

Venice Film Festival: *Naza* exposes the savage machinery of war deployed by Israel against defenceless Palestinian civilians

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Naza, a documentary film by Israeli directors Yuval Abraham and Rachel Szor, won the Special Jury Prize at this year's Venice Film Festival. The film features interviews with two dozen members of the Israeli military outlining the AI systems and protocols used by Israel to target and kill civilians in Gaza. Its title, *Naza*, is a cynical acronym the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) uses as shorthand for the civilian casualties it expects will result from its bombing and assassination terror.

Following a showing of *Naza* in Venice earlier last week, the audience stood and applauded for over 24 minutes, a response exceeding the record 22-minute-long ovation accorded *The Voice of Hind Rajab* at last year's festival.

Abraham and Szor are two of the four directors of *No Other Land*, which won the 2025 best documentary feature academy award and depicts the Israeli government's efforts to force Palestinians from their homes in the southern West Bank.

Attendees at the closing ceremony of the Venice festival on Saturday evening once again applauded loudly and at length as Abraham and Szor accepted their award. Addressing the audience Abraham declared:

It's certainly not easy for us to be here. I'm thinking of all the people, the Israeli politicians [who] are attacking, this film, the journalists attacking it without even having seen it... The reality is that since this film began, in the space of these 10 days, the Israelis have killed at least six children, a three-year-old girl in a school, two sisters at home who were sleeping.

The review of the film in Germany's *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, was headlined "Wir töten diese Kinder absichtlich" ("We deliberately kill these children").

In his Venice remarks, Abraham declared that the actions of the Israeli intelligence forces backed by the government in Tel Aviv was aimed at "the dehumanization of the Palestinians." He went on to denounce the over 200 journalists who had been killed in Gaza by Israel and declared:

We believe that denying a crime causes [it] to be perpetrated, and that's why it's important for us that the Israelis see this film.

The reaction of the Zionist regime to the exposure of some of its massive and historic crimes was predictably apoplectic. Its culture minister Miki Zohar called for the Israeli co-directors of *Naza* to be stripped of their citizenship on grounds of "treason against the state."

On social media, Zohar thuggishly asserted he had asked the authorities "to investigate how the materials were obtained, who is behind them, and whether in the process of obtaining or publishing them, actions were taken that amount to aiding the enemy during wartime."

Benjamin Netanyahu, Itamar Ben-Gvir and other fascist officials made similarly threatening comments. The chief of general staff of the Israeli military claimed the film was "based on blood libels, deliberate distortions of reality and grave, false accusations against IDF soldiers and commanders." He threatened legal action.

Naza was shot in secrecy at night on rooftops in Tel Aviv and features interviews with 24 former members of the IDF, including data analysts, drone operators and snipers. Taken together with other footage, their testimonies reveal the nature of the computerised systems behind Israel's calculated mass killing of Palestinian civilians in Gaza.

Unlike *The Voice of Hind Rajab*, which recreated the horrific death of a 6-year-old girl killed by Israeli military fire while attempting to flee Gaza City, *Naza* stands out for the cool, dispassionate manner of filming that concentrates on the various interview accounts.

Fearing for their safety, those interviewed remain in the shadow, their appearances and voices digitally altered. The backdrop of the roof provides an eerie overview of the city at night. The contrast with Israelis eating dinner, watching television or practising yoga in the illuminated apartments below becomes central to the film's power. Just 60 kilometres away the Israeli killing machine carries out its deadly work.

According to the film, the IDF has developed three programs—the main system, Lavender, supplemented by The Gospel (Habsora) and “Where's Daddy?”—that help identify individuals or structures targeted for attack or destruction.

The program “Where's Daddy?” monitors telephones and is designed to react to messages such as “Daddy's home.” This is the signal for action in the form of a drone or a missile aimed at wiping out an entire family—and of course any visitors or neighbours who get too close.

The IDF alleges there is human oversight over the process, but perhaps the most horrifying detail in the film is that the programs were developed with a “permitted error” rate of 15 percent. One of the interviewees refers to an expected rate of 20 percent, but the implication is that “error rates” could be even higher. In any event, the human operator is always able to blame the machine for “errors” when human collateral damage is involved.

According to those interviewed, thresholds could differ depending on the target's importance; i.e., at times, up to 500 civilian deaths were accepted as a necessary cost for taking out a Hamas leader in a single strike. The programs are not just used for targeted killings—they can also be used to destroy entire neighborhoods in northern Gaza to prevent anyone ever

returning. Reflecting on the AI programs' powers of detection and surveillance, one former soldier comments, “You feel a bit like God.”

In the course of his interviews, Abraham raises the issue of genocide taking place in Gaza. The replies are indirect, but also suggestive. One of the soldiers had visited a concentration camp in Poland and says he still considers the Nazis evil, but then states: “What am I then?” At that point, in the midst of the accounts of the Gaza horror, the directors intercut images of the minute of silence in Tel Aviv on Holocaust Remembrance Day.

While the programs depicted in the film were allegedly developed by the Israeli military, their operation is dependent on the cloud services, storage space and AI tools provided by Amazon Web Services (AWS), Google Cloud and Microsoft Azure. This means that all of these US companies are complicit in Israel's war crimes.

Proud of its military killing capacity, Israel is continually seeking to expand its operations overseas. The Israeli defence company Elbit Systems recently announced plans to set up a new plant in the German state of Sachsen-Anhalt. In a state election a week ago, the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) emerged as the party with the biggest share of votes and is now manoeuvring to take over power.

Greeting the plans to set up the Israeli weapons factory, the leader of the AfD in the state, Ulrich Siegmund, drew a link between the production of armaments, domestic security and his party's fascistic “remigration” policy. The horrific application of AI technology and other forms of advanced weaponry by the Israeli state to facilitate a genocide has implications that reach far beyond the borders of Gaza.



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