

# FIGNEWS-2024 - Bias

## Guidelines v.1

Team: BIAS-BLUFF-BUSTERS

Subtask: Bias Annotation

### Objective

Annotate texts from the Israel war on Gaza and determine if such texts exhibit bias towards Israel, Palestine or other parties. This effort is part of the FIGNEWS2024 shared task, aiming at understanding and identifying bias in news articles and the different layers through which it could be expressed.

### **! Warning note**

We are aware that this annotation task includes texts with potentially upsetting and disturbing written content. This includes references to violent and tragic events, physical and mental abuse, inappropriate language and intentional spread of misinformation that will probably be upsetting.

Take the breaks you need, feel free to reach out for support and to stop the annotation at any time if not reasonably comfortable with the task. We are glad for your help in uncovering bias, but make sure to take care of yourself!

### Self-reflection

A first step to approach this task is to recognize that everyone has some bias, which includes you as well.

Think about the conflict for a moment and how it affects you personally. Do you have any personal connections or are you just an observer? How do you feel about the events unfolding?

Do you stand for or feel closer to one side, feel sympathy for certain groups involved, identify with a group one of the sides also belongs to (e.g. religious, ethnic, ...)?

How familiar are you with the history of Israel and Palestine and where did the information you got come from? Do you live in a society or cultural group which expresses support for one of the sides?

Consider also how you usually get informed about the events, in which language, and whether those sources might have had bias themselves.

**Now, ... would you label yourself as biased?**

Don't worry, it is normal if your answer is 'yes'. These guidelines are here to help you recognize bias, including your own, and to provide you with criteria to more objectively judge it.

Ready? Let's start!

## So what is bias in news?

[Wikipedia](#) defines 'Bias' as "a disproportionate weight *in favor of* or *against* an idea or thing, usually in a way that is inaccurate, closed-minded, prejudicial, or unfair."

In the case of news and reporting, we consider as bias "the slanted presentation of news or internal bias within news articles" (Spinde et al, 2023). According to their research, such bias typically results in coverage that leans towards or against certain persons or opinions, often characterized by one-sided, misleading, or unfair judgments.

Furthermore, the study categorizes bias into two principal types: *ideological* and *spin bias*.

**Ideological bias** captures the influence of a journalist's or editor's personal preferences on how events are reported, usually expressed by non neutral lexical choices. You might identify ideological bias by asking yourself:

*Could this text be rewritten in a more neutral language?*

Ex. (B02-1149) *We are all together, Israeli Jews and Arabs, demanding that the world act and promote the release of all the abductees held by the vile and despicable terrorist organization Hamas... May they return home soon, God willing.*

-

(more neutral language) We are all together, Israeli Jews and Arabs, demanding that the world act and promote the release of all the abductees held by Hamas... May they return home soon, God willing.

**Spin bias** is reflected in the choice of what to report, rather than how, i.e. by omitting potentially relevant information (as in the example above, mentioning only the people kidnapped by Hamas and completely omitting those detained by Israel) or focusing on information that supports one side (the latter is usually also 'propaganda') or even reporting false or controversial information as truthful.

Ex. (B02-7534) ICJ admits Israel is committing massacre in Gaza #IsraelHamasWar #IsraelPalestineConflict #Gaza - false information

## Bias in Reporting

### Controversial terms

The use of controversial terms is inherently biased. Unbiased reporting would use neutral terms that both sides of the conflict can agree upon. However, there are cases where there exists no neutral term that can be accepted by both sides. E.g. Israel might consider calling Hamas an organization instead of terrorists as bias for Hamas.

Consider the following questions to determine whether terms could be considered neutral:

- ***Is it a term both parties would accept?***
- ***Would uninvolved 3rd parties use this term?***
- ***Would official and to some extent superparties organizations, such as the ICJ or the UN use this term?***

For consistency, we made the following decisions concerning commonly occurring terms:  
(we are aware that these decisions might be controversial and reflect our own bias)

- **Hamas-terrorist.** Hamas is recognized as a ‘terrorist’ organization by some countries only. The nature of the organization is still controversial. We decided to consider:
  - Neutral - terms such as *organization/ government*
  - Negative (biased against) - terms such as *murderers/ terrorists*
  - Positive (biased for) terms such as *partisans, liberation party/ movement*
- **War-Genocide.** Israel was accused of ‘**genocide**’, but ICJ has not emitted a verdict and the ruling does not directly recognize it, therefore, at present, calling the war as genocide should be considered ‘bias’. Similar to ‘**apartheid**’ referring to the situation in Israel and Palestine, given it is not accepted by all parties or officially recognized.
- **Israel-occupying power.** Israel is officially recognized as an **occupying** power relative to the Palestinian territories. [The International Court of Justice \(ICJ\).\[3\] the UN General Assembly.\[4\] and the UN Security Council all regard Israel as the occupying power for the territories.](#) This term is therefore not strictly ‘biased’. However, we decided to consider the choice to use it to generically refer to Israel or its army, an intent to delegitimize it and focus the attention on a specific negative aspect, thus representing bias.

Ex. (B01-161) Israeli occupation army spokesman Daniel Hagari says he has documented evidence proving that Hamas uses hospitals as an operations center  
#News #Gaza\_War

## Misinformation (factuality and evidentiality)

Information should be truthful and accurately presented. Consider the factuality (i.e. whether claims are presented as truthful or facts) and evidentiality (i.e. evidence supporting claims) related to the information provided.

The following is an example of false information (ICJ has never confirmed that Israel is committing a genocide in Gaza) presented as factual by using the reporting verb ‘admits’.

Ex. (B02-7534) ICJ admits Israel is committing massacre in Gaza #IsraelHamasWar  
#IsraelPalestineConflict #Gaza - false information

In addition, information flowing from one of the parties in a conflict, not verified by independent parties or confirmed by the party of opposite interest should not be presented as factual or the source of the information should be clearly stated.

- Neutral: Information laid out without being suggested as truthful through terms such as "claimed," "pointed out," or "allegedly."

*Ex. (B02-955) Hamas' armed wing has claimed three members of the Bibas family have been killed inside Gaza. Sky's Alistair Bunkall says "the IDF have said they are looking into this, they have not confirmed it."*

- Biased: Implies truth or falsehood without sufficient evidence or verification, e.g. through 'announced', 'revealed', 'declared', 'lied', 'fabricated evidence' or reporting as 1st person

*Ex. (B01-2268) #AheI raided a weapons warehouse in western Khan Yunis, liquidated more than 100 Hamas terrorists [...]*

*Ex. (B02-1121) [...] The IDF reveals that the terrorist organizations Hamas and Islamic Jihad are using children in military activities and inciting them to violence from an early age, [...]*

## Information Omission

Spin bias reflects the reporter's choice of what to report. When information about an event is purposefully omitted to the advantage of one party, this should be considered 'bias'. This includes: omitting that a positive event also had negative outcomes, only mentioning casualties from one side, not mentioning positive contributions from the other side and so on.

**Challenges in Detection:** Omissions are usually hard to reliably identify, since the full text and the context and circumstances (*When was the text written? Was the missing information known at that point?*) in which the text was produced are normally missing.

*E.g.: 'Two hostages died while held in captivity by Hamas' assuming it was known that they died because of an Israeli air strike, the omission is likely purposeful, to hold only the mentioned party accountable.*

## Bias against or bias for

For this task, we can only annotate **negative bias**, that is 'bias against' an entity. However, the data contains many instances of texts exhibiting **positive bias**, which does not necessarily imply a bias against another entity and often entails also a propaganda intent. To ease the annotation task, we added a temporary label BIAS FOR to tag those texts. This has been automatically reconciled before submission, mapping 'bias for' to the allowed tags and labeling these examples as 'Unclear'.

## Reporter Bias versus Quoted Sources

For determining bias, we should focus on the Reporter's or Editorial Stance. We do not evaluate the bias of quoted sources (3rd parties) and the quotations ascribed to them, but rather focus on the part of the reporter or editor.

Ex. (B01-87) *The Washington Post*: " Hamas" deceived Israeli intelligence with misleading information #Gaza\_War - this is only reporting what a 3rd party said - UNBIASED

Additional factors for consideration:

- The reporter's decision to quote certain sources and their potential impact on spreading or discrediting viewpoints.
  - Was quoting this source and those words relevant no matter the stance of the reporter (e.g. common interest of know what that person or institution says), or unnecessary and likely a deliberate choice to convey that voice and those words?
- How the quoted source (*evil, esteemed, famous, hero, ...*) and the reported speech is introduced and framed (*claims, announced, confirmed, blathered*), whether it discredits or lends credibility to the source and the reported information.

For consistency, we recommend following these conventions:

- Quoted text with no source mentioned -> treat as if coming from the reporter

Ex. (B02-1021) "Don't let the door hit you on your way out. Our government has no place for Hamas sympathizers."

- Quoted text with source neutrally introduced, but unclear reporter's intention behind reporting those words -> UNCLEAR

Ex. (B02-5975) *Israeli Defense Minister says "Hamas must die or surrender"*

- Quotation not neutrally introduced -> BIAS

Ex. (B01-110) 📺 #Hamas - "The liberating Hamas": Erdogan's shocking sentence Analysis and decryption by Quentin Bérichel in Les Indispensables 📌 #24hPujadas #LCI #La26 🔗

- Quotation and source neutrally introduced and perceived neutral intention behind reporting those words -> UNBIASED

Ex. (B02-5975) *Israeli Defense Minister says "Hamas must die or surrender"*

## Layers of bias and how they interact

While the focus of the task is to detect journalist's or editorial bias, different layers of bias might interact in the text and in the annotation process.

Depending on actors perspective:

- Writer's or editorial perspective (main focus)
- Reported sources (3rd party quotations) - for the annotation, these should be considered only with respect to the journalist's choice to report and to how they are reported
- Annotator's perspective - you

Depending on different factors influencing the actors above, including:

- Political orientation (e.g. right, left)
- Religious orientation (e.g. Muslim, Jew, Christian)
- Cultural and language affinity
- Ethnical affinity
- Circumstances and personal connections

Moreover, bias intensity and direction can change over time as people or institutions and countries change their perspective on the conflict.

## Linguistic Cues of Bias

To detect bias, we can look for specific linguistic cues that show a stance by expressing judgment or support/discredit towards the truthfulness of a proposition. We list here the categories identified by Recasens et al. 2013.

### Epistemological Bias

*Characteristics:* Involves the subtle conveyance of the believability of a proposition, often through presupposition, entailment, assertion, or hedging.

- *Factive Verbs:* Presuppose the truth of their complement clause, suggesting an accepted fact (e.g., "He realized that..." versus "His stand was that...").

*Ex. (B06-1632) The fools have not yet realized that their division and hatred showed how weak and divided we are and that is exactly what brought us to this situation. Irresponsible trash people.*

- *Entailments:* Imply a truth from one phrase to another, with implications extending beyond the literal meaning (e.g., "murder" entails "kill").

*Ex. (B02-195) [...] Before our eyes stand our brothers and sisters who were murdered, wounded, abducted, the fallen of the IDF and the security forces. In their name and for their sake we embarked on a campaign, the purpose of which is the destruction of the cruel and murderous enemy Hamas-Daesh.*

- *Assertive Verbs:* Indicate varying levels of certainty in a proposition, affecting the perceived truthfulness (e.g., "point out" versus "say").

Ex. (B02-94) Ronald Lamola, Minister of Justice in #SouthAfrica, said that the Palestinians are subjected to non-stop bombing wherever they go, and are killed everywhere they turn, stressing that Israel launched a major attack on #Gaza and violated the Convention on the Prevention of the Crime of Genocide. #Aljazeera live

- *Hedges*: Used to reduce commitment to a proposition's truth, softening predictions or statements (e.g., "may decrease" versus "will decrease").

Ex. (B13-9654) Israeli ground troops will "probably" invade the Gaza Strip unless Hamas surrenders "without retaliating", the Israeli Defense Forces spokesman said

## Framing Bias

*Characteristics*: More explicit than epistemological bias, involving subjective or one-sided language that reveals the author's stance.

- Subjective Intensifiers: Adjectives or adverbs adding subjective emphasis to a phrase or proposition (e.g., "fantastic reproductions" versus "accurate reproductions").

Ex. (B01-10724) A sad Hanukkah holiday. Hanukkah, the holiday of heroism. Two more heroic reservists of the people of Israel fell today in the Gaza Strip: [...]

- One-Sided Terms: Reflect a single perspective in contentious issues, often in controversial subjects (e.g., "liberated" versus "captured" in political contexts).

Ex. (B01-66) Hamas leader Osama Hamdan: The resistance is ready to thwart Israeli plans, regardless of the strength of the military attack

## Terminology

The goal of this task is to identify bias vs Israel or Palestine. However, we first need to reach a consensus as to what constitutes and can be used to identify and refer to these entities. We are aware of the oversimplification and that we cannot take every aspect into account. To increase consistency and support the annotation task, however, we provide some general guidelines about common terms.

Texts that discuss Palestine are considered for potential bias against Palestine. Texts that discuss Israel are considered for potential bias against Israel.

Other terms can be used with metonymic and hypernym/hyponym relations (synecdoche, representative for represented, instance of class/religion/ethnic group) and other associations to refer to Israel and Palestine.

We provide some general guidelines in the table below, but we recommend also considering the context as well as the reporter's standpoint.

- **Reporter's standpoint.** When terms are used to express bias against a party, by someone that belongs to the same group of that party. In this case, the terms should not generalize to the party.

*Ex. (B02-10761) [...]is the policy of Smotrich and his prophetic gang led by Netanyahu that led to the 7/10 massacre. It is the preference of the settlements and Hamas' rule over the lives of innocent civilians in their homes, that led to the lack of protection for the residents of the cover, and for that there is no forgiveness. Stealing the budget under the devastation brought about by the bloody government policy adds a sin to a crime against the entire Israeli society. oust now! - negative stance about Israeli government, but not towards Israel as a whole.*

	Refers to Palestine?	Refers to Israel?
<b>Yes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Muslims/ Arabs</u> (Palestinian majority also Muslim) in the context of the current war</li> <li>• <u>Gaza/ West Bank</u> (although we recognize that they have important differences)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Jews</u> (Israel majority also Jews)</li> <li>• <u>Israel's army/troops/IDF</u></li> </ul>
<b>No</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Hamas</u>: not equated with Palestine. Mentions of Hamas are related to Palestine only if explicitly stated.</li> <li>• <u>ISIS</u>: not equated with Hamas or Palestine. Mentions of ISIS are related to Palestine only if explicitly stated.</li> <li>• <u>Palestinian Islamic Jihad</u>: not Palestine nor Hamas</li> <li>• <u>Palestinian authority, politicians, representatives</u> (Mohammad Mustafa), unless used to refer to Palestine as a whole</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Zionists</u>: not equated with Jews or Israel. Mentions of Zionists are related to Israel only if explicitly stated.</li> <li>• <u>Specific parties or prominents figures within Israel politicians or army, including the president Netanyahu</u>. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Settlers/settlement</li> <li>◦ Netanyahu, political parties, ...</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

For general guidelines concerning the potential bias of common terms that can be found associated with those two entities, see the table below.

(Disclaimer: those decisions reflect our perspective and intuition and might be biased)

Please consider that terms might change connotation depending on the context and who pronounces them, e.g. 'Zionism' can be seen both as positive and negative bias:

- Zionist government - used with negative connotation 'zionist=occupant'
- Zionist person - used with positive connotation 'zionist=patriot'



<b>Entities/events</b> what is referred to in the text	<b>Expresses bias against entity</b> Negative way to refer to it	<b>Expresses bias for entity</b> Positive way to refer to it	<b>Not bias</b> Neutral ways to refer to entity
<b>Palestine</b>	Hamas, Isis	Palestine country	Gaza, Palestine, Palestine territories
<b>Israel</b>	Occupation army, occupation government, Zionist government		Israel, Israeli government, Israeli forces
<b>October 7th (Hamas)</b>		Response/ reaction, military operation	Attack, offensive, armed incursion, invasion, Terrorist attack (might be in a context of bias towards Hamas, but we decided that the nature of the attack could be considered terroristic even if not against Hamas)
<b>War (Israel)</b>	genocide, Israel's revenge, aggression, massacre, collective punishment, retaliatory attack Israel war on Gaza (possible bias against Israel seen as only responsible and targeting a territory, not Hamas) Israel-Palestine war (might express bias by suggesting the Israel is at war with Palestine rather than Hamas or that Palestine equates Hamas)	self-defense	Israel-Hamas (unless used to suggest it is only against Hamas, Gaza and civilians not involved)
<b>Hamas</b>	Terrorists, monsters, murderers	Resistance, liberation organization, movement	Militants, fighters, organization
<b>Casualties</b>	Assassination, murder, massacre		Death, killing
<b>Hamas hostages</b>			Hostages, kidnapped, captives, Detainees,

			prisoners
<b>Israeli prisoners</b>	Hostages, kidnapped		Prisoners, detainees

## Labels

### Unbiased

Events are reported in what is perceived as a **neutral voice**, not taking a stance for any of the parties involved. This means that words are usually not connotated, i.e. do not invoke positive or negative associations or meaning beyond their primary meaning, and the factuality of events and the evidentiality, i.e. the evidence the writer has to support the statements, are carefully presented. In addition, events and thoughts presented are generally relevant and not intended to support a one-sided narrative.

*Ex. (provided) "In the ongoing Israel-Palestine conflict, recent events have escalated tensions. Yesterday, Israeli forces conducted operations in response to rocket attacks from Gaza. Both sides have reported casualties. International leaders are calling for restraint and a return to peace talks."*

### Biased against Palestine

The events reported and/or the language used to report them, indicate that the reporter takes a stance against Palestine, presenting it in a negative light by using loaded or negatively connotated terms or reporting events or non-factual information aiming at discrediting it.

Common clues we identified include: equating Palestine and Hamas, negating Palestine identity or right to exist, negative references to Paelestinians as a group.

*Ex. (provided) "Once again, Palestinian aggression has disrupted peace in the region. Palestinian extremists, ignoring efforts for peace, launched unprovoked attacks on innocent Israeli civilians. Israel's response, though portrayed as harsh by some, is a justified measure to protect its citizens."*

### Biased against Israel

The events reported and/or the language used to report them, indicate that the reporter takes a stance against Israel, presenting it in a negative light by using loaded or negatively connotated terms or reporting events or non-factual information aiming at discrediting it.

Common clues we identified include: using negative terms to refer to Israel and its army or government, such as Zionist/ occupation government, negative one-sided terms used to refer to the war, such as Israeli's revenge or genocide, negating Israel right to exist or casting doubt on what Israel official sources report as factual.

*Ex. (provided) "In a typical display of excessive force, Israeli troops have yet again targeted Palestinian areas, causing numerous civilian casualties. This aggression, under the guise of self-defense, highlights the ongoing oppressive tactics Israel employs against Palestinians."*

*Ex. (B02-84) Faced with the ongoing humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza, you should be ashamed, Madam President of the European Commission. Shame on turning a blind eye to the deliberate massacre of civilians. Ashamed of supporting Netanyahu when already 4,000 children have died under his bombs. Shame on refusing the ceasefire! - negative towards EU and Israel, we tag with most specific tag 'bias against Israel'*

## Biased against both Palestine and Israel

The events reported and/or the language used to report them, indicate that the reporter takes a stance against both Palestine and Israel, presenting both in a negative light by using loaded or negatively connotated terms or reporting events or non-factual information aiming at discrediting the entities and the current events involving them.

Common clues we identified include: ridiculing the conflict and the parties involved.

*Ex. (provided) "In the latest chapter of their endless and futile conflict, Israeli and Palestinian forces have once again engaged in senseless violence. Both sides continue to commit atrocities, showing a complete disregard for peace or human life."*

*Ex (B02-27) Is the Israel-Palestine dispute over 35 acres of land? The story of AL-Aqsa Mosque between Religion-Existence-Dominance? [...]*


## Biased against others

Use this label for texts expressing bias towards entities other than Israel and Palestine. In case of bias against multiple entities including Israel and/or Palestine, tag with the more specific label (e.g. bias against Iran and Palestine -> BIAS AGAINST PALESTINE).

*Ex. (provided) "In the shadow of the Israel-Palestine conflict, external actors, particularly Iran, are exacerbating tensions. Iran's covert support for extremist groups shows its intent to destabilize the region, disregarding the catastrophic impact on both Israeli and Palestinian civilians."*

We decided to **not equate Hamas and Palestine** and therefore to **tag bias against Hamas as BIAS AGAINST OTHERS**.

Common clues of bias against Hamas we identified include: referring to it and its members with negative terms such terrorists/ murderers, equating it to ISIS, dehumanizing them e.g. considering them as 'animals', 'monsters', adopting a narrative giving them full responsibility for the conflict or casualties on either side, spreading false information about their actions to depict as brutal, disorganized, weak.

Ex. (B02-8683) "Hamas is worse than ISIS" Click to listen to my interview on BBC World 

Ex. (B01-608) YOU CAN'T APPEASE EVIL': New York businessman explains how the barbaric attacks against Israeli civilians pushed his family to he and his family to raise awareness of Hamas' crimes against humanity.

<https://trib.al/UJtFISO>:=<https://www.foxnews.com/world/family-fights-back-response-anti-israel-protests-cann>

## Unclear

Tag as UNCLEAR those texts:

- **Lacking sufficient context** to:
  - interpret whether the text is biased or to determine who the bias refers to  
E.g. (B02-346) "Shameful" - likely bias, but we don't know who this was referred to (Israel/Hamas/Palestinians/Arabs/Jews...)
  - resolve references and link the text to the topic.


Ex. (provided) "Recent developments in the Middle East have seen an increase in hostilities. The situation in the region is complex, with various factors contributing to the current state of affairs. The international community remains divided on the issue."

- Containing **spans in a language that the annotator does not speak** and therefore cannot judge

Ex. (B02-338) Poochta Hai Bharat LIVE: Israel Air Force ने मचा दी तबाही  
LIVE|Israel-Palestine conflict | Netanyahu . . . #poochtahaibharatlive #israelpalestine  
#worldwar #netanyahu #hamasvsisrael #internationalnews #rbharatlive #airstrike  
#pmmodi #hamas #worldnews #worldwar3 #latestnews #palestine #israel #india

- Very **short texts**, e.g. titles that were potentially accompanying links to other media.
- When the **annotator feels they are lacking sufficient knowledge** or evidence to judge the factuality of an event that is presented as factual or non factual.



For texts expressing positive bias towards an entity, we introduce the temporary label BIAS FOR. We then mapped this back to 'Unclear' before submission.

Ex. (B01-544) *"They were very gracious, this must be said." One of the Israeli captives released by Hamas on Monday has been talking about her experience* 

## Not Applicable

Tag as NOT APPLICABLE texts that are **not about the entities relevant to this task** or not related to the conflict.

*Example (supplied) "In other news, the annual technology conference in Tel Aviv has unveiled groundbreaking advancements in cybersecurity. Industry leaders from around the globe gathered to showcase innovations that promise to shape the future of digital security."*

Ex. (B01-29)  *Singer The Weeknd just donated thousands of laptops to more than 1,000 students in need! The artist also donated \$2.5 million to Gaza last month.*   
(via Variety)

Also use this tag when **texts are only fragments**, not intelligible or consists only of links or hashtags

Ex. (B02-1145) *BREAKING...*

## Task

For this task, you will read a text in the annotation spreadsheet and:

- consider whether the reporter expresses any bias in it and who it targets
- assign the corresponding label from the drop-down menu in the bias column

Fact-checking is allowed, but not mandatory. If unsure about the factuality of an event or information reported that might affect bias, you can reverse on 'Unclear'. We recommend consulting moderate sources, and sources from different sides in the conflict to make more informed decisions.

English MT	Annotator ID	Bias	Propaganda	Comments
Snap Wave Production to come up with Freelance journalism & news analysis Youtube channel for impartial analysis on happening around Nation . Dr.Syed Rizwan Ahmed is a socio-religious-legal-political_ commentator known for his candid, frank, bold, nationalist views. For Enquiry :- Facetofacelucknow@gmail.com				
<p>🔴 LIVE: Israel says it is 'at war' after Hamas launches unprecedented military operation in response to desecration of Al-Aqsa Mosque and settler violence <a href="#">1</a></p> <p>In an interview with Mark Regev, Senior Adviser to Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu, Mehdi Hasan asks hard hitting questions, pointing out the various inaccuracies and disinformation promulgated by IDF on Twitter. <a href="#">#etribune</a> <a href="#">#Israel</a> <a href="#">#Hamas</a> <a href="#">#Palestine</a> <a href="#">#Calendar</a> <a href="#">#IDF</a> <a href="#">#Tweets</a> <a href="#">#MehdiHasan</a> <a href="#">#MarkRegev</a></p> <p>Watch IDF Spokesperson RAdm. Daniel Hagari walk through one of Hamas' subterranean terrorist tunnels — only to exit in Gaza's Rantisi hospital on the other side. Inside these tunnels, Hamas terrorists hide, operate and hold Israeli hostages against their will Israel Defense Forces <a href="#">דובר צה"ל</a> IDF Spokesperson</p> <p>An extraordinary Arab-Islamic summit has accused Israel of crimes against Palestinians and demanded an immediate end to military operations in Gaza. Leaders met in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, this weekend as the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Arab League summits - set to take place separately in the kingdom this weekend - combined to address the war in Gaza. The summit condemned "Israeli aggression on the Gaza Strip, war crimes and barbaric and inhumane massacres by the occupation government" in its final communique. The summit also rejected Israel's justification of self-defense for its military response to the Oct. 7 attack by Hamas that killed close to 1,200 people. "We are facing a humanitarian catastrophe that proves the failure of the Security Council and the international community to put an end to the flagrant Israeli violations of international laws," Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman told the summit Saturday. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas said Palestinians are facing a "genocidal war" and called on the United States to end Israeli "aggression". Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi urged Islamic countries to impose oil and goods sanctions on Israel and said Islamic governments should designate</p>	1	Biased against Israel	propaganda	

Unbiased
Biased against Palestine
Biased against Israel
Biased against both Palestine and Israel
Biased against others
Unclear
Not Applicable

## How to annotate?

- **Read the complete text**, including #hashtags and links which might contain cues to assess bias
- Consider carefully whether:
  - **Words convey bias**: e.g. loaded, controversial
  - **Reported facts convey bias**: e.g. non-factual facts, not justifiable factuality commitment (supporting or disproving information)
  - **Narrative conveys bias**: e.g. one-sided presentation of events, omissions
- Consider whether the texts contains **quotations** and how these are introduced - they might contain cues of the reporter's stance
- Before assigning the label, think about what would you possibly write in the Comment column to **justify the decision** to a reader. *Why is this text biased/not biased/...? What terms or considerations led to the decision?* (this helps ensuring annotators make more grounded decisions, similar to asking in prompts LLMs to explain their reasoning)

## Possible test questions for annotators

- **Could you rewrite the text to make it more neutral?**
  - YES, I would change words -> likely biased
  - YES, I would change how the information/facts are presented -> likely biased (and propaganda)
  - YES, The text seems neutral, but what is being reported seems really one-sided -> this might be propaganda)
  - NO -> likely unbiased
- **Reading this text, could you tell who the reporter supports from the parties involved in the conflict?**

- YES -> this is likely biased
- NO -> this is likely unbiased or unclear
- **Would you still consider this biased/unbiased if the original text was in Arabic or in Hebrew?**

The text source language (e.g. Hebrew or Arabic) as well as links in the text that identify which news provider the text was taken from (e.g. Al Jazeera) can influence the perception of bias. We considered removing access to the source language not to influence annotators, however, we found it beneficial to interpret the text and the references in it.

  - NO -> then you are probably influenced by the source language in the interpretation of the text. Try to consider the text only and not who wrote it.
- **Is the text humanizing/dehumanizing civilians and/or soldiers from one side? Does the text aims at making an emotional connection with one side?**
  - YES -> this is likely also propaganda

## References

Spinde, Timo, et al. "What do Twitter comments tell about news article bias? Assessing the impact of news article bias on its perception on Twitter." *Online Social Networks and Media* 37 (2023): 100264.

Recasens, Marta, Cristian Danescu-Niculescu-Mizil, and Dan Jurafsky. "Linguistic models for analyzing and detecting biased language." *Proceedings of the 51st annual meeting of the Association for Computational Linguistics (volume 1: long papers)*. 2013.

## Appendix

### Guidelines dev process

The guidelines for bias and propaganda annotation were developed through a structured iterative process.

1. **Getting familiar with task and agreement baseline:**
  - a. Initially, each contributor independently read established definitions of "Bias" and "Propaganda".
  - b. Following this, each annotator independently examined and annotated a uniform set of 20 examples from the dataset, recording any queries or comments on particularly challenging or ambiguous examples.
2. **Guidelines development and training:**
  - a. Following this, a preliminary version of the guidelines was drafted and an Q&A document was created (this is attached here in the Appendix). The Q&A document functioned as a forum for discussion and clarification of corner cases, thus facilitating consensus.
  - b. Annotators worked on the Main tab of the data, annotating the required 1800 texts one-way according to the guidelines, recording hard cases in the Q&A document and discussing hard cases.

- c. Based on these discussions, decisions were made regarding which inquiries required updates to the guidelines and which clarifications should be incorporated into the guidelines for the explanation of specific cases.
3. **Calibration** (planned but not performed for logistic constraints):
  - a. Annotators independently annotate a second set of the dataset to determine IAA.
  - b. Discuss disagreement
4. **IAA**:
  - a. Annotators annotated independently 200 texts from the IAA section.

## ChatGPT as annotator - Early experiments

We experimented with ChatGPT to support the annotation on the MAIN tab only.

- Pre-tagging connotated words in the texts, to raise annotator awareness
- Adding on the side generated bias and propaganda labels as a reference to annotators and to allow identifying disagreement for a potential calibration step (when the single human annotator and the LLM annotation differed). For this we instructed the LLM with the tagset and simplified guidelines.

Results were deemed only partially useful by the annotators, since the LLM made lots of mistakes in both tasks. More experimentation would be needed to make this a valuable contribution to the annotation.

## Recommendations

Bias annotation proved to be a very complex and rather subjective task. We had only one month of part-time work to develop the guidelines and complete the annotation, thus we could not put into place all measures we would ideally implement to develop sound and detailed guidelines and to better train annotators.

Recommendations for developing Guidelines and Annotation:

- Annotate N-way, with N being large, in order to derive a degree or confidence in each label
- Large and diverse pool of annotators
- Run several rounds of inter-annotator agreements and alignment discussions
- Measure intra-annotator consistency

Task revision recommendations:

- Add labels for Positive bias ('bias for') or structure annotation with:
  - Bias presence: yes/no/unclear
  - Direction: positive/negative
  - Target: Israel/Palestine/others/unclear (multiple selection possible)
  - (optional) Intensity: mild/medium/strong
- Allow to label bias on multiple layers to account for different voices in the text:
  - Reporter
  - Quoted sources



## Data quality considerations

Working on the task, we observed some issues with the data:

- Lack of context
  - Not enough context, some are titles or just quotations, so not clear how they are framed
- Translation limitations
  - we consider connotated language impossible to be faithfully translatable, especially by an automatic translation model, thus the resulting annotation suffers from this intermediate step that likely changed the connotation and perception of the texts
- Unclear type of texts
  - some are news, but some look like blogs or social media, they should be separate in the task or labeled since they seem rather different in purpose, audience and expectations. This seems the case especially for determining a propaganda intent, with some posts being ok if expressing a personal viewpoint, but less so in a news context

## [Q&A discussed examples](#)

Please note that the linked document is mostly unedited and serves as a platform for annotators to discuss and think about examples. The resolution has either been reached by discussion within the document or in calls between the team members. Decisions are reflected here in the guidelines.