



Written by [Angeline Tan](#) on November 17, 2023

Israel “Losing PR War,” Opposition Leader Says Netanyahu Must Go

Marc Owen Jones, associate professor of Middle East Studies at Hamad bin Khalifa University, has slammed the Israeli government for spreading “preposterous” and “increasingly wild” disinformation online, amid its faltering control of the narrative regarding its war on Hamas in Gaza.

In a piece for the Daily Beast, Jones singled out a November 11 video posted by the Israeli Foreign Ministry’s Arabic-language account on X depicting a “Palestinian nurse” condemning Hamas for taking over the al-Shifa hospital in Gaza.

“Everything about it smacked of high school theater — from the botched accent that sounded like it was straight out of an Israeli soap opera to the perfectly scripted IDF talking points rolling off her tongue,” Jones posted.

The nurse wore a “pristine white lab coat” and donned “immaculate” makeup, but no one at al-Shifa had ever seen her before, he elaborated. The video was reportedly made fun of to the extent that it was taken down after a day.

Since Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu launched a war on Gaza after the October 7 brutal Hamas attack that killed around 1,200 Israelis, public opinion in the West, sympathetic to Israel at first, has gradually become hostile toward the Netanyahu administration amid the escalating death toll in Gaza.

Recent estimates by local authorities revealed that more than 11,000 Palestinians have died in Israeli airstrikes and ground operations — including 4,500 children. Jones contended that Israel is disseminating “increasingly desperate disinformation,” hoping to “dehumanize Palestinian children” as “worth killing” since it can no longer deny killing them.

For his part, Netanyahu has maintained that Israel was not targeting civilians and slammed Hamas for using them as human shields. Moreover, Israeli supporters have [decried](#) online rumors that the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) killed their own citizens, including Nova Festival concertgoers, during the October 7 Hamas attack.

Based on the Daily Beast, Israeli “desperation is evident in a seemingly unstemmable tide of preposterous claims,” such as the “annotated and pristine copy” of Adolf Hitler’s *Mein Kampf* [allegedly](#) discovered in a child’s bedroom in Gaza on November 12.



AP Images
Benjamin Netanyahu



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A day later, IDF spokesman Daniel Hagari claimed to be in the basement of al-Rantisi Hospital in Gaza, where he said Hamas had kept some of the 200-plus Israeli hostages. Hagari's main evidence for his claim was a piece of paper with Arabic writing posted on the wall, which he described as "a guardian list, where every terrorist writes his name, and every terrorist has his own shift, guarding the people that were here."

Nonetheless, Jones insisted that the piece of paper was not a list of names but of the days of the week instead.

On November 16, during his first visit to Israel since the war between Israel and Hamas erupted last month, European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell called on Israelis to not be "consumed by rage" over the deadly Hamas attack, asserting that one act of violence should not lead to another.

While Borrell voiced his support for Israel, he called on Israeli forces to exercise restraint in their operation to eradicate Hamas in Gaza.

"I understand your rage, but let me ask you not to be consumed by rage," he said, adding that "not far from here is Gaza. One horror does not justify another."

After arriving in Israel, Borrell toured Kibbutz Be'eri, where locals were massacred by Hamas during its brutal surprise attack last month. Israeli officials have said that the Hamas group killed 130 residents of the community on October 7.

"I know what a kibbutz means for the Israelis," the EU official elaborated, alluding to his own time living on a kibbutz, which is a type of a farming community, in the 1960s.

Israeli Foreign Minister Eli Cohen, who traveled to Be'eri with Borrell, reinforced his government's position that Hamas eventually bears all culpability for the Israeli victims and also for Palestinians killed in Israel's retaliatory bombings on Gaza.

"There is only one responsible for this atrocity, for the massacre of the seventh of October, for the world that started after and also the suffering of the people in Gaza — it's Hamas, which is sponsored by Iran," Cohen said.

Borrell also pledged to discuss Palestinians' plight in impending talks with the Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, as part of a four-day trip to Middle Eastern countries poised to end next Monday. Doha maintains close relations with Hamas's political leadership, and has worked to obtain the release of hostages taken by the armed terrorist group.

Additionally, on November 16, Israeli opposition leader Yair Lapid stated that Netanyahu and "extremists" supporting him must be deposed from the government.

Lapid, the leader of the Yesh Atid ("There Is a Future") party, who briefly served as the Israeli prime minister in 2022, posted on X that replacing Netanyahu would permit Israel to set up a broad and stable coalition in Parliament, led by Netanyahu's Likud ("Consolidation") party. Together with its minor right-wing partners, Likud presently dominates 64 out of 120 seats in parliament.

"The time has come — we need to establish a national reconstruction government. Likud will lead it, Netanyahu and the extremists will be replaced, over 90 members of the Knesset will be partners in the coalition for healing and reconnection," Lapid recommended.

The politician rebuffed worries that now was not the time to replace Netanyahu amid the present crisis in Gaza.



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“I hear those saying this is not the time. We waited 40 days, there is no more time. What we need now is a government that will deal with nothing other than security and the economy,” Lapid posited, highlighting statements he made during a televised speech on November 15.

“The weak link is the government, and especially the prime minister. The coalition funds continue to flow, the treatment of the evacuees and the injured is a disgraceful failure, no one bothers to close the unnecessary government offices, the advocacy is an unfolding disaster,” the politician had declared on November 15 in his broadcasted address.

The beleaguered Netanyahu has faced rising criticism both at home and abroad over various matters, ranging from Israel’s heavy-handed approach to Gaza to permitting the Hamas attack to occur in the first place. Such rising criticism of Netanyahu has been further worsened by contentious comments from Netanyahu himself and his cabinet.

Last month, for example, Netanyahu made a failed effort to blame the Hamas attack on the failure of Israeli intelligence, claiming he was not warned of it in time. Subsequently, the Israeli leader had to apologize and retract his statements. Last week, Heritage Minister Amichai Eliyahu suggested nuking Gaza, which led to widespread criticism and Eliyahu’s suspension.

Meanwhile, Bloomberg reported on November 15 that the U.S. Department of Defense has purportedly increased arms deliveries to Israel without making any public declarations, positing that deliveries of artillery shells, which allegedly feature high on Israel’s wish list, are still going on notwithstanding objections by dozens of relief organizations.

For decades, the United States has been Israel’s closest ally and key arms supplier. After the October 7 Hamas attack on Israel, Washington rushed to help Israel, supplying it with Iron Dome air-defense missiles and smart bombs.

Quoting an internal Defense Department list dated late October, Bloomberg claimed that the Pentagon had been tapping into domestic supplies to provide Israel with 36,000 rounds of 30mm cannon ammunition and around 2,000 Hellfire laser-guided missiles for the AH-64 Apache attack helicopter.

Additionally, Israel reportedly asked for 200 armor-piercing Switchblade 600 strike drones, which the U.S. military does not have in its stocks.

The Defense Department said in a statement that it was “leveraging several avenues — from internal stocks to US industry channels — to ensure Israel has the means to defend itself.” Officials added that “this security assistance continues to arrive on a near-daily basis.”

Another report published on November 15 divulged that the U.S. Defense Department has failed its sixth annual independent audit, having been unable to supply auditors with ample financial data for their study.

The overall results of the audit took into consideration 29 component audits, of which 18 also failed with disclaimers of opinion. Only seven components received “unqualified opinions,” the most desirable rating, while another one obtained a “qualified opinion.”

Pentagon Chief Financial Officer Michael McCord tried to portray the audit results optimistically, declaring in a press release accompanying the report that his department was “making progress toward the goal of a clean audit.”

McCord also admitted in a call with reporters that the Pentagon had not expected to pass the audit, but maintained it was trying to address its balance of funds with the Treasury Department. The officer also



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hailed the use of automated programs for mechanical tasks, stating that “bots” had conserved 600,000 hours of work between the Navy and Air Force alone, alleging that the Pentagon had conducted a comprehensive inventory of its stockpiles while providing billions of dollars in military aid to Ukraine.

Notably, the Pentagon remains the only Cabinet-level department never to have obtained a clean financial bill of health. With \$3.8 trillion in assets, \$4 trillion in liabilities, and little meaningful oversight, the potential for fraudulence is huge, based on the Government Accountability Office, which has included the department’s financial management initiatives on its “High Risk List” — a list of federal programs most vulnerable to fraud, abuse, mismanagement, and waste — for almost three decades.

OpenSecrets.org, a website that monitors political contributions, has claimed that the Pentagon utilizes over half of the U.S. discretionary budget, with most in Washington leery of reducing military spending lest they be at odds with the country’s defense industry. Defense Department staff have acknowledged “misplacing” trillions of dollars in transactions in accounting discrepancies that have never been addressed.

Efforts to curb profligate defense expenditures in Congress have repeatedly come to nought. In 2022, the Senate introduced the Audit the Pentagon Act, which would penalize any department of the military that fails its annual audit by compelling it to forfeit one percent of its budget, following the Defense Department’s failure to account for more than half of its assets. However, this Act never made it to the floor for a vote.



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