

Anti-genocide documentary *Naza* opens in the US, as Netanyahu government continues its attacks on the film

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Naza, the documentary about Israeli military homicidal violence against the Palestinian population of Gaza, has opened in the US and met with considerable success. The film, by Israeli directors Yuval Abraham and Rachel Szor, won the Special Jury Prize at this year's Venice Film Festival after electrifying audiences and receiving a record-breaking ovation at a screening.

IndieWire reported that after two weeks of release in the US, *Naza* “will cross the \$500,000 mark, an impressive accomplishment for any nonfiction film, especially one about such a hot-button, politically charged topic.”

The film features interviews with two dozen members of the Israeli military, interviewed anonymously on rooftops in Tel Aviv, who detail the AI systems and protocols by which the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) target and murder civilians in Gaza. *Naza* is an acronym in Hebrew that essentially translates to collateral damage.

According to the film, the IDF has developed various programs that help identify individuals or structures targeted for attack or destruction. The WSWWS has explained that

perhaps the most horrifying detail in the film is that the programs were developed with a “permitted error” rate [of human collateral damage] 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.

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.

The Zionist establishment and IDF officialdom have venomously attacked *Naza* and the filmmakers, accusing them of “treason” and tacitly encouraging right-wing and vigilante attacks on the co-directors Abraham and Szor, two of the four directors of the acclaimed documentary *No Other Land*.

The war criminal Netanyahu has called for an investigation into the sources featured in *Naza*. The government's attacks on the film have continuously escalated.

On Saturday, Netanyahu wrote on social media:

I demand that the chief of general staff, the head of the Shin Bet [secret service], and the attorney general launch a comprehensive investigation into the participants in the film “Naza” and prosecute them for serious information security violations, criminal libel, and harm to Israel's diplomatic and security interests.

The film presents a false, misleading, and biased narrative that defames the State of Israel and the [Israeli military] internationally, severely damaging Israel's standing.

It is entirely to the film's credit that it has produced this reaction from the fascist bandits responsible for the deaths and wounding of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians. Of course, the notion that *Naza* has “severely damaged” the Israeli government's standing, when the latter is already, along with the Trump administration, the most despised and reviled regime on the planet, is absurd.

One of the film's producers, James Wilson, denounced the “hysterical, vituperative, aggressive backlash from members of the Israeli government, Israeli politicians,” and the threats to the directors, including “threats to revoke their citizenship.”

Wilson added that for the co-directors, who have been “threatened by the political elites of [their] home country with charges of treason and defamation, it has been very difficult and stressful and horrible and scary.”

Rachel Szor told a *New York Times* podcast, “It has been intense. The response to the film has been extremely aggressive. Demonstrators outside my parents’ home were calling for us to be hanged. There has been a great deal of violence directed toward us.”

Yuval Abraham added, “We want to go back home to Israel, but we cannot go back right now. Netanyahu recently said that our film was like ballistic missiles being targeted at Israel. There is a total atmosphere of incitement. There have been so many death threats that our parents and friends are telling us not to return. They say it is not safe for us.”

Some 1,500 Israeli filmmakers and film industry figures signed a petition in late September, “We Stand with Yuval & Rachel.” It noted that in recent days, “We have witnessed an unprecedented campaign of incitement and instigation against the film’s creators. And the distance between it and the incitement to violence and physical threat to their lives is shrinking.”

The petition, signed by Ari Folman and Nadav Lapid among others, goes on

We, filmmakers, call on all who are still fighting for freedom of expression and creation to join in expressing support and solidarity with Rachel Szor and Yuval Abraham. The central role of art and journalism is to hold a mirror up to the society in which they exist, to create discourse and discussion without assumptions, even when the reality is difficult.

Also late last month, the International Documentary Association (IDA) issued a statement condemning the Israeli government’s attacks on *Naza*. The organization called on the Netanyahu regime

to withdraw its threats against filmmakers Yuval Abraham and Rachel Szor. We also call for an end to the public campaign of intimidation against them.

Since *NAZA* won the Special Jury Prize at the Venice Film Festival, senior Israeli officials have moved against its directors. The Culture Minister has accused them of treason and sought to revoke their citizenship. The Prime Minister has announced bills to revoke the citizenship of anyone who “slanders

IDF soldiers” and to raise defamation damages twentyfold.

This official rhetoric has been accompanied by a public campaign against the filmmakers. ... Israeli filmmakers and human rights groups have warned that it could lead to violence. Disagreement with a film must not become a threat to the people who made it.

In its account of *Naza*’s box office fate, *IndieWire* notes almost in passing that the film, “a blistering look at the systems the Israeli government has used to kill Palestinians, was too controversial for prominent indie studios to pick up.” Political cowardice or open support for Israel’s genocide prevented US distributors from bringing before the public a film of world-historical importance.

IndieWire observed October 11 that the self-distributed *Naza*

premiered at New York’s IFC Center last weekend, where it went on to earn more than \$125,000 over its first eight days. It then expanded to 85 theaters in 30 cities across North America, earning another \$298,240 over the three-day weekend and an estimated \$378,200 over the four-day holiday. By Monday, its domestic haul is expected to stand at \$504,074.

Pro-Zionist protests have been organized outside a few of the venues presenting the film, which has a “100 percent critics approval” on Rotten Tomatoes, the review-aggregation website for film and television.



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