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The instrumentalization of terrorism in the Middle East by Israel

La instrumentalización del terrorismo en Oriente Medio por parte de Israel

L'instrumentalisation du terrorisme au Moyen-Orient par Israël

A instrumentalização do terrorismo no Oriente Médio por Israel

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ABSTRACT This article analyzes how Israel has instrumentalized the concept of terrorism from its founding in 1948 to the present, employing it as a political, military, and communicational tool to legitimize its actions and consolidate its regional hegemony. The research adopts a qualitative approach that combines discourse analysis, a literature review of academic and journalistic sources, and the study of contrasting cases. The main findings indicate that the absence of a universal definition of terrorism facilitates its manipulation, allowing Israel to reserve the term for non-state actors such as Hamas or Hezbollah, while concealing practices that various analysts classify as state terrorism. Historical cases, such as the King David Hotel bombing (1946), the Deir Yassin massacre (1948), and the Lavon Affair (1954), as well as operations in Lebanon, Syria, Iran, and Palestine, become the subject of study to identify the main trends in Israeli instrumentalization. The main limitation of the study lies in its reliance on secondary sources. The study concludes that the instrumentalization of terrorism constitutes a structural policy of Israel, articulating

intelligence, communication, and military strategy to reinforce internal cohesion, obtain external support, and justify actions that perpetuate violence in the Middle East as a means to maintain its hegemony.

Keywords: regional hegemony, state terrorism, instrumentalization of terrorism, Israel, Middle East, securitization.

RESUMEN *El presente artículo analiza cómo Israel ha instrumentalizado el concepto de terrorismo desde su fundación en 1948 hasta la actualidad, empleándolo como herramienta política, militar y comunicacional para legitimar sus acciones y consolidar su hegemonía regional. La investigación adopta un enfoque cualitativo que combina el análisis de discurso, la revisión bibliográfica de fuentes académicas y periodísticas, y el estudio de casos contrastados. Los resultados principales indican que la ausencia de una definición universal de terrorismo facilita su manipulación, permitiendo que Israel reserve el término para actores no estatales como Hamás o Hezbollah, mientras oculta prácticas que diversos analistas califican como terrorismo de Estado. Casos históricos, como el atentado al Hotel King David (1946), la masacre de Deir Yassin (1948) y el Lavon Affair (1954), así como operaciones en Líbano, Siria, Irán y Palestina se convierten en material de estudio para identificar las principales tendencias de la instrumentalización israelí. La principal limitación del estudio radica en la dependencia de fuentes secundarias. A través de lo estudiado se concluye que la instrumentalización del terrorismo constituye una política estructural de Israel, articulando inteligencia, comunicación y estrategia militar para reforzar la cohesión interna, obtener apoyo externo y justificar acciones que perpetúan la violencia en Medio Oriente como medio para perpetuar su hegemonía.*

Palabras clave: hegemonía regional, terrorismo de Estado, instrumentalización del terrorismo, Israel, Medio Oriente, securitización.

RÉSUMÉ *Cet article analyse comment Israël a instrumentalisé le concept de terrorisme depuis sa fondation en 1948 jusqu'à nos jours, l'utilisant comme outil politique, militaire et communicationnel pour légitimer ses actions et consolider son hégémonie régionale. La recherche adopte une approche qualitative combinant l'analyse du discours, une revue de la littérature académique et journalistique, et l'étude de cas contrastés. Les principaux résultats indiquent que l'absence de définition universelle du terrorisme facilite sa manipulation, permettant à Israël de réserver ce terme à des acteurs non étatiques tels que le Hamas ou le Hezbollah, tout en dissimulant des pratiques que divers analystes qualifient de terrorisme d'État. Des cas historiques, comme l'attentat à la bombe contre l'hôtel King David (1946), le massacre de Deir Yassin (1948) et l'affaire Lavon (1954), ainsi que des opérations au Liban, en Syrie, en Iran et en Palestine, sont étudiés afin d'identifier les principales tendances de l'instrumentalisation israélienne. La principale limite de cette étude réside dans son recours à des sources secondaires. L'étude conclut que l'instrumentalisation du terrorisme constitue une politique structurelle d'Israël, articulée autour des stratégies de renseignement, de communication et militaires pour renforcer la cohésion interne, obtenir un soutien extérieur et justifier des actions qui perpétuent la violence au Moyen-Orient, afin de maintenir son hégémonie.*

Mots-clés : hégémonie régionale, terrorisme d'État, instrumentalisation du terrorisme, Israël, Moyen-Orient, sécurisation.

RESUMO *Este artigo analisa como Israel instrumentalizou o conceito de terrorismo desde sua fundação em 1948 até o presente, empregando-o como ferramenta política, militar e comunicacional para legitimar suas ações e consolidar sua hegemonia regional. A pesquisa adota uma abordagem qualitativa que combina análise do discurso, revisão da literatura acadêmica e jornalística e o estudo de casos contrastantes. Os principais resultados indicam que a ausência de uma definição universal de terrorismo facilita sua manipulação, permitindo que Israel reserve o termo para atores não estatais, como o Hamas ou o Hezbollah, enquanto oculta práticas que diversos analistas classificam como terrorismo de Estado. Casos históricos, como o atentado ao Hotel King David (1946), o massacre de Deir Yassin (1948) e o Caso Lavon (1954), bem como operações no Líbano, na Síria, no Irã e na Palestina, tornam-se objeto de estudo para identificar as principais tendências na instrumentalização israelense. A principal limitação do estudo reside em sua dependência de fontes secundárias. O estudo conclui que a instrumentalização do terrorismo constitui uma política estrutural de Israel, articulando estratégias de inteligência, comunicação e militares para reforçar a coesão interna, obter apoio externo e justificar ações que perpetuam a violência no Oriente Médio como meio de manter sua hegemonia.*

Palavras-chave: hegemonia regional, terrorismo de Estado, instrumentalização do terrorismo, Israel, Oriente Médio, securitização.

INTRODUCTION

The term terrorism is often associated in Western society with radicalized groups and individuals from the Middle East. This perception largely stems from communicational and political strategies aimed at shaping public opinion, manipulating objective conditions, and legitimizing certain state actions for geopolitical purposes.

Within this framework, it is pertinent to ask: in what ways do States instrumentalize acts of violence and the concept of terrorism to advance their foreign policy agendas?

The case of Israel is particularly relevant. From the founding of the State in 1948 to present days, various events, statements, and the presence of organizations labeled as “terrorist” have been utilized to reinforce political discourse and Zionist action. Institutions such as the Institute for Intelligence and Special Operations (MOSSAD), the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), and the government itself have carried out operations that, directly or indirectly, sought to capitalize on these dynamics to promote national interests.

This process has been facilitated, first, by the support of the United States and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and second, by the social and political conditions of the Middle East, which enabled the emergence of the so-called “War on Terror”¹. This defining event of the 21st century consolidated both countries as hegemonic actors in the region.

The present article aims to analyze the principal cases of terrorism’s instrumentalization by Israel. To this end, a definition of the concept will be provided, and specific incidents linked to the Israeli State will be examined.

To advance the discussion presented in this article, the study adopts a methodological framework that emphasizes the comparative and discursive nature of terrorism as a concept. The analysis is structured around a qualitative case study approach, privileging the examination of texts, narratives, and political discourses rather than quantitative measurement. This choice responds to the central argument of the article: that terrorism is not only a set of violent practices but also a contested label shaped by cultural, political, and historical contexts.

The selection of cases follows clear criteria. First, cases and bibliography are chosen to reflect geographical diversity, incorporating both Western and non-Western perspectives in order to highlight the asymmetries in how terrorism is defined and deployed. Second, cases where terrorism has played a decisive role in Israel's interventions, public debate or policy-making are included (such as Syria, Lebanon, etc), ensuring that the analysis captures moments of discursive intensity. Finally, comparability is sought by selecting cases that illustrate contrasting ways of action by Israel, its ideological motivations and actor types (state versus non-state).

The period of study extends from 2001 to the present, beginning with the September 11 attacks, which marked a turning point in global understandings of terrorism and inaugurated the "War on Terror". Although, some cases adopted as examples of Israel's instrumentalization are from more distant dates, such as the 1940s and other relevant decades along the twentieth century.

This timeframe allows the research to encompass subsequent developments such as the rise of transnational jihadist organizations, the international intervention of States in the "War on Terror", and the evolving debates around new forms of violence. By situating the analysis within this period, the study captures both the historical rupture of 9/11, the ongoing transformations in the discourse of terrorism and its instrumentalization by States.

There have been several studies regarding securitization and instrumentalization of terrorism, as a general concept and also as a phenomenon in the Middle East. In the subject of Israel, the research "Palestine/Israel: reproduction of historic patterns" of José Abu-Tarbush Quevedo (2021) doesn't directly approach the subject of instrumentalization by its critics to the work of Jorge Ramos Tolosa; however, it does give a major context and a critical approach regarding one of Israel's most significant and lasting conflict.

The scholarship on securitization in Israel emphasizes how existential threats are discursively constructed to justify extraordinary measures. Del Sarto (2021) demonstrates that Israel's political leadership has consistently framed terrorism and sectarian identities as existential dangers, particularly in the aftermath of the Arab uprisings. This process aligns with the Copenhagen School's theory of securitization, where political actors transform political issues into matters of survival, thereby legitimizing exceptional policies. The Israeli case illustrates how securitization not only responds to insecurity but also reproduces it, creating a self-sustaining cycle of fear.

Further research highlights the instrumentalization of terrorism within Israel's securitization narrative. Nanic (2018) argues that Israel's permanent state of emergency and its portrayal of terrorism as an omnipresent threat have contributed to its impunity regarding violations of United Nations (UN) resolutions. By presenting itself as perpetually endangered, Israel has been able to justify controversial policies and evade sanctions. This instrumentalization of terrorism thus functions as a strategic discourse that consolidates Israel's position in international forums while reinforcing domestic legitimacy.

This investigation is justified due to the lack of a proper marxist research about the subject at hand, and the sole existence of studies of instrumentalization of terrorism through a western-liberal point of view. The bibliography gathering carried out by the author did not encounter enough sources studying this subject, and therefore there is a scientific loop that needs to be addressed in order to enhance the knowledge regarding the topic at hand.

The research will adopt a qualitative approach, grounded in bibliographic indexing, review of academic sources, organizational reports, journalistic articles, and documentaries. Additionally, it will employ event analysis, complemented by selected and contrasting case studies.

DEVELOPMENT

The concept of terrorism stands among the most studied and debated notions in contemporary international politics. Its characteristics, manifestations, and impacts have been subject to extensive analysis and controversy among political scientists, largely due to the absence of a universally accepted definition; an ambiguity that leaves ample room for political manipulation.

The earliest academic attempts at conceptualization date back to 1969, with the International Civil Aviation Organization. Subsequently, the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 3034 (1972)² and later Resolution 51/210 (1997) on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism. The latter defined terrorism as “criminal acts intended or calculated to provoke a state of terror in the general public or in a group of persons for political purposes”, emphasizing that such acts are unjustifiable under any political, philosophical, racial, ethnic, or other considerations.

The international debate on terrorism has increasingly focused on its instrumentalization as a political and discursive tool. Far from being a neutral concept, terrorism is often mobilized by States³, institutions, and media to legitimize certain policies, delegitimize opponents, and frame conflicts within a moral binary of “civilization versus barbarism.” This instrumental use of the term has generated significant controversy, as it reveals the power dynamics underlying its application and the asymmetries in how violence is categorized depending on the actor involved.

Scholars such as Noam Chomsky (1991) and Edward Said (1997) have underscored how terrorism is frequently defined in ways that reinforce Western geopolitical interests, while Bruce Hoffman (2006) and David Rapoport (2004) have examined its historical evolution and the cyclical patterns of its use. Meanwhile, authors like Richard Jackson (2005; 2025) have emphasized the discursive construc-

tion of terrorism, pointing out that the term itself functions as a weapon in political struggles. These contributions highlight that the debate is not merely about acts of violence, but about the strategic labeling of those acts and the consequences this has for international law, security policies, and public opinion.

In Cuban scholarship, notable contributions include those of Ph.D. Mario Padilla Torres, who examined the application of state terrorism in diverse contexts and compiled reflections in his work *The Paradox of Conceptualizing Terrorism in Multilateral Organizations* (2021). Likewise, Ph.D. María Elena Álvarez Acosta (2014; 2017; 2019) has delivered lectures and published articles offering critical conceptualizations of the phenomenon.

From a Marxist perspective, terrorism is not merely understood as a violent phenomenon but as a political-legal category that materializes relations of power. In this sense, the State is not neutral; it constitutes a condensation of force relations that organize class domination (Ávalos Tenorio, 2019) and, in contexts of settler colonialism (such as the Israeli-Palestinian case), ethnic-national domination. “Terrorism” thus operates as an ideological instrument to expand coercion, surveillance, and exceptional legality (Herrera Zúñiga, 2016).

Complementarily, securitization⁴ theory links terrorism to the political economy of imperialism: aligning allies, distributing resources and technologies, synchronizing doctrines of population control, and legitimizing forms of structural violence. Within this logic, the label “terrorism” may serve to justify territorial expropriations, demolitions, blockades, and administrative confinement, generating new modalities of accumulation and labor control. The so-called “War on Terror” has produced social consensus through fear, racism, and juridical exceptionalism, displacing class conflicts and consolidating a security order that legitimizes the hegemony of a strong State.

Accordingly, the instrumentalization of terrorism is understood here as the deliberate and conscious use of concepts and acts of violence to justify, facilitate, or legitimize political (or other) objectives by individuals, organizations, institutions, or States. Israel and its allies often reserve the term terrorism for non-state actors (such as Hamas or Hezbollah) or for States considered adversaries, such as Iran. However, various governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and scholars have characterized certain Israeli actions as state terrorism or war crimes (Isasi, 2025).

Even prior to its establishment, the Zionist movement was linked to violent practices aimed at achieving political objectives. Organizations such as Haganah⁵, Lehi, and, more prominently, Irgun⁶ carried out operations of displacement and colonization in Palestine under the British Mandate. Landmark examples include the bombing of the King David Hotel (1946)⁷ and the Deir Yassin massacre (1948)⁸ (ANRed, 2024).

Following the creation of the State in 1948, episodes such as the Lavon Affair (1954) illustrate the instrumentalization of terrorism. Israeli agents carried out attacks against civilian targets in Egypt with the aim of attributing them to the Muslim Brotherhood, thereby justifying British presence in the Suez Canal. Although the operation was exposed, in 2005 the surviving operatives were officially honored, implying a tacit recognition of state responsibility (Weiss, 2013).

In the case of Lebanon, Israel sponsored the creation of phantom groups such as the Front for the Liberation of Lebanon from Foreigners (FLLF), active between 1979 and 1983, which served as a façade for attacks against Syrian and Lebanese civilians. Likewise, the South Lebanon Army (SLA) and other Christian (or mixed) militias received logistical support from the Israel Defense Forces, facilitating the direct intervention of Israeli troops under the pretext of stabilizing the region (Cobban, 1984; Schiff & Ya'ari, 1984). These alliances culminated in episo-

des such as the Sabra and Shatila massacre (1982)⁹, perpetrated by allied militias with indirect Israeli backing.

At present, Israel reinforces the tendency to classify national liberation movements (NLMs) as “terrorist.” However, practices such as the application of the Dahiya Doctrine (which legitimizes disproportionate attacks against civilian infrastructure), the use of drones and aerial bombardments, and psychological operations such as the 2024 explosion of communication devices¹⁰ (claimed by Netanyahu’s cabinet) demonstrate the continuity of methods that may be interpreted as terrorist in nature.

Criticism of this strategy finds support in Domenico Losurdo, who in his book *Il linguaggio dell’Impero. Lessico dell’ideologia americana* (2007) argues that “the persistent and obsessive denunciation of ‘terrorism’ serves only to criminalize any form of resistance against military occupation”. In this sense, Israel’s instrumentalization of terrorism in Lebanon constitutes a paradigmatic example of how the concept is employed to legitimize military operations and consolidate regional hegemony; portraying Hezbollah and Palestinian militias as targets to justify bombings and interventions, while simultaneously supporting and creating other armed groups to facilitate its deployments in the Arab country.

Israel’s actions in Syria show similarities with the Lebanese case, though with distinct nuances. Israel relied on proxy organizations¹¹ (armed groups in Daraa and Quneitra, as well as sectors of the Druze minority in Suwaida) and on the instrumentalization of the activities of Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State (ISIS)¹². These dynamics were employed both to criticize the government of Bashar al-Assad and to justify interventions in the Golan Heights through so-called “preventive attacks”.

The Israeli strategy was primarily oriented through communicational channels, labeling the Syrian government as “terrorist” and “destabilizing”, while concealing its own acts of state terrorism. In this

regard, Israel had a clear interest in destabilizing its neighboring country, mainly due to Syria's ties with Iran, its principal political rival in the region. Among the most significant episodes were attacks on civilian infrastructure, such as the bombing of the Iranian embassy in Damascus (2024), the bombardment of the ports of Latakia and Tartus, and killings carried out by the IDF following the occupation of the Golan Heights in 2025.

Although Israeli authorities initially welcomed the rise of Ahmed al-Sharaa, they soon intervened in border regions and supported opposing Druze groups, demonstrating that Israel's interest in Syria transcends ideologies or governments and responds to geopolitical objectives linked to containing Iran and colonizing strategic regions.

In the Iranian case, Israel's instrumentalization of terrorism has manifested mainly through covert operations, targeted assassinations, and indirect support for opposition groups, with the aim of weakening Iran's nuclear and military capacity and fostering internal instability. The so-called "Operation Narnia" (2025) eliminated thirteen Iranian nuclear scientists and caused seventy civilian deaths as collateral damage (Infobae, 2025).

Direct attacks were also recorded, such as the assassination of Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran¹³ and the missile exchanges of June 13, 2025, which destroyed defense systems and affected more than ten Iranian cities, resulting in the deaths of senior military officials¹⁴. Israel framed Iran's response as "state terrorism," reinforcing its legitimizing narrative, while its own attacks were justified under the discourse of the right to self-defense.

Regarding proxy support, in January 2026 an Iranian opposition group released a video on social media publicly thanking Israeli and U.S. assistance (AJN, 2026). In addition, accusations persist of links with organizations such as Mujahideen-e-Khalq (MEK) and Jundallah, identified by Iran as instruments of external interference (Staff, 2025). Although

these operations have had limited reach due to Iran's defensive capacity, they reinforce the notion that Israel employs the label "terrorism" selectively, instrumentalizing violent actors when they serve its strategic interests.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict constitutes one of the most illustrative scenarios of Israel's instrumentalization of terrorism, where every possible measure has been applied to manipulate the concept of terrorism in order to maintain control over the occupied Palestinian territories. Since the late 1980s, Israeli special agencies are reported to have supported the emergence and strengthening of religiously oriented armed organizations, with the aim of countering secular national liberation movements. In this context, Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood began to gain influence after the First Intifada¹⁵, to the detriment of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) (Milton-Edwards, 2010).

Over time, these organizations acquired greater popularity among the Palestinian population, positioning themselves as central actors in the resistance against Israel. In 2005, Hamas came to power in the Gaza Strip, displacing Fatah and the PLO in 2006, which generated an internal schism that persisted until the Cairo negotiations in 2017 (Goberna, 2025). According to various analysts, this process formed part of an Israeli strategy to divide Palestinian forces and project internationally the image of "terrorist" groups in conflict with one another, reinforcing the narrative of insecurity and justifying territorial occupation.

There are multiple references to Netanyahu and his government permitting the entry of Qatari assets into the Gaza Strip, with the aim of strengthening Hamas and subsequently conditioning a violent outcome between the two forces (Haaretz, 2024; The Times of Israel, 2025). This was also admitted several times by the prime minister himself before his own party and journalists (RTVE Play, 2025).

On the communicational front, following the events of October 7, Israel launched one of its largest media

campaigns, focused on highlighting Hamas's "terrorist acts" against Israeli civilians. Various organizations have pointed out that this narrative served to legitimize subsequent military operations in Gaza, described by critics as disproportionate and directed against the civilian population. It has even been alleged that part of the Israeli casualties of that day may have resulted from the response of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) (SkyNews, 2025).

The United Nations (UN) and the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) have repeatedly condemned Israeli military actions in Gaza, including attacks against children, women, health facilities, and international agency headquarters, which have been interpreted as state terrorism in multiple multilateral forums¹⁶. At the same time, reports from 2025 suggest that the Israeli government armed Bedouin groups in Khan Younis and the West Bank to confront Hamas, even when some of these individuals had prior links to Al-Qaeda (Al Jazeera, 2025).

Israeli intelligence agencies (Mossad, Aman, and Shin Bet) constitute a fundamental pillar in the instrumentalization of terrorism. Through them, Israel has constructed and disseminated a narrative in which actors such as Hamas, Hezbollah, or Palestinian Islamic Jihad are classified as "terrorists". This classification allows military and diplomatic operations to be justified within the framework of the "global war on terrorism", exporting the discourse to international forums and securing support from Western allies. Thus, IDF actions in other countries are justified as "counterterrorism", when in reality these selective attacks and acts of sabotage involve violations of sovereignty and international law.

Domestically, the anti-terrorist discourse reinforces national cohesion and legitimizes strict security policies. Externally, it positions Israel as a "bastion against terrorism" in the Middle East, facilitating financial, military, and diplomatic support from the United States and Europe. In this way, the concept of terrorism becomes a strategic tool with dual use: internal control and international legitimization.

In the military sphere, the Dahiya Doctrine represents the conscious application of state terrorism. This strategy consists of massive and indiscriminate bombardment of urban areas to generate a devastating psychological impact and deter future attacks. According to Moreno (2023), the doctrine seeks to impose a rapid victory through collective terror. This doctrine has been implemented for decades, with examples found in the 2006 Lebanon War and in the current conflict in Gaza, where recent estimates indicate that more than 80% of local infrastructure has been destroyed.

Israel's communicational manipulation of terrorism is evident in the way it constructs narratives that portray its adversaries as absolute threats, while concealing its own actions under the discourse of "counterterrorism." An example of this was the international coverage after October 7, where Israeli media and their allies focused attention on Hamas's attacks against civilians, while obscuring international organizations' denunciations of the disproportionate response by the IDF (OCHA, 2023; OHCHR, 2024; Harb et al., 2024). This communicational strategy not only legitimizes the violence exercised but also shapes global perception, reinforcing the idea that Israel is a permanent victim and therefore justified in its reprisals.

In Israeli official and media discourse, these operations are presented as necessary to guarantee national security against "terrorism". The narrative transforms the devastation of entire cities into a defensive act, concealing the punitive and psychological nature of the strategy, and consolidating the idea that destruction is a legitimate means of protection.

This communicational manipulation extends to the diplomatic and international media spheres. Israel exports its narrative to multilateral forums and Western outlets, where it succeeds in establishing an equivalence between Palestinian resistance and terrorism, while its own actions are presented as legitimate defense. UN and UNRWA denunciations

of attacks on hospitals, schools, and humanitarian headquarters are minimized or relativized in official discourse, reinforcing a narrative that criminalizes any form of opposition. In this way, communication becomes a central instrument of the instrumentalization of terrorism: a symbolic field where the aggressor and the victim are redefined, ensuring political and military legitimacy for Israeli actions.

The evidence presented throughout this study demonstrates that the Israeli state apparatus coherently articulates its intelligence agencies, media campaigns, and military strategies around the manipulation of the concept of terrorism. This articulation seeks to impose its interests at the international, multilateral, and national levels, projecting an image of a victim state combating external threats.

However, behind this narrative lies what various analysts have identified as the systematic application of state terrorism against its political opponents. The discursive construction of “counterterrorism” functions as a legitimizing resource that conceals disproportionate military operations, sabotage, and violations of international law, while reinforcing internal cohesion and securing external support.

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis carried out demonstrates that Israel’s instrumentalization of terrorism does not constitute an isolated or circumstantial phenomenon, but rather a structural policy that permeates the different spheres of the State. Since its origins, the Israeli apparatus has resorted to covert operations, alliances with armed groups, media campaigns, and military doctrines to construct a narrative that legitimizes its actions and projects an image of permanent victimhood in the face of alleged terrorist threats. This articulation between intelligence, communication, and military strategy reveals a consistent pattern of manipulating the concept of terrorism to impose national and regional interests.

The cases studied in Lebanon, Syria, Iran, and Palestine show how Israel has employed both the creation of proxy groups and the criminalization of national liberation movements to justify military interventions and consolidate its hegemony. The Dahiya Doctrine and intelligence operations exemplify the deliberate application of methods that, according to various analysts, fall within the framework of state terrorism. At the same time, communicational manipulation has enabled the export of this narrative to international forums and Western media, obscuring denunciations from multilateral organizations and reinforcing the equivalence between resistance and terrorism.

Consequently, the instrumentalization of terrorism emerges as a comprehensive political resource: it serves to cohere Israeli society under a security discourse, to secure diplomatic and military support from its allies, and to legitimize actions that violate international law. The constant redefinition of who is the aggressor and who is the victim constitutes the core of this strategy, ensuring the continuity of a security order favorable to Israeli interests and perpetuating structural violence in the Middle East.

The present investigation is limited due to the sole access to open sources, diminishing its capability to achieve a broad analysis regarding the subject and the study cases selected. Also, there are several difficulties to attribute the intentionality of certain actions to some of the organizations and events displayed in this paper, as a consequence of the use of journalistic and biased sources, with both left and right-wing political points of view.

As recommendations, the actor would like to suggest to keep enhancing the investigations regarding terrorism, its concept and application as a method to achieve power goals. Its highly important that, being this a subject mostly academically approached by the western countries, and as a non-consensus in international forums, nations of the Global South (and their scholars) develop their own conceptions and interpretations of terrorism and its instrumentalization.

It would be appropriate to keep developing investigations about securitization, instrumentalization of terrorism, extraordinary policies and other similar subjects, not only in the Middle East but throughout the world, in order to be able to comprehend this processes even better. Finally, it's recommended to research even further the politics, both internal and foreign, of the State of Israel, taking notice that, as a strong regional power, most of its decisions have a regional or worldwide impact.

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NOTES

- ¹ The War on Terror is a term used to describe the global counterterrorism campaign led by the United States, launched in response to the terrorist attacks

of September 11, 2001. In its scope, expenditure, and impact on international relations, the War on Terror was comparable to the Cold War. At the same time, it was intended to represent a new phase in global political relations and has had significant consequences for security, human rights, international law, cooperation, and governance (Jackson, 2025).

² The title of Resolution 3034 is: “Measures to prevent international terrorism that endangers or takes innocent human lives, or compromises fundamental freedoms, and the study of the underlying causes of forms of terrorism and acts of violence arising from afflictions, frustration, grievances, and hopelessness, which lead some individuals to sacrifice human lives, including their own, in an attempt to bring about radical change.”

³ State Terrorism is often understood as the systematic use of violence, coercion, and fear by governments to suppress dissent, control populations, and maintain economic or geopolitical dominance (author’s personal construction based on the studies of Ph.D. María Elena Álvarez Acosta). Unlike western conventional definitions that focus on non-state actors, it is powerful states who often deploy terror against marginalized communities, both domestically and abroad, while simultaneously denying or obscuring these practices in mainstream terrorism studies.

⁴ Securitization refers to the discourse or political practice that promotes the mobilization of material and human resources with the aim of confronting subjective threats perceived as endangering the interests of a particular class or group. Beyond security understood as the protection of individuals and property within a rule-of-law framework, securitization constitutes both a rhetoric and an institutionalization of threat and danger. It leads to the implementation of measures that exceed the normal boundaries of protection, placing broad sectors of the population under surveillance and suspicion (Sarasola, 2024).

⁵ Although several authors note that the Haganah (predecessor of the IDF) opposed the terrorist me-

thods of Irgun (whose members had originally trained within the ranks of the Haganah) the author Ibrahim Hewitt challenges this assertion in his article “Turning Terrorists into ‘Heroes’” (2023).

⁶ The Irgun was formed in 1931 as a militant offshoot of the Haganah, a defense group for Zionist settlers arriving in Palestine following various incidents with the region’s native communities. Irgun’s members came primarily from Betar, aligned with the paradigm of Revisionist Zionism. Born in Odessa (then part of the Russian Empire), Zeev Jabotinsky (founder of Revisionist Zionism and Betar) was the organization’s first commander. Irgun later had other leaders, including Avraham Tehomi (also born in Odessa), Abraham Stern (born in Poland), who composed the Irgun anthem, and the Lithuanian David Raziel (ANRed, 2024).

⁷ The bombing of the King David Hotel took place on July 22, 1946, when two massive explosions devastated the southern wing, collapsing several floors and killing 91 people (including 41 Arabs, 28 Britons, and 17 Jews, among others), while leaving around 45 injured (Dikbayir, 2025).

⁸ The Deir Yassin massacre took place on April 9, 1948, when approximately 130 far-right Zionist militiamen, belonging to the paramilitary groups known as Irgun and Lehi, killed between 107 and 360 Palestinian Arabs (depending on the source), including women and children, in the village of Deir Yassin; a small community of barely 600 inhabitants located near Jerusalem (ANRed, 2024).

⁹ The Sabra and Shatila massacre was the killing of Palestinian and Lebanese refugees by the Lebanese Forces between September 16 and 18, 1982. This armed group, the military wing of the conservative Maronite Christian party known as the Lebanese Phalanges, left around 2,000 dead in those camps in southern Beirut during the country’s civil war, although the exact figures remain unknown (Montes, 2022). The IDF, which was occupying the area at the time, did not intervene in support of either side, thereby allowing the massacre to occur.

¹⁰ The explosions of beepers and other electronic devices took place between September 17 and 18, 2024. They resulted in approximately 40 deaths and more than 3,000 injuries. The State of Israel later admitted responsibility for the attack (Chutel & Sampson, 2024).

¹¹ The Sabra and Shatila massacre was the killing of Palestinian and Lebanese refugees by the Lebanese Forces between September 16 and 18, 1982. This armed group, the military wing of the conservative Maronite Christian party known as the Lebanese Phalanges, left around 2,000 dead in those camps in southern Beirut during the country's civil war, although the exact figures remain unknown (Montes, 2022). The IDF, which was occupying the area at the time, did not intervene in support of either side, thereby allowing the massacre to occur.

¹² The explosions of beepers and other electronic devices took place between September 17 and 18, 2024. They resulted in approximately 40 deaths and more than 3,000 injuries. The State of Israel later admitted responsibility for the attack (Chutel & Sampson, 2024).

¹³ Ismail Haniyeh, leader of Hamas's political wing, was killed in an explosion at his guesthouse in Tehran, the Iranian capital, on July 31, 2024. Iran and Hamas blamed Israel for the assassination (McCabe, 2024).

¹⁴ The attack initially left at least 329 injured and 78 dead, while targeting several Iranian nuclear facilities (Cubadebate, 2025). Subsequently, the exchanges of attacks continued until U.S. intervention at the end of that month.

¹⁵ The First Intifada was a popular uprising that took place on December 8, 1987, when an Israeli vehicle in Gaza caused an accident that resulted in the death of four Palestinians. In response, riots broke out in the Jabalia refugee camp in Gaza. This confrontation had repercussions throughout Palestine, where thousands of demonstrators clashed with the Israeli army using sticks and stones, while the latter responded with rifle fire (Hawaleshka, 2023).

¹⁶ In total, Israel's campaign has killed more than 67,000 Palestinians and injured nearly 170,000, according to the Gaza Ministry of Health. More than 40,000 of the injured suffer from irreversible conditions, according to the World Health Organization (Frankel, 2025). This is, without a clear number of the death beneath the debris in the Gaza Strip.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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