



## Managing Visibility Under Constraint: Telegram, TikTok, and the Platformization of Wartime Messaging (2023–24)

Ihab Ahmed Awais<sup>\*</sup>, Sujoud Sameeh Awais<sup>\*\*</sup>, Mohd Yahya Mohamed Ariffin<sup>\*\*\*</sup>, and Abeer Z.A. Alhossary<sup>\*\*\*\*</sup>

### Abstract

This study examines the use of digital platforms by a non-state actor during the October 2023–January 2024 war in Gaza, analyzing 369 media outputs produced over a 100-day period. Using a mixed-methods design that combines quantitative content analysis with qualitative thematic coding, the study maps how platform-specific affordances shaped content formats, distribution patterns, and audience targeting across different phases of the conflict. The findings show a consistent reliance on short-form video, particularly on Telegram and TikTok, alongside platform-specific messaging strategies for domestic, adversarial, and international audiences. From a media-management perspective, the analysis highlights how digital platforms functioned as distribution infrastructures, allowing communication activities to scale under conditions of material and regulatory constraint. Rather than evaluating the political claims advanced in the messages themselves, the study focuses on organizational logics, platform strategies, and attention economies that structured wartime visibility. The article contributes to scholarship on platform governance, strategic communication, and the political economy of digital media in conflict settings.

### Introduction

The media has become a battleground for shaping public opinion, mobilizing support, and influencing narratives in modern conflicts, a dynamic observed in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. On October 7, 2023,

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<sup>\*</sup> Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Leadership and Management, Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM), Nilai, Malaysia.

<sup>\*\*</sup> Communication researcher and holds a PhD in Communication Studies from Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM), Nilai, Malaysia.

<sup>\*\*\*</sup> Professor, Faculty of Leadership and Management, Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM), Nilai, Malaysia.

<sup>\*\*\*\*</sup> Lecturer, Faculty of Media and Humanities, University College of Applied Sciences (UCAS), Gaza, Palestine.



Hamas launched an operation called Tufan Al-Aqsa (Al-Aqsa Flood), in which Hamas breached the barrier system constructed by Israel around Gaza, which has been described by human rights organizations as part of a broader regime of separation and control. For the global media, it was also recognized as the 2023 Gaza War, highlighting the transformative power of digital platforms in contemporary conflict, unlike earlier phases of the conflict, where state actors had controlled media narratives. Non-state factions, such as Hamas, have increasingly used social media strategically to challenge traditional power imbalances (El-Zein and Abusalem 2015). This shift reflects broader patterns in conflict communication, where cyberspace serves as both a strategic tool to amplify protests, document crimes, and foster global solidarity, and a strategic arena (Mohyidin 2023). For Hamas, whose media operations evolved from grassroots propaganda to a sophisticated digital apparatus, the 2023 conflict marked a turning point in utilizing real-time content to counter Israeli military and informational superiority (Patrikarakos 2023).

Historically, Palestinian media struggled to present their story internationally, often yielding ground to Israeli state-aligned publications that viewed events through a counterterrorism lens (Smith 2014). The absence of reliable Palestinian sources in past conflicts allowed Israeli perspectives to dominate, thereby worsening inequalities in global dialogue. However, platforms like Telegram, TikTok, and Instagram, Hamas has been able to circulate content outside traditional news institutions, disseminate uncensored content, including speeches by Al-Qassam Brigades spokesman Abu Obaida, footage of military operations, and captives' negotiations, and establish claims of legitimacy. This intentional shift highlights the group's adaptability in aligning its messaging with the immediacy and virality of digital media, thus reshaping its interaction with local, regional, and international audiences.

Recent research has begun to recognize the sophistication of Hamas's digital media strategies during the 2023 Gaza War. Cortellessa and Bergengruen (2023) highlight the group's decentralized, multilingual social media operations aimed at real-time audience engagement and psychological warfare. Similarly, they emphasize Hamas's increasing reliance on flexible and widely used digital platforms, such as Telegram and TikTok, to evade censorship and control the conflict narrative. However, these studies broadly describe emerging patterns rather than systematically analyzing the content, rhetorical appeals, or strategic shifts in messaging across different phases of the war.

Despite increasing scholarly interest in Hamas's media tactics, there are significant gaps in understanding how its military wing, the Al-Qassam Brigades, crafted its communication strategies during the 2023 Gaza War.



While recent studies, such as Cortellessa and Bergengruen's (2023) analysis of Hamas's post-October 7 social media campaigns, shed light on the shift towards real-time content dissemination, they primarily focus on broader regional dynamics rather than detailed, phase-specific adaptations. Majeed and Abushbak (2024) explored TikTok's role in digital activism but did not evaluate how Hamas's messaging evolved alongside battlefield developments. Earlier research, such as that by Byman and McCaleb (2023), focused on digital infrastructure and tactical innovation but overlooked how media content aligns with negotiation periods or specific audience segments. This creates a gap in understanding the evolving connection between military operations, political strategies, and the construction of digital narratives. This study aims to fill that gap by analyzing 369 media outputs from Hamas-affiliated platforms between October 7, 2023, and January 14, 2024. It employs a mixed-methods approach to examine strategic evolution, persuasive appeals, and audience targeting. Using both quantitative content analysis and qualitative thematic coding, it addresses four research questions:

- 1- How did Hamas's media tactics evolve across distinct phases of the 2023 Gaza War?
- 2- What persuasive appeals (e.g., nationalistic, religious, humanitarian) dominated Hamas's discourse during the conflict?
- 3- How did Hamas strategically align its messaging with military objectives and negotiation dynamics?
- 4- How did Hamas tailor its media discourse to target distinct audiences, including the Palestinian and the Israeli public?

Academically, this mixed-methods approach enriches the literature on asymmetric conflict communication by showing how non-state actors use digital channels to project power and weaken state narratives. The findings highlight Hamas's dual narrative strategy, which simultaneously portrays itself as a resilient resistance force and a voice of Palestinian suffering, complicating its reception abroad. Practically, the study offers valuable insights for legislators and humanitarian organizations involved in managing information warfare in conflict zones, particularly in addressing ethical issues related to platform governance and combating misinformation. Additionally, by analyzing Hamas's media model, which includes multilingual content, real-time updates, and symbolic imagery, this research provides a framework for understanding how other militant groups might adopt similar strategies, potentially influencing future conflict dynamics.

In addition to the symbolic and communicative aspects of Hamas's media outputs, this study argues that a calculated economic approach drives the group's digital strategy. By utilizing commercial, algorithm-based platforms like Telegram, TikTok, and X, Hamas effectively outsourced the



infrastructure and distribution costs of wartime communication. This platform-native method, which relies on existing networks, user engagement mechanics, and low production costs, has created a scalable and sustainable model for digital messaging. Therefore, Hamas's media operations cannot be understood solely through ideological or rhetorical lenses; they must also be viewed within a larger digital conflict economy, where algorithmic amplification, attention economies, and infrastructural outsourcing shape strategic communication. This economic perspective broadens the study of strategic wartime messaging practices by highlighting the material foundations of non-state actors' media strategies in asymmetric environments characterized by resource scarcity.

Recent developments in crisis communication research emphasize the strategic use of digital platforms to shape narratives, manage public sentiment, and respond to reputational threats in real time. Social media is no longer just a channel for message dissemination; it has become a battleground where claims of legitimacy, credibility, and influence are actively negotiated. For instance, Suteja et al. (2024) demonstrate how the skincare brand Whitelab used Twitter to confront backlash and engage directly with the public, using real-time responses to de-escalate criticism and reinforce brand trust. Similarly, Limarandani et al. (2024) show how the BIONS YouTube channel effectively employed structured communication strategies, specifically the AIDDA model, to sustain audience engagement and establish credibility in public health messaging. While these examples originate in corporate and health communication settings, they offer valuable parallels for understanding how non-state political actors, such as Hamas, use digital media to influence perceptions, respond to unfolding events, and maintain public support during armed conflict. Together, these studies emphasize the increasing importance of deliberate, audience-sensitive communication in managing narratives across various sectors and crisis scenarios.

## Literature Review

### *The Palestinian-Israeli Struggle*

The Palestinian–Israeli conflict is one of the most protracted political crises of the modern era. It is fundamentally a struggle over land, sovereignty, and self-determination rather than an ancient religious feud. Since the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 and the forced displacement of more than 700,000 Palestinians during Al-Nakba, the region has witnessed a continuing system of military occupation and settlement expansion that has reshaped the social and political landscape of historic Palestine (Chomsky and Pappé 2015; Khalidi 1997). The 1967 war deepened this imbalance, leading to the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip



and the entrenchment of what several international bodies and scholars now describe as an apartheid system (United Nations 2024; UNHCR 2021).

The asymmetry of power between a militarized occupying state and an occupied population defines both the political dynamics on the ground and the way the conflict is represented globally. Mainstream international narratives have often reflected state-centric perspectives that portray Palestinian non-state groups primarily through the lens of terrorism or instability, while overlooking the structural realities of blockade, displacement, and disenfranchisement (Panayotova and Rizova 2021). In recent years, digital platforms have become crucial spaces where Palestinians attempt to challenge these narratives and assert their political agency. Non-state actors such as Hamas have used social media to frame their struggle as one of liberation and survival rather than religious confrontation. As Panayotova and Rizova (2021) explain, new media environments enable non-state actors to circulate content outside legacy news institutions, repositioning the conflict as an anti-colonial struggle grounded in international law and human rights. Understanding Hamas's communication practices, therefore, requires situating them within this broader political framework of occupation, asymmetry, and the continuous fight for Palestinian self-determination.

#### *Gaza War (2023) "Tufan Al-Aqsa"*

The 2023 Gaza War, which Hamas dubbed (Tufan Al-Aqsa), began with an unexpected operation by Hamas's military wing, known as the Al-Qassam Brigades, on October 7, 2023. This operation was in response to decades of Israeli occupation, blockade, bombardment of Gaza, and systematic violations of Palestinian rights (Banikalef and Al-khawaldeh 2025; Westfall et al. 2023). The operation marked a turning point in the ongoing Palestinian-Israeli struggle, demonstrating a level of scope and coordination unprecedented in previous Palestinian actions. The operation on October 7 triggered a massive Israeli military campaign in the Gaza Strip, resulting in catastrophic levels of destruction and civilian casualties, a campaign that has been described by United Nations officials and international legal scholars as potentially constituting genocide (Aldabbour et al. 2024; Alhossary et al. 2024). International organizations and humanitarian bodies have documented repeated and systematic violations of international law in Gaza. Despite the numerous appeals to negotiate a ceasefire, the situation remained as fragile, characterized by continuous conflict across the Gaza Strip (United Nations 2023). The unprecedented war in Gaza has attracted global attention and condemnation due to the severe humanitarian crisis and extensive devastation, resulting in a lasting influence on the region and intensifying pre-existing tensions (Sunghay 2024).



The Gaza Strip, characterized by high population density and already confronting resource and infrastructural issues, was further devastated by the war. The humanitarian conditions worsened as Israel destroyed hospitals and essential service-providing institutions (VanRooyen 2024). The Israeli military campaign in Gaza has resulted in substantial civilian losses, according to figures reported by humanitarian organizations. Since October 7, 2023, and as of April 3, 2025, the Palestinian Ministry of Health (MoH) in Gaza reported that at least 50,523 Palestinians have been killed and 114,776 Palestinians injured (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs 2025). Several international organizations have reported that repeated attacks on residential areas contributed significantly to civilian casualties and destruction of hospitals, schools, mosques, universities and refugee camps. According to reports by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (2025), around 1.9 million Palestinians, nearly 85% of the population, have been forcibly displaced, which is even more catastrophic than the Nakba of 1948 (Alhossary, Mashharawi, and Supartono 2024). Entire neighborhoods in Gaza were reduced to rubble, creating what UN experts described as “a graveyard for children,” highlighting the severity of civilian suffering and raising urgent calls for accountability and intervention (United Nations 2024).

Within parts of the academic and activist literature, the 2023 Gaza war is situated within a longer history of Palestinian displacement and political contestation. To Hamas, the “*Tufan Al-Aqsa*” came as a response to the protracted colonial conflict rooted in the long suffering of the Palestinians’ displacement, dispossession, and apartheid (Amnesty International. 2024). The endurance of the Palestinian population amid the protracted humanitarian crisis has intensified global demands for the enforcement of international law and legal accountability (United Nations 2024).

#### *Hamas Media Network*

Hamas is acknowledged for its strategic utilization of media to advance its political and ideological objectives. The organization has undergone a marked transformation in its strategies, shifting from grassroots propaganda to an advanced digital framework (Abdelal 2016). Resistance constitutes a fundamental component in Hamas’s media narrative as a non-state actor, embodying its ideological position. The media strategy is tactical and strategic, designed to impact local and international audiences. Hamas established and funded Al-Aqsa TV to function as a key media outlet, promoting the collective consciousness of the Palestinian national identity (Awais, Awais, and Alhossary 2020; Awais et al. 2021).



Hamas has a wide-ranging and sophisticated media network comprising radio stations, television channels, websites, and social media platforms. Hamas used the platforms to disseminate its agenda, highlight its operations, and depict the Palestinian resistance against the Israeli occupation (Yehoshua and Green 2014). During *Tufan Al-Aqsa*, Hamas extensively disseminated its messages via social media to evade Israeli media limitations. It employed multilingual content to mobilize international support (Daniel Byman and McCaleb 2023). According to Cortellessa and Bergengruen (2023) the capacity of Hamas's network to customize its messaging for specific audiences has been vital in shaping public opinion and mobilizing worldwide solidarity. Dadoo (2018) examined the impact of social media on Palestinian advocacy, highlighting its role in countering Israeli narratives. Zeitzoff (2018) also examined the role of social media on conflict dynamics and how it changes in public support to influence the behavior of conflicting sides. In addition, Al-Zo'by (2019) asserted that social media communication has immense social and political consequences on the masses.

Recently, more studies have examined the impact of social media on conflict narratives. For example, Halewa (2020) analyzed Hamas's utilization of social media among Palestinian youth to emphasize its role in overcoming the barriers of conventional media and promoting its agenda. Regarding the effect of media coverage of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, Zahoor and Sadiq (2021) examined the evolution of traditional media coverage and highlighted the integration of social networking platforms into reporting methodologies. In another study, Amer (2023) illustrated Hamas's tactical use of Twitter to amplify narratives and target international audiences. Amer's analysis of the *Palinfoen* account "Hamass's English-Language Twitter" channel revealed how the group employs referential and predictive strategies to frame Palestinians as victims of Israeli aggression while depicting Israel as a 'criminal entity' (Amer 2023). By leveraging hashtags like *#IsraeliCrimes* and *#JusticeforShireen*, Hamas constructs a dual narrative: legitimizing armed-group messaging framed as 'resistance' and delegitimizing Israeli actions. In addition, Majeed and Abushbak (2024) examined the Great March of Return hashtag on Twitter and demonstrated how digital activism supports Palestinian nationalism and highlights civilian rights.

### *Theoretical Framework*

The role of social media in shaping narratives during international conflicts is complex and consequential. This study anchors its theoretical approach in two interrelated perspectives: Agenda-Setting Theory and Framing Theory. Agenda-Setting Theory, first proposed by McCombs and Shaw (1972), posits that the media influence public perception by



determining which issues receive attention and which are marginalized. In the context of the 2023 Gaza War, Hamas strategically employed social media platforms such as Telegram and TikTok to emphasize themes of legitimizing ‘resistance-oriented’ messaging portraying what the organization characterized as Israeli security breakdowns and military vulnerabilities, particularly in the immediate aftermath of October 7. Rather than asserting sustained military failure across the entire duration of the conflict, the messaging frequently highlighted specific events, such as the breach of border defenses and the capture of Israeli personnel, framing them as evidence of defensive collapse in the early phase of the war. Analyses of Hamas’s post-October 7 communication strategy note that the group deliberately circulated footage of these incidents to construct a narrative of Israeli vulnerability and to amplify their symbolic impact in the information domain (Cortellessa, 2023; Byman & McCaleb, 2023). In this sense, references to “military failure” functioned primarily as a framing device within Hamas’s own discourse rather than as an empirical assessment of battlefield outcomes over the subsequent months.. This pattern echoes findings by Awais et al. (2021), who observed that digital media increasingly surpass traditional outlets in setting public agendas during conflict.

Recent research has expanded Agenda-Setting Theory by exploring algorithmic amplification. Luo et al. (2019) argue that platform algorithms and engagement metrics now act as digital gatekeepers, shaping which content gains visibility and perceived importance. This dynamic was evident in Hamas’s media strategy, where distinct narratives were directed toward the Palestinian public, Israeli society, and international audiences across different phases of the war. Such targeted dissemination represents an evolved form of agenda-setting, enabling non-state actors to bypass institutional media filters and steer global attention (Momen 2023).

While agenda-setting determines what audiences think about, Framing Theory explains how they think about it. Drawing on Goffman (1974), framing emphasizes how presentation structures interpretation by defining problems, assigning responsibility, and suggesting solutions. In this sense, social media serves not only as a distribution tool but as a framing mechanism that constructs cognitive schemas around conflict. During Tufan Al-Aqsa, Hamas framed its operations as legitimate ‘resistance-oriented’ messaging, humanized its fighters, and depicted Palestinians as victims of state violence. These frames contrasted sharply with state-centered narratives in traditional media, offering visceral and unfiltered portrayals that provoked international sympathy and solidarity (Amer 2023).

However, digital framing is double-edged. While it democratizes information and amplifies marginalized voices, it also enables misinformation and emotional manipulation. Kuntsman and Stein (2015)



caution that viral content during crises can distort facts, inflame hostility, and deepen polarization. Thus, as Goffman suggests, frames are not neutral vessels but active constructors of reality. For researchers and policymakers, understanding how such narratives are shaped, circulated, and interpreted within real-time digital battlegrounds is critical to grasping the broader dynamics of modern warfare communication.

## Methodology

This study examines Hamas's media strategy during the first one hundred days of the 2023 Gaza War and contributes to wider debates on how digital platforms redefine modern warfare. It underscores the need for multidisciplinary approaches to understand and mitigate the weaponization of information in conflict.

### *Research Design*

To ensure methodological accuracy, the research employed a mixed-methods design combining quantitative content analysis with qualitative interpretation. The approach captured both measurable publication patterns and the deeper communicative meanings embedded within them. Following Frey et al. (2000), the analysis encompassed syntactic elements, such as words, phrases, and sentences, as well as thematic components that conveyed political or emotional significance. Content and textual analysis formed the core of the design. As Fico et al. (2008) explain, this method systematically evaluates texts to reveal recurring meanings, ideological cues, and representational strategies. It is widely used to examine diverse media outputs, including news, advertisements, television, and social media posts (Fürsich 2018). Through this process, researchers can assess how linguistic and visual choices construct narratives, disseminate ideologies, and reinforce social values (Thornborrow 2006). While this study focused on Hamas's reliance on Telegram and TikTok for real-time visual communication, comparable work on X (formerly Twitter) demonstrates similar patterns of discursive warfare. For instance, Amer (2023) analyzed 3,500 tweets from Hamas's *Palinfoen* account and showed how linguistic framing and multimedia elements (such as videos of *Al-Aqsa* clashes) were used to influence perception.

### *Sampling and Data Collection*

The dataset comprised 369 media items collected from verified digital outlets affiliated with Hamas's official or semi-official media structures. Primary sources included the Al-Qassam Brigades' official Telegram channel, the spokesman Abu Obaida channel, and the Hamas Media Office channel. Telegram served as the primary outlet for daily video updates, military statements, and press releases. TikTok operated as a secondary but influential space for short motivational clips and symbolic imagery, often



cross-posted from Telegram. Facebook pages belonging to the Hamas Media Office and Al-Aqsa TV primarily featured text announcements and graphics, while X accounts @AlQassamBrigade and @HamasInfoEn shared brief Arabic and English updates to reach international audiences. YouTube and archival channels hosted longer materials such as documentaries, press conferences, and operational footage, complementing shorter content distributed elsewhere. Each item was archived with its publication date, content type, and source link. The data were first coded in Microsoft Excel and then processed statistically. Explicit inclusion and exclusion criteria ensured that only relevant and verifiable materials were analyzed (Aziz 2011). To ensure accuracy and validity, inclusion and exclusion criteria were established, as summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: Inclusions and Exclusions for Data Selection

Category	Criteria
Inclusion Criteria	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1- Posts published by an official or semi-official Hamas-affiliated source (Al-Qassam Brigades, Abu Obaida channel, or Hamas Media Office).</li> <li>2- Content produced between 7 October 2023 and 14 January 2024.</li> <li>3- Materials in Arabic or English that focused on the war, negotiations, or humanitarian aspects connected to the conflict.</li> <li>4- Posts with identifiable metadata, including date, platform, and source.</li> <li>5- When the same post appeared on more than one platform, only the version with the earliest timestamp was retained to avoid duplication.</li> </ol>
Exclusion Criteria	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1- User-generated posts or commentary not verified as official Hamas output.</li> <li>2- Duplicate or mirrored posts that repeated identical material on multiple channels.</li> <li>3- Commentary by independent journalists or sympathisers not directly affiliated with Hamas media structures.</li> <li>4- Content unrelated to the 2023 Gaza conflict or to the organization’s media activity.</li> </ol>

As shown in Table 1, only official or semi-official media outputs were included, ensuring that all items originated from verifiable Hamas communication sources. Posts from sympathizers, general users, or third-party commentators were excluded to maintain data integrity.

*Units of Analysis and Measurement*

a- Units of analysis

The data analysis stage, also referred to as analytical measurement and counting, is a critical step in producing valid research results and forming the foundation for statistical interpretation. The unit of analysis represents the smallest element measured in the study and serves as the basic building block of the analysis (Obaid 2006). This study employed two complementary units of analysis. The natural unit included the complete



media item, covering all forms of media listed in the analytical categories such as videos, graphics, and text statements. The theme unit focused on a specific portion of content, which could consist of one or more sentences expressing a particular political, social, or economic idea. Using both levels of analysis made it possible to capture not only the general structure of each publication but also the underlying themes and meanings embedded within it.

b- Counting and measuring method

The identified analytical units served as the foundation for the statistical summaries presented in the study. The repetition method was used as the primary counting approach, recording the frequency with which each theme or category appeared across the dataset. This approach ensured that all coded variables were tracked consistently and allowed for clear quantitative comparison between categories and time periods. The analysis focused on the media output of the Al-Qassam Brigades, Hamas’s military wing, during the first 100 days of the 2023 Gaza War. To examine how messaging evolved over time, the dataset was divided into three phases, each corresponding to major developments on the ground, as summarised in Table 2. Across these phases, a total of 369 media publications were analyzed: 143 in October 2023, 87 in November, 103 in December, and 36 in the first two weeks of January 2024.

The findings indicate that media activity was highest in October, coinciding with the outbreak of hostilities in the Gaza Strip. Activity declined temporarily in November during the ceasefire period, then increased again in December as Israeli operations intensified. This temporal pattern suggests that the communication strategy observed in the dataset shifted in parallel with major military developments, increasing its output during periods of active combat and reducing it during negotiations.

Table 2: Temporal distribution of the publication media material

Phase	Dates	Description	Number of Posts
Phase I	7–31 October 2023	The initial outbreak of hostilities and the early stage of high-intensity combat.	143
Phase II	1-30 November 2023	The period of the temporary ceasefire and prisoner exchanges.	87
Phase III	1 December 2023–14 January 2024	The resumption of large-scale Israeli operations and the continuation of bombardment.	139

*Coding and Codebook*

A detailed codebook was developed to categorize all media items systematically. Each record was coded according to four key variables:

- 1- Media type (video, text, graphic, or image).



- 2- Thematic focus (e.g., strengthening ‘resistance-oriented’ messaging, praising public resilience, highlighting humanitarian aspects).
- 3- Persuasive appeal (nationalistic, religious, intimidation, humanitarian, ethical, legal, or emotional).
- 4- Geographical target (Palestinian public, Israeli public, Israeli government, allied armed groups messaging, or international audiences).

Two trained coders completed the analysis. Inter-coder reliability, calculated on a 20% random subsample ( $n = 74$ ), produced Cohen’s  $\kappa = 0.87$ , indicating strong agreement. An intra-coder reliability check conducted two weeks later yielded another 10% subsample with  $\kappa = 0.89$ , confirming internal consistency.

#### *Data Cleaning and Integrity*

After coding, the data were checked for accuracy. Totals were verified against the raw counts in the Arabic dataset. Percentages were standardized to one decimal place, and each table in the results section was recalculated to total exactly 100%. Items labeled as “mirrored,” “partial,” or “deleted” were removed from the final analysis to ensure that unique and verifiable posts remained.

#### *Ethical Considerations and Data Handling*

This study analyzes publicly accessible digital content without reproducing or embedding violent or graphic imagery. No images, videos, or links to sensitive material are included in the published article. All content was archived for analytical purposes only and coded descriptively. The study adheres to ethical guidelines for research on conflict-related media by minimizing harm, avoiding amplification of violent content, and focusing on structural and organizational communication patterns rather than promotional reproduction.

## **Results**

### *First: Evolution of Hamas’s Media Tactics Across Conflict Phases*

To address the first research question, how Hamas’s media tactics evolved across distinct phases of the 2023 Gaza War, the study analyzed the types of media content disseminated and the geographic orientation of its discourse. Tables 3 and 4 illustrate (a) the media formats employed and (b) the directional focus of messaging toward different audiences.

The analysis indicated an apparent predominance of video content, constituting (66.9%) of the total media outputs, highlighting the significance of audiovisual storytelling in Hamas’s communication strategy. This media was particularly prominent in October, the war’s early stage, when shock



value and visibility were crucial, with 92 videos circulated. Graphics increased again in December and January (especially January, when 36 graphics were published), while text statements remained stable. Static images were used sparingly (4.6%), suggesting a preference for motion-based visual engagement. This pattern indicates a deliberate alignment with the consumption behaviors of younger digital consumers, particularly on platforms such as Telegram and TikTok.

Table 3: Media Elements Used in ‘Resistance-Oriented’ media

Month	Expressive media				Total	Percentage
	Video	Statements and Texts	Image	Graphic		
October 7	92	18	9	24	143	38.7%
November	60	12	4	11	87	23.6%
December	66	16	4	17	103	27.9%
January 14	29	3	0	4	36	9.8%
Total 100 days	247	49	17	56	369	100%
Percentage	66.9%	13.4%	4.6%	15.1%	100%	

*Note: “Resistance-oriented” is used here as an analytical coding label reflecting the terminology employed in the media outputs themselves, not as an authorial characterization.*

The dominance of video content signifies a strategic shift from conventional propaganda methods, such as pamphlets, to engaging, emotionally charged multimedia. This result aligns with Patrikarakos (2023), who noted that Hamas’s growing dependence on real-time visual media enhances its visibility in the global narrative landscape. In contrast to previous campaigns that mainly utilized written manifestos (Smith 2014), the 2023 media strategy demonstrates a conscious advancement in format and frequency. The findings align with El-Zein and Abusalem (2015), who contend that digital platforms enable non-state actors to circumvent traditional gatekeeping, thus redefining narrative control in asymmetric conflicts. This strategic layering of content mirrors findings from other sectors where structured, multi-phase messaging, like the AIDDA model, enhanced audience engagement and behavioral impact (Limarandani et al. 2024).

*a- The geographical direction of the speech*

The study analyzed the geographical focus of Hamas’s media messaging during the 100-day conflict to gain insight into its strategy. The objective was to ascertain which audiences, domestic, regional, or international, were emphasized in the group’s narrative formulation. Table 4 below outlines the frequency and distribution of communications aimed at geopolitical entities, encompassing the Palestinian public, the Israeli public and government, allied resistance factions, Arab and Islamic nations, and international stakeholders. This paper demonstrates how Hamas utilized



targeted discourse within a comprehensive psychological, political, and ideological media campaign.

Table 4: The Trend of Geographical Discourse in the ‘Resistance-Oriented’ Media

Month	Palestinian Public	Israeli Public	‘Resistance - oriented’ messaging (Hezbollah, Yemen, Iraq, Syria)	Arab and Islamic Countries	International and Western Community	International Organizations and UN	Occupation Government
October	26.9%	22.8%	17.7%	3.1%	2.5%	0.9%	26.1%
November	30.1%	24.3%	8.4%	3.4%	2.5%	2.9%	28.4%
December	35.2%	24.7%	6.5%	1.5%	0.5%	0%	31.6%
January	40.1%	22.5%	3.7%	0%	1.2%	0%	32.5%
Total	30.5%	23.6%	11.9%	2.5%	1.9%	1.3%	28.3%

The Palestinian public was the most targeted audience (30.5%), followed closely by the Israeli government (28.3%) and the Israeli public (23.5%). The three audiences accounted for more than 80% of the total mentions. Communication aimed at the axis of ‘resistance-oriented’ messaging (11.9%), comprising factions in Yemen, Lebanon, Iraq, and Syria, was supportive; however, messaging directed at the Arab/Islamic world (2.5%) and international organizations (1.9%) was significantly restricted. Temporal changes were evident; in October, coinciding with the outbreak of conflict, Hamas intensified its communications to both Palestinians (141 mentions) and Israelis (119 for the home front, 137 for the government), indicating an increase in operational messaging and psychological warfare. The volume diminished in subsequent months, along with battlefield defeats and operational exhaustion.

The results illustrate a dual narrative strategy, in which content reinforced national unity among Palestinians while simultaneously exerting psychological pressure on Israeli audiences. The careful concentration of the Israeli government and public supports Zeitzoff’s (2018) assertion that digital media in war zones is frequently utilized to amplify psychological pressure and incite discontent among opponents. The limited involvement with international actors indicates a strategic internal shift, as noted by Cortellessa and Bergengruen (2023) who posited that Hamas’s new communication approach demonstrates dissatisfaction with global diplomacy and emphasizes internally constructed credibility, framed by the group itself as ‘resistance’.

In addition, Hamas’s media publication focused on the Palestinian public during the ‘*Tufan Al-Aqsa*’ to preserve the social unity and collective ‘resistance-oriented’ identity. This result is consistent with the findings of Awais et al. (2021), who found that Hamas’s media production on Al-Aqsa TV reinforces the strategy of informing the audience about political and military updates to boost Palestinian spirit and reaffirm national identity.



*b- Themes in ‘Resistance-Oriented’ Media*

The study analyzed the themes disseminated across various Hamas media platforms to understand the evolution of Hamas’s media strategies and messages during the 2023 Gaza War, as reported by *Tufan Al-Aqsa*. Table 5 shows the key narratives promoted during the 100-day study period. The results demonstrate how Hamas has adapted its narrative to accommodate operational shifts, public sentiment, and political developments.

Table 5: Themes in ‘Resistance-Oriented’ Media Discourse

Month	Strengthening Military Resistance	Humanizing ‘Resistance-oriented’ Actions	Mobilizing Masses and Governments	Threatening the Occupation and Exposing Propaganda	Praising the Palestinian Public	Strengthening Negotiation Efforts
October	30%	4.4%	7.3%	28.7%	29.6%	0%
November	22.3%	5.8%	13.1%	24.2%	25.7%	8.9%
December	31.9%	1.2%	3.7%	27.9%	30.9%	4.4%
January	32.7%	0%	6.9%	25.8%	31.7%	2.9%

As shown in Table 5, the thematic analysis of Hamas’s media output during *Tufan Al-Aqsa* reveals a dynamic interplay between narrative construction and battlefield realities. The prominence of “praising the Palestinian public” (31.7%) in January underscores Hamas’s strategic use of media as both propaganda and psychological sustenance for the besieged Palestinians. This aligns with Awais et al. (2021), who documented how Hamas’s Al-Aqsa TV historically reinforced collective identity through narratives of resilience. However, this study extends their findings by revealing how such praise intensified during Israeli ground offensives, functioning not only as a morale-building mechanism but also as a recruitment tool. That tactic was similarly observed in Amer’s (2023) analysis of Hamas’s Twitter campaigns, where praising “martyrs” stimulated youth engagement.

The escalation of “strengthening military resistance-oriented” themes (32.7%) in January correlates with Hamas’s need to project unyielding strength amid territorial losses. This mirrors Abdelal’s (2016) assertion that non-state actors leverage operational imagery to compensate for material asymmetries. Nevertheless, our data reveals a critical distinction: Hamas’s focus on military resistance peaked not during victories but during setbacks, a pattern Majeed and Abushbak (2024) attribute to “resistance performativity” in digital activism, where perceived defiance substitutes for tangible gains.

The sustained focus on “threatening the occupation and exposing propaganda” (27.9%) in December is equally significant. These efforts to delegitimize Israel resonate with Zeitzoff’s (2018) framework of asymmetric



digital propaganda, where non-state actors weaponize social media to erode adversary credibility. However, this study identifies a tactical evolution: Hamas increasingly paired threats with “evidence” (e.g., edited battlefield-related video content), a method Cortellessa (2023) notes amplifies psychological impact by blending intimidation with perceived authenticity. This duality, in which aggression is framed as “exposure,” contrasts sharply with state-led health campaigns, such as Indonesia’s use of Twitter to debunk vaccine myths through fact-based infographics (Pinariya and Yulianti 2024). Notably absent were humanitarian and legal themes (under 10%), despite their transient use during November’s ceasefire negotiations. This selective engagement reflects what Dadoo (2018) terms “calculated empathy”, a performative appeal to global audiences during tactical pauses, abandoned once hostilities resume.

*Second: Persuasive Appeals in Hamas’s Discourse*

The second research question examined the types of persuasive appeals used by Hamas’s military media. Table 6 illustrates that nationalistic appeals were the most prevalent, at 29%, followed by intimidation and threats at 21.7% and religious appeals at 19.7%. These rhetorical strategies demonstrate a calculated effort to maintain morale, ideologically rationalize acts, and apply psychological pressure on opponents.

Table 6: Persuasive Appeals in ‘Resistance-Oriented’ Media

Month	Religious Appeals	National Appeals	Humanitarian Appeals	Ethical Appeals	Legal Appeals	Intimidation and Threats	Emotional Appeals
October	21.8%	31.2%	10.6%	6.5%	1.4%	22.3%	6.2%
November	18.7%	24.5%	15.8%	9.4%	13.6%	11.5%	6.2%
December	19.6%	32.3%	10.9%	4.9%	3.8%	26.3	2.2%
January	16.4%	24.4%	11.2%	10.2%	4.1%	26.5%	7.2%
Total	19.7%	29%	12%	7.4%	5.2%	21.7%	5.2%

As shown in Table 6, nationalistic appeals peaked during the intense fighting in October and December. These appeals were employed to reinforce themes of resistance, unity, and sacrifice, a pattern that aligns with the historical role of Al-Aqsa TV and similar platforms, as noted by Awais et al. (2021). By employing such an appeal, Hamas aims to assert a unified Palestinian identity rooted in a struggle-and-resistance orientation. In addition, Hamas used religious appeals (19.7%) consistently over all months to function as a religious justification for Hamas’s behavior. The almost equal use of national themes and religious messages reflects a critique of Hamas’s integration of political and religious messages, complicating its worldwide response (Cortellessa 2023). The prominence of nationalistic appeals (29%) and intimidation-based appeals (21.7%) in this study aligns with Amer’s (2023) findings on Hamas’s Twitter discourse, where terms like ‘occupation forces’ and ‘resistance’ dominate. For example, the *Palinfoen* account’s focus on events like the killing of Shireen Abu Akleh mirrors the original study’s emphasis on humanizing Palestinian sufferings (38.6%



legitimacy narratives of ‘resistance-oriented-messaging’). Both platforms strategically amplify their themes of victimhood and heroism, though Twitter’s textual focus contrasts with Telegram/TikTok’s audiovisual immediacy.

The use of intimidation and threats is obvious in December with the escalation of military operations, functioning not only to demonstrate force but also to exhibit Israeli army domination. This strategy agrees with Cortellessa and Bergengruen’s (2023) findings that Hamas has gradually utilized digital media as an instrument of asymmetric psychological warfare. Hamas’s use of humanitarian appeals peaked in November, coinciding with the ceasefire and prisoner swap negotiations, which underscores the importance of this strategy to ensure the success of the swap. This planned utilization of emotional content aligns with Dadoo’s (2018) research on the deliberate use of social media to elicit global sympathy during humanitarian emergencies. The limited occurrence of legal appeals (5.2%) further emphasizes Hamas’s focus on emotional and identity-driven mobilization rather than institutional or rights-oriented campaigning.

*Third: Media Discourse Targeting the Palestinian Public*

The third question of the study is to examine Hamas’s media content strategy directed at the Palestinian public. The results from Tables 7 and 8 indicate a complex dual approach in which Hamas developed parallel narratives to reinforce internal solidarity while diminishing enemy morale. The media discourse directed at the Palestinian public, as outlined in Table 7, focused on themes that reinforced national identity, encouraged resilience, and justified the armed struggle.

Table 7: ‘Resistance-Oriented’ Media Discourse Directed at the Palestinian Public

Month	National Approach	Achievements and Challenges of the Resistance	Legitimacy narratives of Resistance	Emotional Appeals	Unity with the West Bank and Occupied Palestine	Religious Messages
October	18.1%	20.2%	38.3%	3.5%	7.2%	12.7%
November	16.8%	20.2%	37.1%	4.4%	8.4%	13.1%
December	21.7%	19.2%	40.9%	1.4%	3.4%	13.4%
January	18.8%	17.1%	35.9%	5.4%	10.2%	12.6%
Total	18.9%	19.6%	38.6%	3.4%	6.7%	12.8%

Messages highlighting the legitimacy narratives of resistance (38.6%), the movement’s achievements and challenges of the resistance (19.6%), and a nationalistic approach to liberation (18.9%) constituted the essence of this communication. These themes consolidated public support and portrayed ‘resistance’ as the viable path to liberation. Hamas sought to unite its supporters around a common objective and maintain internal solidarity over the extended battle by appealing to a combination of historical continuity, communal sacrifice, and moral rationale.



*Fourth: Media Discourse targeting the Israeli public*

The fourth question examines Hamas’s military media strategy directed at the Israeli public, as outlined in Table 8 below:

Table 8: ‘Resistance-Oriented’ Media Discourse Directed at the Israeli Public

Month	Failure of the Military Approach	Call for Rebellion	Denying the Official Narrative	Intimidation and Threats	Psychological Pressure	Humanizing Resistance
October	21.9%	6.2%	25.6%	24.6%	9.5%	12.2%
November	16.3%	8.5%	17.9%	19.7%	13.7%	23.9%
December	23.8%	6.4%	25.1%	17.3%	12.2%	15.2%
January	22.6%	11.1%	29.7%	25.9%	3.7%	7.4%
Total	20.6%	7.2%	23.2%	21.2%	11.3%	16.5%

In contrast to the data presented in Table 7, Table 8 shows that the media discourse aimed at the Israeli public utilized a contrasting array of strategies grounded in psychological warfare. Table 8 illustrates that Hamas focused on delegitimizing the Israeli state narrative (23.2%), delivering explicit threats (21.2%), and highlighting the ineffectiveness of Israel’s military strategy (20.6%). These communications aimed to weaken Israeli public trust in governmental leadership and military effectiveness, especially during times of intensified conflict and negotiation. By emphasizing vulnerabilities, such as operational failures, videos involving captives, and ambushes, Hamas sought to represent itself as both unpredictable and capable, to generate fear and anxiety within the Israeli public. The integration of empathetic representations of ‘resistance’ fighters and appeals for internal dissent further complicated the narrative, seeking to sway public attitudes within the opponent’s domestic arena.

Hamas’s use of dual communication techniques jointly demonstrates its dynamic utilization of digital media in asymmetric warfare (Amer 2023). Hamas’s capacity to adjust its messaging in response to changing battlefield circumstances, ceasefire negotiations, and political developments also shows a significant level of strategic media literacy. Its ability to adapt its methods aligns with Agenda-Setting Theory, which entails that media entities can affect the topics individuals consider, and their perceptions of specific issues presented in the media. Hamas successfully maintained engagement (Amer 2023), strengthened its claims of legitimacy, and applied psychological pressure in a digitally mediated arena by tailoring content to specific audiences’ emotional, political, and ideological dispositions. This aligns with Cortellessa and Bergengruen (2023), who argue that Hamas’s messaging increasingly exploits psychological operations aimed at delegitimizing the Israeli state and disrupting its social cohesion. Like Whitelab’s tailored messaging in response to public backlash, Hamas’s digital strategy demonstrates acute audience awareness. As observed in Suteja et al. (2024), brands used public apologies and narrative shifts to mitigate hostility, tactics paralleled in Hamas’s media outputs,



particularly through emotionally resonant content intended to influence both domestic solidarity and enemy morale.

*Fifth: Digital Platform Economies and Operational Sustainability*

Digital platforms have become central to the strategic media operations of both state and non-state actors. For Hamas, the 2023 Gaza War demonstrated a refined application of platform-based media management, characterized by economic efficiency, strategic segmentation, and agile content production. One of the most significant findings from this study is the dominance of short-form video content, which constituted approximately 66.9% of all media outputs. This media form, particularly prominent on platforms like TikTok and Telegram, offers a highly cost-effective alternative to traditional broadcast or satellite communications. Production typically requires minimal equipment and labor investment while yielding disproportionately high levels of engagement due to platform-specific algorithms that favor real-time, emotionally charged, or visually compelling content.

Hamas's choice of platforms also reveals a strategic understanding of affordances and user behaviors. With its encrypted channels and unmoderated distribution, Telegram served as a base for directly broadcasting battlefield footage and leader statements. Its affordances enabled the group to operate a centralized, high-frequency dissemination network with low regulatory friction. On the other hand, TikTok was utilized to tap into emotionally resonant and viral visual culture, appealing especially to younger audiences. The platform's algorithmic design, which favors high-engagement content, allowed Hamas to amplify the reach of relatively simple videos at scale, such as battlefield-related clips, symbolic imagery, or religious-nationalist messages.

These tactics point to an evolving platform economy of 'resistance', in which low-cost, high-impact media production serves as both an ideological and operational weapon. This system's economics are partly sustainable because it shifts infrastructure burdens onto the platforms, leveraging their storage, distribution, and recommendation algorithms without requiring investment in proprietary media networks. In doing so, Hamas reaches its core audiences and participates in broader media ecosystems, including mainstream and alternative news outlets that recycle and amplify platform-native content. Moreover, the dual-track strategy observed, targeting both Palestinians and Israelis, mirrors a form of platform-based segmentation, where language, tone, and platform usage patterns tailor content. This reflects a media management approach that draws from commercial practices, such as audience profiling and behavioral targeting but repurposed for ideological and tactical objectives in wartime communication.



## Discussion

The findings demonstrate that Hamas's media activity during the 2023 Gaza War followed a coordinated and deliberate pattern. Over the course of one hundred days, this dissemination of 369 verified posts revealed a structured communication plan that evolved in response to battlefield and political developments. The data indicate that digital platforms were not only tools of documentation but also instruments of influence. The dominance of video material, accounting for nearly two-thirds of all outputs, underscores the centrality of visual communication in shaping perception. In line with the Agenda-Setting Theory of McCombs and Shaw (1972), repetition and visibility appear to have determined what issues the audience viewed as most significant. The constant flow of videos depicting battlefield-related operations, leadership speeches, and symbolic gestures gave salience to the ideas of endurance, unity, and defiance. This aligns with previous findings that visual repetition can more effectively set public agendas than textual reporting in times of conflict (Entman 2007; Zeitzoff 2018). Through continuous visual exposure, the analyzed media outputs consistently reinforced a narrative framed by the group as 'resistance'.

### *Agenda-Setting and Temporal Shifts*

The results show apparent temporal variation in the salience of topics. During October, the first phase of the war, messages were dominated by visuals of surprise attacks and statements of victory, establishing 'resistance' as the leading agenda item. In November, when the temporary ceasefire and prisoner exchanges took place, humanitarian and negotiation-related content briefly displaced battlefield-related imagery. This demonstrates how the prominence of issues shifted in response to battlefield realities and media opportunities, a pattern consistent with earlier observations of agenda fluidity in wartime digital ecosystems (Kioussis and Strömbäck 2010).

By December and early January, the focus returned to armed confrontation and internal morale. The rising share of messages aimed at the Palestinian public, from 27% at the start of the conflict to 40% in the final weeks, indicates an inward shift that prioritized social cohesion over international persuasion. This progression supports the argument that agenda-setting in conflict is cyclical rather than linear and is shaped by immediate political and emotional contexts (Maxwell et al. 2014). The data also confirm agenda-setting practices evident in the dataset appear to have functioned not only to inform but also to shape emotional engagement, re-energizing its base when fatigue and devastation were at their peak.



### *Framing and Audience Differentiation*

Framing Theory (Entman 2006; Goffman 1974) helps explain how Hamas presented the same events through distinct interpretive structures for different audiences. The Palestinian public encountered frames emphasizing claims of legitimacy, sacrifice, and national identity. Approximately 39% of domestically oriented content reinforced the message that ‘resistance’ was both a moral and a political duty. These frames paralleled what Wolfsfeld (2003) calls ‘*mobilization framing*’, in which communicators link ongoing suffering to collective empowerment. Messages addressed to the Israeli audience carried contrasting frames built on doubt and fear. Content directed at Israeli audiences emphasized governmental credibility gaps and military shortcomings, and conveyed images of vulnerability. Around one-quarter of all Israeli-targeted content contradicts official narratives of control, echoing Ben-David’s (2012) findings that insurgent communication often seeks to erode public confidence rather than to win empathy.

A smaller portion of content, less than 10% was framed for international observers. These posts, which appeared mainly during the November truce, used humanitarian and ethical appeals to depict the movement as disciplined and rational. Similar framing dynamics were documented by Amer (2023) in his digital ethnography of Hamas’s Twitter activity during earlier conflicts, showing how global audiences receive different moral cues from the same events. Together, these differentiated frames suggest that Hamas’s communication was an adaptive process in which meaning was recalibrated to fit the expectations of each audience.

### *Hybrid Platform Strategy and Digital Economies*

The data also confirm that Hamas relied on a hybrid platform strategy, combining Telegram, TikTok, Facebook, X, and YouTube for specific communicative purposes. Telegram served as the primary outlet for official statements and operational videos, offering controlled access to loyal audiences. TikTok expanded reach through short, emotionally charged clips that thrived on algorithmic virality. Facebook and X were used to summarize Arabic content in shorter posts aimed at regional and international publics, while YouTube hosted longer videos, documentaries, and archived press conferences. This approach aligns with the concept of hybrid media systems, as described by Chadwick et al. (2016), where political actors blend old and new media logics to maintain their influence. By exploiting the affordances of each platform, Hamas maximized exposure while minimizing the risk of total removal. This mirrors observations by Tufekci and Wilson (2012) that networked movements utilize commercial infrastructures to compensate for limited resources. In economic terms, the



strategy transformed corporate social media networks into instruments of low-cost propaganda, creating what Byman and McCaleb (2023) refer to as a platform economy, framed by the actors themselves as ‘resistance’. From a theoretical perspective, this hybrid structure bridges the gap between Agenda-Setting Theory and Framing Theory. Agenda-setting describes how Hamas gained visibility through frequency and repetition, while framing explains how each platform customized the content’s tone and narrative. The result is a communication model where visibility itself becomes a form of strategic influence, reflecting recent studies on digital authoritarianism and non-state media warfare (Bradshaw and Howard 2019).

### *Scholarly and Practical Contributions*

The study advances the broader field of digital conflict communication by offering empirical evidence on how visibility and framing intersect in asymmetric warfare. It builds on earlier analyses of Middle Eastern media conflicts (Amer 2023) by showing that media control now relies less on material infrastructure and more on algorithmic positioning. The findings reveal that Hamas’s 2023 media campaign was not only ideological but also managerial, characterized by efficient use of digital economies, consistent messaging, and adaptation to audience feedback.

For practitioners and policymakers, the findings emphasize that platform governance during conflicts cannot depend solely on content removal. As Tufekci and Wilson (2012) argues, decentralized communication networks are resistant to top-down control, making long-term moderation strategies more crucial than reactive bans. For scholars, the study illustrates the importance of combining quantitative and qualitative methods to analyze media behavior in wartime settings. The methodological framework used here, including coding, reliability testing, and contextual interpretation, offers a replicable model for future research on digital conflicts in other regions.

### **Conclusion**

This study examined how media outputs produced by Hamas during the 2023 Gaza War contributed to the construction and circulation of narratives framed as ‘resistance.’ The dataset indicates a predominant reliance on video content (66.9%), reflecting the centrality of visual formats in wartime digital communication. This approach was adapted in response to ground developments, shifting from shock-oriented visuals early in the conflict to narratives emphasizing prisoner exchanges and the resilience of the resistance groups in later periods. The findings reveal Hamas’s calculated narrative strategy: by emphasizing military resistance (28.7%) and existential threats (27%), the communication patterns observed projected a dual representation of protection and confrontation, aimed at uniting Palestinians



under siege while undermining Israeli resolve. This pattern suggests a strategic mobilization of identity narratives rather than incidental storytelling. Praising Palestinian resilience (29.1%) functioned as a morale-sustaining mechanism for a population under bombardment, transforming collective trauma into a recruitment tool.

Geographically, Hamas's media strategy mirrored its asymmetrical warfare: 30.5% of content rallied Palestinians around 'resistance-oriented' narratives, while 40.2% targeted Israeli audiences to undermine morale, a dual-track approach that functioned simultaneously as a protective mechanism for internal mobilization and as a channel for exerting psychological pressure on adversaries. However, the near-exclusion of international bodies (less than 2% of the discourse) signals more than mere frustration with diplomacy; it may indicate a declining prioritization of multilateral engagement within the group's communication strategy. The observed communication strategy prioritized polarizing dynamics on digital platforms. This inward focus highlights a broader truth: non-state actors are increasingly viewing digital spaces not as arenas for negotiation but as battlegrounds, suggesting a reduced emphasis on diplomatic engagement in asymmetric conflicts. In addition to narrative strategy, the study highlights Hamas's economic use of digital media. By leveraging the low-cost infrastructures of platforms like Telegram and TikTok, Hamas maximized visibility while minimizing operational expenditures, an adaptive logic aligned with the economics of platform capitalism. This strategic media usage exemplifies how insurgent non-state actors strive for ideological dominance and operational sustainability in digitally mediated conflicts. Such groups co-opt attention economies to gain symbolic power, mobilize support, and maintain claims of legitimacy in prolonged warfare.

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