view of the author, but when they are too strongly related to context this is still unbiased (see example Row #5 and Row #17).
  - Examples second annotation:
  - Row #23: New attack occurred this morning in Jerusalem which left several victims while new hostages had to be released. Hamas claims responsibility for this attack. <unbiased>
  - Row #5: The death toll in Gaza has surpassed 25,000 people since the start of the Israel-Hamas war, according to the Hamas-controlled health ministry in the enclave. Follow live updates. <unbiased>
  - Row #17: Who is #Yahya\_Sinwar, the leader of "#Hamas" in #Gaza, whom #Israel threatened to reach after the "#Al-Aqsa\_Flood" operation? Watch the #magazine video 📺 <unbiased>

- Row #7: Countries around the world are demanding accountability for Israel's alleged war crimes against Palestinian civilians. Chile and Mexico most recently asked the International Criminal Court (ICC) to investigate alleged war crimes committed by all sides against civilians since Oct. 7 during Israel's siege of Gaza, which has killed more than 24,700 Palestinians. Around 1,140 Israelis were killed by Hamas on Oct 7. South Africa has already put Israel on trial at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for alleged genocide against Palestinians in Gaza and is demanding a ceasefire. Indonesia and Slovenia have also joined a request for an ICJ opinion on whether Israel has violated Palestinians' right to self-determination through its illegal occupation of the Palestinian territories. The difference between the ICC and ICJ is that the ICC prosecutes individuals and the ICJ prosecutes nations. However, neither court has enforcement power. Israel has denied the charges in the South Africa ICJ case and isn't a member of the ICC. <unbiased>
- **Unclear:** The label unclear is used when a phrase is nonsense or can be interpreted as both the Palestinian and the Israeli narrative.
  - Examples first annotation:
  - Row #9: Hate in Hollywood. <unclear>
  - Row #45: Israel Palestine conflict: Hamas showed courage, now 'disaster' on Gaza! , R Bharat. , , #IsraelPalestineWar #israel #palestine #HamasvsIsrael #IsraelHamasWar #israelpalestineconflict #israelpalestine #israelnews #israelipalestinianconflict #netanyahu #warlive #IsraeliPalestineianRelations <unclear>
  - Examples second annotation:
  - Row #2: An FEC complaint argues 51 former intelligence officials strategically crafted to discredit the Hunter Biden laptop story. Catch up on this story and more top headlines in today's Fox News First newsletter. <unclear>
- **Unattributed vs attributed quotes:** We differentiate between unattributed and attributed quotes. Both types of quotes highly depend on context. With unattributed quotes, it is specifically hard to judge the bias since it is unclear whose perspective is represented. Therefore, unattributed quotes are labelled as <not applicable>. Attributed quotes can be a form of reporting on events that happened. Therefore, these are labelled as <unbiased>. Note: the quote can still have a frame labelled to it
  - Examples first annotation:
  - Row #5: "My head is just exploding to think about the logic of this President. He goes to Israel, basically functions as a shill to Hamas." <not applicable>
  - Row #4: Israeli military said in the past 24 hours it had struck targets including a tunnel housing Hamas fighters and lookout posts. <unbiased> + <Israel's targeted strikes>
  - Examples second annotation:
  - Row #3: "Even wars have rules. All innocent life is equal in worth — Israeli and Palestinian" Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau urged Israel to stop "this killing of women, of children, of babies" in the Gaza Strip, during a news conference on Tuesday, which he described as heart wrenching. Trudeau called

on the Israeli government to exercise 'maximum restraint'. Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu slammed Trudeau following his speech saying Israeli forces don't deliberately target non-combatants while Hamas 'beheaded, burned and massacred civilians'. <unbiased> + <Israel target civilians> + < Hamas terrorist attack>

- Examples second annotation:
- Row #9: "Anti-Israel rallies were announced in close to 20 other cities in the US, Canada and Europe, including at Israeli consulates and embassies in San Francisco, Atlanta and London." Read the full story at: <not applicable>
- Row #15: Reuters, citing officials: #Khamenei informed #Haniyeh that #Iran will not enter the war "on behalf of Hamas" #Al-Arabiya <unbiased>
- **Hashtags:** You can use hashtags as context to determine the bias of a phrase. However, it is important to keep in mind that people can use a mix of hashtag to improve their reach. Using a hashtag does not necessarily represents the authors point of view. In cases where it is unclear how to interpret the hashtag, the bias portrayed in the actual text is leading (see example row #45).
  - Examples first annotation:
  - Row #43: Israel caused devastation in Gaza through this bomb! Israel's bunker buster bomb which is destroying Gaza's tunnels, bunkers, buildings and towers. #Israel #Gaza #Israel\_under\_attack #IsraelPalestineWar #HamasAttack #IsraelPalestineConflict #Jerusalem | #ATDigital <bias against both> + <general sensationalism>
  - Row #45: Israel Palestine conflict: Hamas showed courage, now 'disaster' on Gaza! , R Bharat. , , #IsraelPalestineWar #israel #palestine #HamasvsIsrael #IsraelHamasWar #israelpalestineconflict #israelpalestine #israelnews #israelipalestinianconflict #netanyahu #warlive #IsraeliPalestineianRelations <unclear>
- **Links:** We have decided to not consider links in the annotation
- **Multiple frames:** a phrase can have multiple frames.
  - Examples first annotation:
  - Row #34: Adva Adar is my grandmother! You were abducted unhindered to the Gaza Strip. Her name is Yaffe Ader, she is 85 years old!! My grandmother who founded the kibbutz with her own two hands, who believed in Zionism, who loved this country that abandoned her, was kidnapped. Probably dumped somewhere, suffering from severe pain, without medicine, without food and without water, dying of fear, alone. No one talks to us, doesn't know how to say anything, we found out all the information we have from videos that were circulated. I want this image to be regretted by all those disconnected from this disgraceful government. Let them understand that there are people here, elderly and children, women and men, with names and families. I want them to stay awake at night and turn over every piece of land until these people come home. Please share the post. Hope it reaches people who might be able to help us. <bias against Palestine> + <Israel should protect its citizens>/<protection of Israeli sovereignty>

## List of frames

Below are our lists of frames for the two narratives. The frames are also annotated (zero or one frames per text) in the "frame" column in the annotation sheet.<sup>1</sup>

### Palestine narrative/bias against Israel

- Israel occupation
  - Apartheid
- Resistance Palestine
  - Hamas resistance
- Israel targeting civilians
  - Genocide
  - Bombing hospitals (deliberately)
- Retaliation events before October 7
- International support Palestine
  - ICJ & ICC

### Israel narrative/bias against Palestine

- Rise of antisemitism
  - Juxtaposition October 7 and antisemitism
- Israel western country
  - Pro-LGBT
  - Democracy
- Hamas responsibility conflict
- Israel self defense
  - Israel targeted strikes
  - Destroy hamas
  - Israel surrounded by all sides
- Glorification IDF/patriotism
  - Glorifying zionism
  - Soldiers giving up their life
- Hamas is a terrorist organization
  - Hamas aims at killing civilians
  - NGOs colluded Hamas (conspiracy theory)
- Israel international support right self defense
- Denying Palestinian suffering

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<sup>1</sup> Since the frame layer is an extra annotation layer, we did not complete our annotations in this layer before the deadline of submitting bias annotations. The full annotation results for frames will be discussed in our paper.