

## Demonizing Smotrich and Ben Gvir: A Western Campaign to Whitewash “Israel”



From the very first day of Israel’s genocidal war on Gaza—launched on October 7, 2023—the Western media adopted a clear, direct, and overt narrative. This narrative has followed two unwavering tracks: unrelenting demonization of the Palestinian resistance on one hand, and unquestioning promotion of the Israeli narrative on the other, free of scrutiny or debate.

Across platforms, Western outlets relied on well-known strategies familiar to media professionals—chief among them, systematic selectivity. This included the deliberate choice of terminology, the use of pre-vetted, pro-Israel sources, and the suppression or distortion of events to serve the occupation’s agenda.

In doing so, the Western media not only misled public opinion but also actively worked to normalize Israel’s presence and legitimize its crimes under the pretense of “self-defense.”

With the collapse of the long-held myth of Western media independence, the blatant bias in favor of Israel’s criminal war—targeting Gaza’s women, children,

and elderly—has come to reflect the explicit directives of Western governments themselves, which remain deeply entangled in complex networks of political and economic interests.

This bias has persisted despite mounting evidence that many of Israel’s narratives are fabrications, suggesting a willful commitment to propaganda over truth.

Yet, a noticeable shift has recently emerged in Western coverage. New angles have appeared, offering limited criticism of Israeli actions in Gaza and expressing a superficial humanitarian concern for the Palestinian population, which has been subjected to starvation tactics for over 650 days.

What stands out, however, is the personalized nature of this criticism. Rather than confronting Israel as a criminal, settler-colonial entity, Western media have honed in on two scapegoats: Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich and National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir. These figures are framed as the sole architects of atrocities, obscuring the broader system of oppression and absolving the Israeli state from institutional accountability.

Given that Western media rarely operate independently—whether due to political control or financial influence—this pivot cannot be interpreted as a moral or professional awakening. Nor is it a sign of shifting political stances in Western capitals. Rather, it reflects a calculated maneuver driven by strategic interests, calibrated through a cost-benefit lens. The key question remains: what lies behind this shift in media discourse?

### A Coordinated Wave of Criticism

In July 2025 alone, a series of prominent Western outlets began deviating—albeit slightly—from their previously unwavering support for the Israeli narrative, incorporating criticisms that appear to serve as little more than symbolic gestures.

On July 24, the Associated Press reported on the widespread famine in Gaza and the tightening siege on humanitarian aid, highlighting a letter signed by more than 100 organizations urging Israel to allow the flow of food and water. The WHO Secretary-General warned of a “man-made famine” unfolding in Gaza.

On July 23, The Washington Post cited over 100 human rights organizations raising alarms over impending famine due to Israeli military actions. Two days earlier, it published an op-ed titled “In Gaza, a war with no endgame leads to a humanitarian collapse,” criticizing the chaotic distribution of aid and the deadly consequences for civilians.

In an earlier report, dated July 11, the Post condemned Israeli plans to build so-

called “humanitarian camps” resembling internment facilities. The article echoed global concerns that these proposals reflect Smotrich and Ben Gvir’s explicit calls for forced displacement.

TIME magazine, on July 23, published a piece titled “The Violent Gaza-ification of the West Bank,” warning of mounting violence and Israeli collusion with settler attacks, describing an apparent effort to turn the West Bank into “another Gaza.” The piece directly criticized the rhetoric and policies of Smotrich and Ben Gvir.

On July 22, several outlets covered a joint condemnation by 30 Western countries and the European Union, accusing Israel of “inhumane killing” of Gaza’s civilians. These governments described Tel Aviv’s aid distribution model as “dangerous and destabilizing.”

On July 19, The New Yorker published a report on the killing of Marwan Sultan, director of the Indonesian Hospital, who was killed in an Israeli airstrike in Gaza City on July 2. The article held Israel responsible and condemned the ongoing targeting of journalists and medical personnel, labeling it “systematic.”

Broadcast media followed suit. British broadcaster Piers Morgan—long seen as an unapologetic defender of Israel—publicly reversed his stance. “I can no longer resist criticizing Israel,” he said, acknowledging that Gaza is suffering mass starvation and indiscriminate killings.

Morgan condemned Smotrich and Ben Gvir’s “racist” rhetoric, described the Israeli military operation as opaque and contradictory, and even referred to Israel as a “rogue state.” On X, he asked: “When did the world decide to stand idly by and allow a rogue government to do this to civilians in Gaza, day after day?”

MSNBC’s Chris Hayes criticized Israel’s bombing of refugee camps, while Jon Stewart denounced the West’s double standards in framing Israel’s “right to self-defense.” British journalist Owen Jones launched a scathing critique of Smotrich for his suggestion to halve Gaza’s population within two years—an idea the media has largely ignored, despite its genocidal implications.

### Smotrich and Ben Gvir in the Crosshairs

Western media criticism has focused on Smotrich and Ben Gvir’s most extreme statements: calls for forced displacement, cutting off electricity and water, and razing Gaza to the ground.

Smotrich infamously said Gaza “must be completely destroyed,” and advocated for the mass expulsion of Palestinians to third countries. He called starving over two million people a “moral” act to pressure for hostage release, and vowed not to allow “even a grain of wheat” into Gaza.

Ben Gvir, no less extreme, called Palestinians near the border “human animals” and said anyone approaching—even children—should be shot in the head. He has openly promoted “voluntary migration,” expressed his wish to replace Al-Aqsa Mosque with a Jewish temple, and insisted last year that Gaza needs no aid, calling any such provision a “grave and dangerous mistake.”

Their remarks have triggered political as well as media backlash. Five countries—Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and Norway—imposed sanctions on the two ministers, denouncing their dehumanizing and inflammatory rhetoric.

### Not Outliers—Racism is the Zionist Bedrock

While Smotrich and Ben Gvir’s racism is undeniable, their views are not aberrations—they are symptomatic of the broader Israeli political spectrum. Even those seen as “moderates” have espoused similar views.

Former Defense Minister Yoav Gallant labeled Palestinians “human animals” and announced a siege that included cutting off water, electricity, food, and fuel—echoing Nazi tactics. Heritage Minister Amihai Eliyahu called for a nuclear strike on Gaza and is the son of Rabbi Shmuel Eliyahu, who forbade leasing property to Arabs and hailed the 2023 earthquake in Turkey and Syria as “divine justice.”

Knesset member Revital Gotliv also called for a nuclear attack on Gaza, posting: “Only a Middle East-shaking explosion can restore this country’s dignity... Crush Gaza mercilessly!” Former Defense Minister Benny Gantz began his 2019 election campaign by bragging about killing Palestinians and “sending Gaza back to the Stone Age.”

This same ideology traces back to figures like Matan Vilnai, who warned in 2008 that Palestinians would face a “holocaust,” and former IDF Chief of Staff Mordechai Gur, who admitted bombing four Lebanese villages indiscriminately in 1978.

From Smotrich to Ben Gvir, Gotliv to Gantz, this racist ideology stretches back to David Ben-Gurion, Israel’s founding prime minister, who famously gestured toward the forced expulsion of Palestinians from Lydd and Ramla in 1948.

### The “Gang and the Villain” Narrative

Western media—rarely driven by independent conscience—has sought to reduce Israel’s crimes to the misconduct of two extremists. Like an old Egyptian film in which a corrupt elite sacrifices one gang member to save the rest, Smotrich and Ben Gvir have become the convenient villains onto whom all blame is shifted.

This allows liberal Jews in the US and Europe to unite in condemnation of two

“bad apples,” while preserving the image of Israel as a fundamentally moral state. In this narrative, the systemic racism and violence underpinning the Zionist project is overlooked, sanitized, or ignored.

The duplicity is evident: the Board of Deputies of British Jews refused to meet Smotrich, yet had no qualms engaging with far-right Israeli figures like Ambassador Tzipi Hotovely and Diaspora Minister Amichai Chikli.

Ultimately, Western media only received the green light to criticize Israel when the stench of its crimes could no longer be masked. The horror in Gaza—images of starving children, skeletal remains—forced even the most complicit institutions to feign concern. Still, their response has been to protect Israel’s image by scapegoating two ministers and whitewashing the broader apartheid regime.

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