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People walk past an anti-Israel billboard with the chequered Keffiyeh covering the Star of David in Tehran's central Vali-Asr square. (October 2023)

Iranian Regime Deploys Slogans, Disinformation Amid Attack On Israel

6 hours ago

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Politics Conflict - Military Iran Israel

During the first three days of the attack on Israel by Hamas, Iranian officials and media have voiced slogans, wishful thinking, and disinformation in their rhetoric.

However, the ordinary citizens swiftly made it evident that they were not inclined to accept the regime's rhetoric. The public promptly ridiculed the government's poorly constructed celebration of Hamas's "victory" just hours after the attacks commenced. Many took to social media to question the government, asking, "Are you celebrating hundreds of lives lost on both sides?"

On the third day, a poorly assembled piece of disinformation on the state TV's news channel, IRINN, backfired. Many Iranians quickly pointed out that **the footage shown in the Monday morning news bulletin**, depicting Hamas militants supposedly taking Israeli army generals hostage, was actually from the conflict in Nagorno Karabakh two weeks prior, during which Azerbaijani commandos were apprehending local Armenian officials.

Sunday afternoon in a stadium in Tehran, tens of thousands reacted to the government's propaganda by telling in explicit rude terms where to shove hundreds of Palestinian flags that were hoisted around the stadium.

- 13:15 Trauma
- 13:45 **News at a Glance**
- 14:00 News (26')
- 14:30 Special Interview Series



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52,550	55,500	64,260
-0.9%	-0.6%	-0.6%

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Some observers noted that the change from polite slogans in the past about "Neither Gaza nor Lebanon" to this new sexually explicit slogan was the outcome of the Iranian government's refusal to listen to what the people want.

Off the beaten track of state-run propaganda, in an article on a slightly independent website, **reformist figure Azar Mansoori tried to explain** "Why Iranians no longer support the Palestinian resistance." She pointed out that 45 years of government propaganda promoting the "resistance" has confined support for Palestinian movements to a few state-owned media outlets. She argued that the fervent pro-Palestinian rhetoric has waned due to the government's double standards.

Mansoori argued that while the government constantly lent political and material support to the Palestinian groups, it ignored the repression of Muslims in other parts of the world.



Reformist figure Azar Mansoori

By material support, she meant billions of dollars Iran has given to groups such as Hezbollah, Hamas and Islamic Jihad. And by "elsewhere in the world," she meant

China in particular.

However, due to the intense censorship in Iran, Mansoori couldn't explicitly state that Iranians are deeply frustrated with their government for allocating funds that should have been used for their welfare to Palestinian groups recognized internationally as terrorists.

Meanwhile in an article on Etemad Online, **reformist commentator Abbas Abdi cautiously warned** the government to avoid premature decisions as "Israel and Hamas are not the only players in this war and no one knows what the future holds for them" and for Iran. "It is like a coin tossed in the air and it could flip in many ways before it finally lands."

Speaking about the gruesome nature of some of the pictures released from the first day of the attack about the way Hamas treated hostages, particularly women and children, Abdi suggested that it should have respected the rules of war, adding that Hamas's behavior could portray an image of the group that elicits hatred. He added that Israel's behavior over the years has triggered the same kind of reaction.

Abdi, who is one of a handful of reformist commentators allowed to write in the media, added that the problem of Palestine cannot be solved by use of force and a sustainable agreement is needed to end the conflict.

He also expressed the view that the attitude projected by Iran regarding the war, which includes endorsing the mistreatment of hostages and those who have been killed, or encouraging such behavior, is more detrimental to Iran than any actual war. Abdi recommended that Iranian officials' rhetoric should encompass a combination of ethical and humanitarian principles alongside national interests.

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