

# Linguistic Terrorism: Somebody Buy Israeli Politicians a Dictionary

A top-six list of the various ways Israeli officials have reinvented definitions — and types — of terrorism.

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*Likud MK Miri Regev had a fairly successful career as a wordsmith back when she was the IDF Spokesperson — before becoming even better known for calling African asylum seekers “[a cancer in Israel’s body](#).” She later [apologized](#) to cancer victims for the analogy.*

On Wednesday, Regev made a new addition to the list of insane Israeli uses of language — by herself and countless other politicians and officials — by inventing new types of terrorism.

Put simply, most terrorism involves explosions or shooting. There are exceptions, of course, but generally they do not include at least five out of the six following types of terrorism invented by Israeli officials in recent years.

6. Diplomatic terrorism. When PLO Chairman Mahmoud Abbas went to the UN to seek statehood for the Palestinians in 2012, Israel’s foreign minister was livid. In addition to calling Abbas a “a liar, a coward and a weakling,” Liberman described the PLO chairman’s UN bid as “diplomatic terrorism.” It only got stranger. “Between diplomatic terror and conventional terror,” [Liberman told](#) the entire Israeli diplomatic corps, “diplomatic terror is more serious.”

5. Economic terrorism. The BDS movement has been gaining momentum in recent years. So when the EU announced new settlement guidelines to ensure that it’s own money doesn’t end up in settlements, which it considers illegal, Israel got a little worked up. Before becoming Israel’s economy minister, Naftali Bennett served in two of Israel’s most elite reconnaissance and counter-terrorism units, so one might be tempted to give him the benefit of the doubt that he knows what terrorism is. At least [until he called](#) the EU settlement guidelines “economic terrorism.”

4. Legal terrorism. Israel is a small country and it can feel a little suffocating after a while, especially in August. So it’s no surprise that Israelis love to travel. Threatening the ability to travel of Israel’s closest thing to royalty, its army generals, would indeed be terrifying. So when seeking war crimes charges against top military officials came back en vogue following the deadly *Mavi Marmara* raid in 2009, it was only natural that the [IDF described](#) efforts to enforce international law as “legal terrorism.”

3. Gastrointestinal terrorism. Israel arrests a lot of Palestinians. Let's face it, is it entirely Israel's fault that in order to maintain an undemocratic military occupation over a foreign people for 47 years it has been forced to put [40 percent](#) of the male Palestinian population in prison? So it's no wonder that Israel has also been forced to deal with a hunger strike or two. MK Miri Regev (Likud), during discussions of how best to force-feed Palestinian prisoners, [described hunger strikes](#) as "terrorism in prison." Yup, all you have to do to become a terrorist these days is stop eating.

2. Self-inflicted terrorism. The Shin Bet puts out a yearly report about "data and trends in Palestinian terrorism." In its report on 2009, the year of Operation Cast Lead, there was one line of very confusing data. According to the Shin Bet, 15 people died in terrorist attacks in 2009, nine of them during Cast Lead. What types of attacks, you ask? According to page four of [the Shin Bet report](#): "Five civilians and soldiers were killed by high-trajectory launchings and *four soldiers were killed by friendly fire.*" Let's give them the benefit of the doubt. At least according to official Israeli logic, the soldiers were killed in the *fight against terror*, and Israel has always described attacks against soldiers as terrorism — a separate yet hugely problematic implication in and of itself. But that doesn't explain an even stranger classification that came a year later when [the Defense Ministry classified](#) as a "victim of terror" a Jewish settler rabbi who was mistakenly shot to death by an Israeli soldier who thought he was shooting at Palestinians.

1. Journalistic terrorism. When CBS's "60 Minutes" did a feature on the plight of Palestinian Christians in the Holy Land a few years ago, Israel went on a diplomatic and public relations offensive (or defensive, I suppose). Then Israeli Ambassador to the U.S. [Michael Oren led the defensive](#), trying to place the blame for the Christian exodus from the Holy Land on the Palestinians instead of on Israel. The campaign went too far on-record. But it was an off-record comment by an Israeli official that takes the cake. Speaking to *The Forward*, [the official likened](#) CBS's documentary news program to "a strategic terror attack." I'm not quite sure what that means, but its absurdity landed it the number-one spot on this list.

Those terrorists... what will they think of next!?

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