


Media Framing of the 2023 Israel-Palestine Conflict: Russia vs. U.S.

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Abstract

Purpose: This study comparatively examines how the 2023 Israel–Palestine conflict, between October 7 and 10, was framed in Russian and American media, focusing on how political orientations and national interests shaped media narratives.

Design/methodology/approach: Using qualitative content analysis, the study analyzes 539 news articles published on Ria.ru and Nytimes.com. The analysis focuses on tone, framing strategies, source selection, linguistic representation, and portrayals of conflict, actors, and possible solutions.

Findings: The findings show that Ria.ru adopted a predominantly neutral tone, provided relatively balanced coverage of Israeli and Palestinian sources, framed the conflict within a broader historical context, and emphasized diplomatic solutions such as ceasefire and a two-state resolution. In contrast, Nytimes.com demonstrated a more pro-Israeli orientation, relied more heavily on emotionally charged language, prioritized Israeli narratives and sources, and gave more limited space to Palestinian perspectives.

Research limitations/implications: The study is limited to the first four days of the conflict and to two news outlets, suggesting the need for broader and longer-term comparative research.

Practical implications: The findings show how emotional language, selective sourcing, and framing choices shape public perception of international conflict.

Originality/value: The study contributes to comparative media framing research by examining Russian and American coverage of the same conflict episode and showing how national interests and political orientations shape media narratives.

Keywords: *Media Framing, Israel-Palestine Conflict, Russian Media, American Media, News Content Analysis*

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Introduction

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict began in the late 19th century. Following World War I, Britain controlled Palestine and supported a Jewish "national home," heightening tensions between Jews and Arabs (United Nations, n.d.). In 1947, UN Resolution 181 proposed partitioning Palestine, allocating 55% to a Jewish state (Alsaafin, 2023). Israel's founding in 1948 ignited the first Arab-Israeli War, leading to significant Palestinian displacement. Although the 1993 Oslo Accords allowed for limited Palestinian self-governance in the West Bank and Gaza, military conflicts persisted (United Nations, n.d.). After Hamas won the 2006 elections and took control of Gaza in 2007, armed conflicts with Israel became frequent. On October 7, 2023, Hamas launched rocket attacks on Israeli towns, prompting Israel to declare a "complete siege" on Gaza, cutting off vital supplies (RIA, 2024b).

The Israeli–Palestinian conflict has significant global implications, prompting various studies on media coverage (Alashqar, 2024; Kamhawi, 2002; Kandil, 2009; Noakes & Wilkins, 2002; Shahzad et al., 2023; Za Warshagha et al., 2024). While emerging research is starting to explore media framing of the 2023 Israel–Hamas escalation (Asmus, 2024; Barari & Yacoub, 2024; Gondwe & Walcott, 2024; Pérez Castro, 2023; Schoones, 2024), there is still a gap in comparative cross-national studies regarding media reporting on this recent conflict phase.

The aim of this study is to comparatively analyze how the 2023 Israel–Palestine conflict (October 7–10) was framed in Russian and American media, focusing on how political orientations and national interests influenced media narratives. This specific time frame was selected because it marks the initial outbreak of the conflict, when coverage intensity and framing effects were at their peak. The analysis focuses on two prominent online news platforms—Ria.ru and Nytimes.com—which represent the distinctive journalistic cultures and political contexts of Russia and the United States. In line with this aim, the study seeks to answer the following main research question: "How do Russian and American media frame the 2023 Israel–Palestine conflict in terms of tone, framing strategies, source selection, and linguistic representation, and to what extent do these framing patterns reflect each country's political orientations and national interests?" To elaborate this overarching question, the study further examines seven sub-questions that address the tone of reporting, the use of generic and issue-specific frames, the selection of information sources, portrayals of Hamas, representations of the October 7 attack, framing of potential conflict resolutions, and the use of emotionally charged language. These dimensions provide a comprehensive framework for understanding how national interests shape media representations during international crises.

This study employs qualitative content analysis to compare media framing of the 2023 Israeli–Palestinian conflict in Russian and American outlets. It examines how media frames are influenced by government policies, geopolitical strategies, and national interests. The coding process follows established framing categories from previous research (Dimitrova & Strömbäck, 2005; Johnson & Ali, 2024; Kamhawi, 2002; Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000).

1. Media Frames

Entman (Entman, 1993, 2007), Gitlin (Gitlin, 2005), Druckman (Druckman, 2004), De Vreese (Vreese, 2005), Ardèvol-Abreu (Ardèvol-Abreu, 2015), and D'Angelo (2017) highlight that media selectively emphasize certain aspects of reality, shaping interpretations and evaluations of topics—a process known as "framing." While framing is a well-established concept in mass communication research, no universally accepted definition exists (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000, p. 94). Goffman (1986, p. 21) describes frames as "schemata of interpretation" that make meaningless aspects of scenes meaningful. Gitlin (2005, p. 7) characterizes media frames as "persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation" involving selection, emphasis, and exclusion in discourse.

Scheufele (1999, p. 106) distinguishes between media frames and individual frames. Media framing, as explained by Entman (1993, p. 52), is the process of highlighting certain elements in communication to define problems, interpret causes, evaluate morals, and suggest solutions. In contrast, individual frames serve as cognitive schemas through which individuals interpret and process information (Ardèvol-Abreu, 2015, p. 431).

Vreese (Vreese, 2005, p. 54) distinguishes between issue-specific and generic frames. Issue-specific frames are tailored to specific topics, offering detailed narratives, while generic frames are versatile and can be applied across various contexts. For instance, Neuman et al. (1992, p. 67) identified broadly applicable news frames like "Human impact," "Powerlessness," "Economics," "Moral values," and "Conflict." Semetko and Valkenburg (2000, pp. 95–96) further developed five commonly used news frames:

1. Conflict frame: Emphasizes disputes among individuals, groups, institutions, or nations.
2. Human interest frame: Centers on the human aspects of events to personalize and engage audiences.
3. Economic consequences frame: Analyzes the financial impacts of events on various entities.
4. Responsibility frame: Identifies who is accountable for an event or issue.
5. Morality frame: Contextualizes the event within religious or ethical principles.

Gerhards and Rucht (1992, p. 579) introduce Diagnostic and Prognostic frames for framing analysis. The Diagnostic frame focuses on identifying a problem and its causes, while the Prognostic frame seeks solutions and discusses potential consequences (Dimitrova & Strömbäck, 2005, p. 409). Both frames have been widely used in media content analyses, as shown by Dimitrova and Strömbäck (2005) and Kamhawi (2002).

Dimitrova and Strömbäck (2005, p. 409) outline three key frames for media conflict coverage:

1. Violence of war frame: Highlights the destructive impacts of armed conflict, detailing bombings, casualties, and injuries.

2. Anti-war protest frame: Focuses on opposition to war, featuring protestors, demonstrations, and movements against the conflict.

3. Media self-referential frame: Examines the media's role, including journalists' challenges and experiences in covering the war.

Framing research categorizes studies into those examining frames as independent or dependent variables. When treated as dependent, the focus is on factors influencing their creation or modification, such as social norms, interest groups, or political ideologies. In contrast, studies treating frames as independent variables investigate their effects on audiences (Scheufele, 1999, p. 107).

2. Existing Research on the Israeli–Palestinian Conflict

Recent studies have examined the portrayal of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in media. Evidence shows that mainstream American and Western outlets often present Israeli-centric messages and elements of orientalist discourse. Research consistently reveals an imbalance in cited sources, with an overrepresentation of Israeli perspectives (Barari & Yacoub, 2024; Kamhawi, 2002; Noakes & Wilkins, 2002; Pérez Castro, 2023). Additionally, there is a greater focus on humanizing Israeli victims compared to Palestinian casualties, despite significant discrepancies in reported death tolls (Johnson & Ali, 2024; Pérez Castro, 2023).

The representation of Palestinians in the American media has evolved over time, reflecting broader shifts in political contexts and journalistic framing practices. For example, during the intifada, Palestinians were less likely to be characterized as terrorists, violent or militants and more likely to be seen as victims. After the sign of the Oslo Accords in 1993 American media increased the use of Palestinians as sources, started to characterize the PLO as a legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and increased characterization of the Palestinian desire for self-government (Noakes & Wilkins, 2002).

Barari and Yacoub (2024) found that mainstream Israeli media during the 2023 Israel-Hamas conflict often dehumanized Palestinians while highlighting traumatic Israeli narratives, aligning with Zionist objectives. Similarly, Kamhawi (2002) criticized U.S. evening news coverage of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in late 2000 as "repetitive" and "uninformative," placing blame on the Palestinian Authority and overlooking the conflict's causes and potential solutions. Asmus (2024) noted that German newspapers during the 2023 conflict emphasized Israeli victimhood and demonized Palestinians, further justifying Israeli military actions.

Alashqar (2024) compared the representation of the May 2021 Gaza-Israel violence in American and British media outlets. The results revealed while mainstream American outlets tended to reflect pro-Israel bias, British media, despite similar pro-Israel tendencies, provided a more comprehensive coverage reflecting international concerns and the broader geopolitical context.

Recent studies have analyzed Arab media outlets, including Al Jazeera. Findings from Pérez Castro (2023), Za Warshagha et al. (2024), Schoones (2024), and Shahzad et al. (2023) show that Al Jazeera primarily prioritizes Palestinian experiences and condemns Israeli occupation.

Gondwe and Walcott (2024) analyzed online cartoons about the 2023 Israel-Palestine conflict in both Western and non-Western media. They found a dominant anti-war sentiment, with Sub-Saharan African cartoons favoring Palestine, while American cartoons supported Israel. European and UK cartoons gained prominence in response to public concern over anti-Semitism, and Asian cartoons raised moral questions about the conflict.

In summary, while previous studies have extensively examined the Israeli–Palestinian conflict in Western and Arab media contexts, little attention has been given to how Russian and U.S. outlets frame the same event through the lens of national interest and political alignment.

This study fills this gap by conducting a comparative qualitative content analysis of Ria.ru and Nytimes.com, revealing how political orientations and geopolitical contexts shape framing choices. In doing so, it contributes to the growing body of research on international media framing by extending the analysis beyond traditional Western–Arab comparisons.

3. Methodology

3.1. Objective and Research Questions

The study focuses on Russian and American media outlets because these two countries have historically represented opposing geopolitical and ideological poles. Their media systems, deeply intertwined with national political structures, continue to reflect distinct value orientations and foreign policy priorities. While U.S. media coverage of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict has been extensively examined, Russian perspectives remain relatively underexplored in the literature. By comparing these two contrasting contexts, the study addresses this gap and provides insight into how divergent political orientations and global power positions shape the framing of international conflicts.

The main objective of this study is to analyze how the 2023 Israel–Gaza conflict was framed in Russian and American media, focusing on the influence of government policies, geopolitical strategies, and national interests on media coverage.

In line with this objective, the study seeks to answer the following main research question:

RQ (Main): How do Russian and American media frame the 2023 Israel–Gaza conflict in terms of tone, framing strategies, source selection, and linguistic representation, and to what extent do these framing patterns reflect each country’s political orientations and national interests?

To elaborate this overarching question, the study also addresses several sub-questions that examine specific dimensions of media framing:

RQ1: What is the overall tone of coverage of the 2023 Hamas–Israel conflict in Russian and U.S. media?

RQ2: Which generic frames are most prevalent in Russian and American media outlets?

RQ3: What types of information sources are most commonly cited in Russian and U.S. media coverage?

RQ4: How do Russian and U.S. media outlets frame Hamas?

RQ5: Which frames are used to describe the Hamas attack on Israel on October 7, 2023, in Russian and American media?

RQ6: What framing strategies are employed by Russian and U.S. media in presenting potential solutions to the 2023 Israeli–Palestinian conflict?

RQ7: Do Russian and American media use emotionally charged language (e.g., slaughter, massacre, or carnage) to describe attacks against Israelis and Palestinians, and if so, is there a noticeable disparity?

3.2. Method and Data

The present study uses qualitative content analysis, a popular method in framing studies (Neuendorf & Kumar, 2016, p. 5). Schreier (Schreier, 2012, p. 1) defines it as a method for systematically describing qualitative data, noted for its data reduction, systematic nature, and flexibility.

Qualitative content analysis goes beyond manifest content by exploring latent and contextdependent meanings, providing a nuanced interpretation of material (Schreier, 2012, p. 10). This study, conducted in January 2025, analyzes the most popular news websites in the U.S. and Russia—Nytimes.com and Ria.ru. From October to December 2024, Similarweb (2024b, 2024a) reported that Nytimes.com (5.19%) and Cnn.com (3.82%) led in the U.S., while Ria.ru (4.59%) and Rbc.ru (4.51%) ranked highest in Russia. News aggregators were excluded as they compile content rather than produce original reports (Athey & Mobius, 2012, p. 1). In December 2024, Nytimes.com had about 633.5 million visits, and Ria.ru had 95.33 million (SimilarWeb, 2024c, 2024d).

This study, consistent with previous research on media framing (Alashqar, 2024; D’Angelo, 2017), focuses on the early days of the conflict, specifically news stories published from October 7 to October 10, 2023. This period was selected for its high media coverage of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict (Gondwe & Walcott, 2024, p. 7). Emphasizing immediate coverage highlights that initial event framing significantly influences subsequent reporting (Dimitrova et al., 2005, p. 30).

News stories were sourced from online databases archiving articles from specific sites. Nytimes.com had a dedicated "Israel-Hamas War News" section for events after October 7, 2023. In contrast, Ria.ru did not have a specific section on the conflict, requiring the use of hashtags like “The escalation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in 2023,” “Israel,” and “Palestine” to gather the sample. A total of 539 news stories were analyzed, comprising 81 from Nytimes.com and 458 from Ria.ru.

The collected data were analyzed using MAXQDA, a software tool designed for qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-method research (MAXQDA, n.d.).

3.3. Coding Procedure

Communication researchers often use both inductive and deductive approaches to identify media frames. The deductive approach involves adopting previously successful frames relevant to the current study, while the inductive method allows frames to emerge organically from the data during analysis (Ardèvol-Abreu, 2015, p. 433).

This study employs a deductive approach to detect media frames, with the following variables identified and coded.

1. **Generic frames:** This content analysis utilizes generic frames from prior research, including Conflict, Human interest, Economic consequence, Responsibility, Morality, Diagnostic, Prognostic, Violence of war, Anti-war protest, and Media self-referential frames. Each news article is assigned one dominant generic frame, despite the presence of multiple frames in some reports.

2. **Types of information sources:** This study, consistent with the research of Li et al.(2002), Kamhawi (Kamhawi, 2002), Dimitrova and Strömbäck (2005), and Noakes and Wilkins (Noakes & Wilkins, 2002), examines the types of information sources cited. The identified source categories include Palestinian, Israeli, American, European, and Russian government officials and organizations, Palestinian and Israeli civilians, various media outlets (including American, Israeli, Palestinian, Western, and Russian), experts/academicians, and others. Notably, citations from Hamas fall under "Palestinian government officials and organizations." Each source type is counted based on its frequency in the text.

3. **Tone of coverage:** The tone of coverage is a key criterion in framing studies (Dimitrova & Strömbäck, 2005; Kamhawi, 2002; Noakes & Wilkins, 2002). However, as Kamhawi (2002, p. 15) notes, identifying overt tone can be challenging, complicating coding efforts. This study classifies tones as follows: Pro-Israeli (supportive of Israel), Pro-Palestinian (supportive of Palestine), and Neutral (not clearly supportive or opposing either side).

4. **Use of emotive language:** Johnson and Ali (2024) highlighted a disparity in emotive language, showing that terms like "slaughter" and "massacre" were mainly used for Israeli casualties. Their study analyzes emotional language, including "slaughter," "massacre," and "carnage," to evaluate disparities in media framing.

Using an inductive approach, the following issue-specific frames were identified.

1. **Frames to characterize Hamas:** Neutral frame, Militarism frame, Terrorism frame, Enemy frame, Demonization frame, Religious movement frame, Extremism frame, Iran-sponsored frame, and Palestinian resistance frame.

2. **Frames to convey potential solutions to the 2023 Israel-Palestinian conflict:** Two-state solution frame, Ceasefire/Negotiations frame, and Destruction of Hamas frame.

3. **Frames to portray the 2023 Hamas attack on Israel:** Terrorist act frame, Historical grievances frame, Freedom struggle frame, Religion defense frame, Criticism of Israeli government

frame, Accusations against America and the West frame, and Disruption of peace between Israel and Arab countries frame.

The three aforementioned frames are counted as many times as they appear within a single news story.

Within the framework of this study, only textual materials are analyzed, with visual materials and their accompanying captions excluded from the scope of analysis. A skilled human coder, fluent in both English and Russian, conducted a content analysis of 539 news reports using this coding scheme.

Since the dataset included Russian-language articles, a bilingual researcher fluent in Russian and English conducted the initial coding for Ria.ru content to ensure linguistic and contextual accuracy. The coding framework (codebook) was collaboratively developed by both researchers based on established framing categories (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000; Dimitrova & Strömbäck, 2005) and refined after pilot coding on a subset of news articles. The first author subsequently reviewed and cross-validated the coded segments to ensure conceptual alignment and consistency with the analytical framework. The analysis was conducted using the qualitative data analysis software MAXQDA, which provided a transparent and replicable coding environment. This collaborative process strengthened the credibility and dependability of the findings by minimizing translation bias and ensuring cultural–linguistic accuracy in frame identification. One limitation of the coding process is that intercoder reliability was established through discussion and verification rather than statistical testing, due to the qualitative and bilingual nature of the dataset.

4. Findings

4.1. Tone of Coverage in Russian and American Media

The findings presented in Table 1 reveal significant differences in the tone adopted by the Russian (Ria.ru) and American (Nytimes.com) media outlets.

Table 1.

Tone of Coverage of the 2023 Hamas-Israel Conflict in Russian and U.S. Media

Category	Ria.ru		Nytimes.com	
	N	%	N	%
Pro-Israeli tone	19	4%	50	62%
Pro-Palestinian tone	19	4%	6	7%
Neutral tone	420	92%	25	31%
Total	458	100%	81	100%

(Source: The table was created by the authors)

Ria.ru maintains a predominantly neutral tone in 92% of its coverage, with only 4% reflecting pro-Israeli and 4% pro-Palestinian perspectives. This distribution suggests an effort to present the conflict in a broadly impartial manner.

In contrast, Nytimes.com coverage is markedly pro-Israeli, with 62% of articles adopting a supportive stance toward Israel, 31% maintaining neutrality, and only 7% presenting a pro-Palestinian perspective. This imbalance highlights a stronger emphasis on Israeli suffering and a relative underrepresentation of the Palestinian narrative.

4.2. Dominant Generic Frames in Russian and American Media

Table 2 outlines the dominant generic frames employed by Russian and American media outlets in their coverage of the 2023 Israel-Palestine conflict.

Table 2.

Dominant Generic Frames in Russian and American News Coverage

Category	Ria.ru		Nytimes.com	
	N	%	N	%
Military Conflict Frame	206	45.0%	29	35.8%
Economic Consequence Frame	8	1.7%	8	9.9%
Human Interest Frame	52	11.4%	16	19.8%
Responsibility Frame	44	9.6%	9	11.1%
Morality Frame	2	0.4%	0	0.0%
Diagnostic Frame	11	2.4%	3	3.7%
Prognostic Frame	61	13.3%	5	6.2%
Violence of War Frame	74	16.2%	11	13.6%
Anti-War Protest Frame	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Media Self-Referential Frame	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	458	100.0%	81	100.0%

(Source: The table was created by the authors)

The Military conflict frame is the most dominant in both Russian and American media, appearing in 45% of articles on Ria.ru and 35.8% on Nytimes.com.

Nytimes.com employs the Economic consequences frame more frequently (9.9%) than Ria.ru (1.7%). American coverage highlights global effects of the Israel-Gaza conflict, such as oil price fluctuations and economic instability, while Russian media focuses on regional impacts, including tour cancellations and changes in consumer behavior in Israel.

The Human interest frame is more prevalent in American media (19.8%) than in Russian reporting (11.4%). Ria.ru uses neutral language to describe the suffering of Palestinians, Israelis, and

foreign nationals, a tendency consistent with Russia’s diplomatic posture in the Middle East, which emphasizes mediation and neutrality in regional conflicts (Trenin, 2016). In contrast, Nytimes.com focuses on emotional narratives of Israelis and Americans affected by the conflict, using personal testimonies and vivid language. For example: “Panic, disbelief, and fear rippled throughout Israel and Gaza...” (Kershner & Abdulrahim, 2023), “Yoni Asher’s nightmare began early on Saturday morning...” (Kingsley, 2023), and “I have two little babies, two little girls. These little babies should not be held or kept by terrorists” (Kingsley & Boxerman, 2023).

The Responsibility frame appears in 9.6% of Ria.ru articles and 11.1% of Nytimes.com articles. Russian media assigns blame to multiple actors— Hamas, Israel, and the U.S.—reflecting the conflict's complexity. These reports emphasize U.S. and Israeli neglect of Palestinian rights while positioning Russia as committed to safeguarding both Palestinians and Israelis, aiming for neutrality. In contrast, Nytimes.com mainly blames Hamas and Iran, highlighting Iran's support for Hamas and criticizing the Biden administration for its deal with Iran, which is seen as enabling its involvement in the conflict. It also holds the Israeli government accountable for failing to prevent the attack.

The Morality frame is absent in Nytimes.com and only marginally present in Ria.ru (0.4%). In Russian coverage, it appears occasionally in references to the violation of sacred spaces, such as the Al-Aqsa Mosque, thereby framing Palestinian resistance as a moral response to perceived injustices.

The Diagnostic frame is minimally present in both outlets (Nytimes.com: 3.7%; Ria.ru: 2.4%).

The Prognostic frame appears more in Russian media (13.3%) than in American media (6.2%). In Ria.ru, it mainly discusses solutions, often promoting a ceasefire and a two-state solution. In contrast, American reporting uses the Prognostic frame to analyze the conflict's broader consequences, particularly its geopolitical impact on the Saudi-Israel normalization deal and Israel's response to Hamas.

The Violence of war frame appears in both media outlets, but is more frequent in Ria.ru (16.2%) than in Nytimes.com (13.6%). Nytimes.com tends to focus on Israeli suffering with emotionally charged language, while Ria.ru reports casualties from both sides in a neutral, factual tone, emphasizing the broader violence.

Both the Anti-war protest frame and the Media self-referential frame are entirely absent from the coverage in both outlets.

4.3. Sources Cited in Russian and American Media

Table 3 highlights the distribution of sources cited in Russian and American media coverage of the 2023 Israel-Hamas conflict.

Table 3.

Information Sources in Russian and American Media Coverage of the 2023 Hamas-Israel Conflict

Category	Ria.ru	Nytimes.com
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	N	%	N	%
Palestinian Government Officials and Organizations	1281	36.3%	59	10.2%
Israeli Government Officials and Organizations	1302	36.9%	144	24.8%
American Government Officials and Organizations	50	1.4%	140	24.1%
European Government Officials and Organizations	75	2.1%	39	6.7%
Russian Government Officials and Organizations	421	11.9%	0	0.0%
Other Countries' Government Officials and Organizations	52	1.5%	28	4.8%
Palestinian Civilians	4	0.1%	24	4.1%
Israeli Civilians	3	0.1%	54	9.3%
American Media	11	0.3%	1	0.2%
Israeli Media	256	7.3%	4	0.7%
Palestinian Media	6	0.2%	0	0.0%
Western Media	9	0.3%	0	0.0%
Other Countries' Media	17	0.5%	4	0.7%
Russian Journalists / Russian Media	9	0.3%	0	0.0%
Experts/Academicians	17	0.5%	58	10.0%
Others	18	0.5%	25	4.3%
Total	3531	100.0%	580	100.0%

(Source: The table was created by the authors)

Ria.ru most frequently cites Israeli (36.9%) and Palestinian (36.3%) government officials and organizations, reflecting a balanced emphasis on the two sides of the conflict. In contrast, Nytimes.com prioritizes Israeli (24.8%) and American government sources (24.1%), showcasing a stronger alignment with Western and Israeli narratives.

Nytimes.com infrequently cites Palestinian officials (10.2%), limiting their representation. In contrast, Ria.ru provides extensive coverage of statements from Palestinian and Hamas officials, featuring notable headlines like: “The President of Palestine Held Talks with the U.S. Secretary of State,” “Israel Crossed 'Red Lines' at the Al-Aqsa Mosque, Hamas Stated,” “The

Battle with Israel is the Beginning of the Liberation of Palestine, Hamas Declared,” and “Palestine Warned of the Consequences of the Unresolved Conflict.”

The disparity in citing domestic government officials highlights differing media roles. Nytimes.com cites U.S. officials in 24.1% of sources, positioning the United States as a key actor in shaping the conflict narrative. In contrast, Ria.ru references Russian government sources in 11.9% of cases, suggesting a more observational approach to reporting the conflict.

Both media outlets cite civilians infrequently—Palestinian civilians (Ria.ru: 0.1%, Nytimes.com: 4.1%) and Israeli civilians (Ria.ru: 0.1%, Nytimes.com: 9.3%). However, American media places significantly more emphasis on civilian perspectives, particularly those of Israeli civilians. Nytimes.com cites Israeli civilians more than twice as often as Palestinian civilians (9.3% vs. 4.1%), frequently using personal stories as the central focus of its coverage.

Ria.ru cites Israeli media more frequently than any other media source (7.3%), while Nytimes.com rarely references external media (0.7%), reflecting a preference for direct reporting and official government statements.

Compared to Ria.ru (0.5%), Nytimes.com gives significantly more attention to experts and academics (10%).

Ria.ru (2.1%) and Nytimes.com (6.7%) report on European officials like Josep Borrell and Volker Türk, who condemn Hamas attacks, warn against excessive Israeli responses, and address Gaza's humanitarian crisis. Russian media, however, focuses more on European calls for Palestinian aid, opposition to the Gaza blockade, and the need for ceasefires, while also detailing evacuation efforts for foreign citizens. Both outlets portray European officials as sympathetic to Palestinian suffering.

Ria.ru (1.5%) and Nytimes.com (4.8%) also cite government officials and organizations from other countries. Russian media reference a broad range of nations (e.g., Iran, Cuba, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, China, Turkey, UAE, Brazil) – many critical of Israel – framing the conflict as rooted in systemic neglect of the Palestinian cause.

In contrast, American media, while citing other countries' government officials (e.g., Iran, Saudi Arabia), focuses on issues of foreign policy, security, and regional diplomacy. American media emphasizes Iran's support for Hamas and its threat to regional stability, as well as the conflict's impact on U.S.-brokered normalization efforts between Israel and Saudi Arabia.

Other sources of information are minimally represented in the coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict across both media outlets.

4.4. Framing of Hamas in Russian and American Media

Table 4 presents the linguistic frames used to characterize Hamas in Russian and American media outlets between October 7 and 10, 2023, during the initial phase of the Hamas–Israel conflict.

Table 4.

Linguistic Frames Used to Characterize Hamas in Russian and American Media Coverage

Linguistic Frames	Ria.ru		Nytimes.com	
	N	%	N	%
Neutral Frame, Including	2264	87.0%	129	27.7%
Military Wing	681	26.2%	15	3.2%
Palestinian Movement / Movement	702	27.0%	2	0.4%

Fighters / Palestinian Fighters / Hamas Fighters / Gazan Fighters / Palestinians	419	16.1%	37	7.9%
Group / Palestinian Group / Organization / Palestinian Forces / Hamas Forces	26	1.0%	45	9.7%
Political Bureau / Political group	205	7.9%	2	0.4%
Other characterizations of Hamas	231	8.9%	28	6.0%
Militarism Frame, Including	100	3.8%	201	43.1%
Hamas Militants / Gazan Militants / Palestinian Militants / Armed Militants	92	3.5%	90	19.3%
Militant Group / Militant Organization / Armed Group	2	0.1%	37	7.9%
Gunmen / Hamas Gunmen / Palestinian Gunmen / Armed Men	4	0.2%	54	11.6%
Attackers / Palestinian Attackers / Hamas Attackers / Assailants / Palestinian Assailants	2	0.1%	20	4.3%
Terrorism Frame, Including	111	4.3%	65	13.9%
Terrorists / Hamas Terrorists / Terrorist Organization / Terrorist Group / Terrorist Activity	111	4.3%	65	13.9%
Enemy Frame, Including	13	0.5%	4	0.9%
Enemy / Aggressor / Hostile forces	13	0.5%	4	0.9%
Demonization Frame, Including	7	0.3%	16	3.4%
Evil	1	0.0%	8	1.7%
Human Animals	3	0.1%	1	0.2%
Barbarians	1	0.0%	2	0.4%
Other characterizations	2	0.1%	5	1.1%
Religious Movement Frame, Including	1	0.04%	7	1.5%
Islamic Movement / Islamist Hamas movement / Islamic Group / Islamist militant group	1	0.04%	7	1.5%
Extremism Frame, Including	89	3.4%	5	1.1%
Radicals	88	3.4%	0	0.0%
Radical Groups / Radical Movement	1	0.0%	2	0.4%
Extreme Groups / Extreme Elements	0	0.0%	3	0.6%
Iran-sponsored Frame	5	0.2%	29	6.2%

Palestinian Resistance Frame, Including	11	0.4%	10	2.1%
Hamis resistance / Freedom Fighters / Heroes of Resistance / Resistance Movement / Champions for the Holy Land / Great Martyrs	11	0.4%	10	2.1%
Total	2601	100.0%	466	100.0%

(Source: The table was created by the authors)

Ria.ru uses the Neutral frame in 87.0% of its coverage, often referring to Hamas as a "Palestinian movement," "fighters," "military wing," or "political bureau." This framing maintains an observational tone by highlighting Hamas’s political and military aspects without judgment. In contrast, Nytimes.com applies the Neutral frame only 27.7% of the time. Moreover, Russian media refers to Hamas as a "political bureau" in 7.9% of cases, while Nytimes.com does so in just 0.4%.

Nytimes.com applies the Militarism frame in nearly half of its coverage (43.1%), using terms such as “militants”, “militant group”, “gunmen”, and “attackers”. This highlights Hamas’s violent actions and its role as an armed actor. In contrast, Ria.ru employs the Militarism frame sparingly (3.8%).

Nytimes.com employs the Terrorism frame in 13.9% of its coverage, referring to Hamas as “terrorists” or a “terrorist organization”. This aligns with previous studies emphasising the dominance of terrorism-related labels in Western news coverage (Kumar, 2010; Philo & Berry, 2015). In contrast, Ria.ru uses this frame far less frequently (4.3%), primarily when quoting pro-Israeli officials.

Ria.ru refers to Hamas as “radicals” under the Extremism frame (3.4%), while Nytimes.com uses this frame less frequently (1.1%).

Notably, Ria.ru applies the Militarism, Terrorism, and Extremism frames primarily on the first day of coverage, using labels such as “militants”, “terrorists”, and “radicals” in the main text. Thereafter, these terms appear only in quotations from Israel-aligned officials. This linguistic shift may reflect the immediacy and intensity of early reporting, particularly when relying on Israeli sources. Subsequently, Ria.ru adopts a more neutral tone.

The Enemy and Demonization frames are rarely employed by either outlet. Nytimes.com uses these frames slightly more frequently (0.9% and 3.4%, respectively), often incorporating emotionally charged language such as “evil”, “human animals”, and “indiscriminate evil”. In contrast, Ria.ru applies these frames minimally (0.5% and 0.3%, respectively), and only when quoting Israel-aligned officials.

The Iran-sponsored frame highlights Hamas’s connections to Iran, especially in financial and logistical support. This frame appears in only 0.2% of Ria.ru’s coverage, mostly through quotes from Israel-aligned officials and expert geopolitical commentary. In contrast, Nytimes.com incorporates this frame in 6.2% of its coverage, emphasizing Iran's alleged role in arming Hamas and its broader influence in the Middle East, portraying Hamas as part of a larger Iranian strategy and a regional stability threat.

Both Russian and American outlets make minimal use of the Religious movement frame (0.04% and 1.5%, respectively), as well as the Palestinian resistance frame (0.4% and 2.1%, respectively).

4.5. Media Framing of the Hamas Attack on Israel

Table 5 highlights the dominant frames employed by Russian and American media in depicting the Hamas attack on Israel on 7 October.

Table 5.

Frames Used to Depict the Hamas Attack on Israel on 7 October in Russian and American Media

Category	Ria.ru		Nytimes.com	
	N	%	N	%
Terrorist Act Frame	38	9.1%	95	49.0%
Historical Grievances Frame	246	59.0%	20	10.3%
Freedom Struggle Frame	100	24.0%	14	7.2%
Religion Defense Frame	8	1.9%	4	2.1%
Criticism of Israeli Government Frame	7	1.7%	36	18.6%
Accusations Against America and the West Frame	15	3.6%	11	5.7%
Disruption of Peace Between Israel and Arab Countries Frame	3	0.7%	14	7.2%
Total	417	100.0%	194	100.0%

(Source: The table was created by the authors)

Nytimes.com predominantly employs the Terrorist act frame (49%), portraying the Hamas attack as an act of terrorism. In contrast, Ria.ru uses this frame significantly less (9.1%), primarily within quotations from Israel-aligned officials.

The Historical grievances frame is most prominent in Ria.ru (59.0%), emphasizing longstanding injustices, territorial disputes, and Israel's failure to uphold international resolutions. In contrast, Nytimes.com employs this frame less frequently (10.3%).

The Freedom struggle frame is prominent in Ria.ru (24.0%), depicting Hamas's actions as responses to Israeli occupation and injustices against Palestinians. For instance, Mahmoud Abbas, the President of Palestine, was cited 77 times between October 7 and 10, 2023, stating at an emergency meeting, "The President of Palestine, Mahmoud Abbas, emphasized the Palestinian people's right to self-defense against Israeli forces and settlers" 6/29/26 3:16:00 PM. In contrast, Nytimes.com uses this frame less often (7.2%), presenting statements from global figures supporting Palestinian rights but often juxtaposed with criticisms of Hamas's methods.

The Religious defense frame is used minimally by both outlets (Ria.ru: 1.9%; Nytimes.com: 2.1%). Both apply the frame primarily to highlight Palestinian grievances over Israeli actions at religious sites, particularly the Al-Aqsa Mosque.

Nytimes.com employs the Criticism of the Israeli government frame (18.6%), describing the attack as a failure of Israeli intelligence and leadership, often using terms like “systemic failure” and “devastating failure.” In contrast, Ria.ru uses this frame minimally (1.7%), maintaining an observational stance and primarily citing American media, Israeli experts, and international analysts without criticism of the Israeli government.

The Accusations against America and the West frame appears in 3.6% of Ria.ru’s coverage, highlighting the U.S. and its allies' role in escalating tensions. Russian media often connects U.S. policies to destabilizing actions, including undermining Palestinian rights and obstructing peace efforts. In contrast, Nytimes.com uses this frame more frequently (5.7%), focusing on domestic political debates, particularly Republican critiques of Biden, such as claims that unfreezing Iranian funds enabled Hamas. In American media, this frame is heavily politicized, portraying Biden’s foreign policy as ineffective, a depiction echoed in mainstream analyses criticizing the administration’s handling of the Middle East crisis (Carlstrom, 2023).

The Disruption of peace between Israel and Arab countries appears in 7.2% of Nytimes.com’s coverage, framing Hamas’s attack as a deliberate move—reportedly backed by Iran—to disrupt U.S.-brokered normalization efforts between Israel and Saudi Arabia. In contrast, Ria.ru references this frame in only 0.7% of its coverage, highlighting that U.S.-led normalization initiatives have overlooked the unresolved Israel-Palestine conflict.

4.6. Framing of Potential Solutions

Table 6 compares how Russian and American media frame potential solutions to the 2023 Israel-Palestinian conflict.

Table 6.

Frames for Potential Solutions to the 2023 Israel–Palestinian Conflict in Russian and American Media

Category	Ria.ru		Nytimes.com	
	N	%	N	%
Two-State Solution Frame	362	46.6%	4	11.4%
Ceasefire / Negotiations Frame	401	51.6%	9	25.7%
Destruction of Hamas Frame	14	1.8%	22	62.9%
Total	777	100.0%	35	100.0%

(Source: The table was created by the authors)

Ria.ru emphasizes the Two-state solution in 46.6% of its coverage, focusing on historical and diplomatic perspectives, particularly UN resolutions. For instance, a news article notes: “Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov stressed the urgent need to stop bloodshed between

Israel and Palestine, urging both sides to cease hostilities. He highlighted that resolving the Palestinian issue is only achievable through UN Security Council resolutions, which envision coexistence of two states” (RIA, 2023f). In contrast, Nytimes.com employs this frame much less frequently, at 11.4% of its coverage.

Russian media also strongly emphasizes the Ceasefire/Negotiations frame, which comprises 51.6% of its coverage. For example, one report notes: “Russia calls on Israel and Palestine to cease fire and return to the negotiating table...” (RIA, 2023a).

American media employs the Ceasefire/Negotiations frame in 25.7% of its coverage, primarily through citations from representatives of Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, and U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk.

The Destruction of Hamas frame dominates Nytimes.com coverage at 62.9%, reflecting alignment with narratives that emphasize Israel’s military objectives. This frame is minimal in Ria.ru (1.8%) and appears only in quotations from Israeli and American government officials.

A key characteristic of Russian media is that nearly every news article concludes with a discussion of potential solutions to the conflict, portraying Russian media as a proponent of diplomatic resolution and de-escalation through ceasefire, negotiations, and adherence to international frameworks.

4.7. Use of Emotionally Charged Words

Table 7 examines the use of emotionally charged terms in media coverage of attacks on Israelis and Palestinians in Russian and U.S. outlets.

Table 7.
Emotionally Charged Language in Russian and U.S. Media

Category	Ria.ru		Nytimes.com	
	N	%	N	%
Use of the Words “Slaughter”, “Massacre”, and “Carnage” Along With their Derivatives, to Describe Attacks Against Israelis	2	100%	21	95%
Use of the Words “Slaughter”, “Massacre”, and “Carnage” Along With their Derivatives, to Describe Attacks Against Palestinians	0	0%	1	5%
Total	2	100%	22	100%

(Source: The table was created by the authors)

In Ria.ru, emotionally charged language appeared exclusively in quotations from external sources (2 instances), specifically U.S. President Joe Biden (RIA, 2023e) and the Israeli newspaper Haaretz (RIA, 2023c), both referring to attacks on Israelis. The Russian media refrains from using such emotionally loaded terms in headlines or body text, maintaining a consistently neutral tone.

In contrast, *Nytimes.com* employs emotionally charged language more frequently. These terms appear not only in direct quotations but also throughout the narrative and in two news headlines, emphasizing Israeli suffering. Of the 22 instances identified, 21 (95%) refer to attacks on Israelis.

5. Discussion

The analysis of Russian and American media coverage of the 2023 Hamas–Israel conflict reveals distinct trends in framing strategies, reflecting broader national political interests.

5.1. Neutrality Versus Advocacy

Russian media, such as *Ria.ru*, employs a predominantly neutral tone in reporting on the conflict. It gives balanced attention to both Israeli and Palestinian perspectives while avoiding emotionally charged language, which helps maintain a restrained narrative. This neutrality seems to be a strategic move to reinforce Russia's image as an impartial global mediator (TASS, 2024a).

In contrast, American media – *Nytimes.com* – shows a pronounced alignment with the Israeli perspective, with 62% of its coverage identified as pro-Israeli. This is particularly evident in the active use of emotionally charged language when referring to Israelis, as well as the frequent use of the Human interest frame to highlight the emotional experiences of Israeli individuals. This framing reflects the broader context of the strategic U.S.–Israel partnership, which has long shaped American foreign policy and media narratives (Walt & Mearsheimer, 2007; Sharp, 2025).

In this respect, the tone analysis complements the earlier findings on frame selection, revealing consistent ideological tendencies across both outlets.

5.2. Generic Frames: Systemic Context versus Emotional Intensity

Both Russian and American media emphasize the Military conflict frame in their coverage, but their use of other frames highlights key differences. *Ria.ru* employs the Violence of war and Prognostic frames, focusing on solution-oriented approaches and a humanitarian perspective while maintaining a neutral narrative.

Nytimes.com employs the Human interest and Violence of war frames, highlighting individual stories of Israeli civilians and the consequences of Hamas's attacks to evoke sympathy and support for Israel from U.S. audiences. This strategy aligns with the American journalistic tradition of human-interest storytelling, prioritizing reader empathy and emotional engagement (Schmidt, 2021, p. 1174).

The Responsibility frame underscores the national priorities of both countries. U.S. media mainly blames Hamas and Iran, aligning with U.S. foreign policy goals. In contrast, Russian media takes a neutral position to maintain a balanced international image.

5.3. Source Selection: The Balancing Act versus Strategic Alignment

Russian media cites Israeli and Palestinian officials with equal frequency, aiming to balance narratives. This approach reflects a desire for impartiality and supports Russia's goal of maintaining diplomatic ties in the Middle East (TASS, 2024b).

American media often highlights Israeli and U.S. officials while sidelining Palestinian voices. This selective sourcing perpetuates pro-American and pro-Israeli biases, consistent with findings from Noakes and Wilkins (2002), Kamhawi (2002), Pérez Castro (2023), and Barari and Yacoub (2024).

5.4. Citation of Domestic Government Officials: Observational Neutrality versus Centralized Leadership

Russian officials are cited in 11.9% of all sources in Ria.ru. By limiting reliance on domestic government voices, Russian media positions itself as a platform for diverse perspectives, offering more balanced coverage of the conflict.

In contrast, American government officials account for 24.1% of citations in Nytimes.com, positioning U.S. leadership as central to interpreting and addressing the conflict.

5.5. Subheading Framing Hamas: The Politics of Labeling

In Russia, Hamas is not designated as a terrorist organization. Moreover, Russian leadership maintains official contacts with Hamas representatives. For example, in 2022, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov met with Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Moscow to discuss the regional situation and efforts to restore Palestinian national unity (RIA, 2023f).

Russian media primarily refers to Hamas as a “movement” or “fighters”. This linguistic neutrality supports Russia's diplomatic engagement with a broad range of actors, including Hamas and its political allies (Trenin, 2016; Sweidan, 2024).

In contrast, American media labels Hamas as “militants”, “militant group”, “gunmen”, “attackers”, “terrorists”, and “terrorist organization”, consistently portraying it as an existential threat. Both the United States and Israel officially classify Hamas as a terrorist organization (RIA, 2023c). This framing aligns with U.S. security interests and reinforces the narrative of Israel as a frontline ally in the fight against Hamas, as reflected in official U.S. statements following the October 2023 attacks (The White House, 2023; Sharp, 2025).

5.6. Labeling Frames for Hamas's Attack: Historical Grievances versus Terrorist Act

Russian media primarily uses the Historical grievances frame (59%) to contextualize Hamas's actions in the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. This framing focuses on unresolved issues like occupation and territorial disputes, highlighting the attack as a symptom of longstanding failures to address the Palestinian cause.

The official Russian stance on the Hamas attack is summarized by Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, who stated: “We condemn all terrorist actions, including Hamas's attack on Israeli civilians on October 7 last year. However, Israel’s retaliatory actions are unacceptable and violate international humanitarian law” (TASS, 2024a). Additionally, Dmitry Polyanskiy, Russia’s Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN, attributed the renewed conflict to “years of lawlessness and illegal actions by Israel against Palestine, making claims of provocation unjustified” (RBC, 2023b).

American media frames the Hamas attack as a terrorist act. President Biden described it as “pure, unadulterated evil,” “indiscriminate evil,” and “atrocities,” emphasizing its brutality while omitting historical or geopolitical context and focusing on its immediate moral impact (Baker, 2023).

5.7. Emotive Language versus Neutral Detachment

American media frequently employs emotionally charged terms such as “massacre”, “carnage”, and “slaughter”, with 95% of instances referring to Israeli casualties. This language amplifies sympathy for Israel and helps legitimize its military responses—supporting Johnson and Ali’s (2024) findings on media-driven justification of state actions.

In contrast, Russian media avoids emotive language, favoring a neutral, fact-based tone to preserve objectivity and enhance perceived credibility.

5.8. Solutions Framing: Diplomacy versus Military Solutions

Russian media's focus on the Ceasefire (51.6%) and Two-state solution (46.6%) indicates a long-term, diplomatic approach to resolving the conflict, aligning with Russia’s foreign policy as a peace broker in the Middle East (TASS, 2024b). President Putin has stated, “We have always advocated for the implementation of UN Security Council resolutions, primarily to establish an independent, sovereign Palestinian state” (RBC, 2023a).

American media’s predominant use of the Destruction of Hamas frame (62.9%) indicates a U.S. preference for military solutions to threats. According to Ahmed (Ahmed, 2023), the U.S. State Department instructed diplomats to avoid public statements that suggest support for reducing violence. Internal communications revealed that senior officials directed staff to exclude terms like “de-escalation,” “ceasefire,” and “restoring calm” from press materials. This reflects a reluctance to advocate for peace, emphasizing military objectives over diplomatic resolutions.

Divergences in media framing can be attributed to the interplay between government policies, geopolitical strategies, and national interests.

5.9. Strategic Alliances

U.S. media's pro-Israeli framing reflects the strategic alliance between the United States and Israel, driven by economic ties, military cooperation, and shared values (Davydov, 2024). This alignment ensures that the language used in news coverage supports policies that favor Israel.

In contrast, Russian media's neutral framing aligns with Moscow's broader foreign policy objectives, which emphasize maintaining relationships with both Arab and Israeli stakeholders to preserve its role as a diplomatic intermediary in the region.

For decades, Russia has strengthened ties with Muslim-majority countries. Since 2005, it has held observer status in the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, highlighting its diplomatic engagement with the Islamic world. In the expanded BRICS organization, Egypt, Iran, the UAE, and Saudi Arabia joined on January 1, 2024, with Russia playing a key role. Additionally, Iran, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Oman are part of Russia's "North-South" transport corridor project, enhancing economic and political relations (Galeev & Semenov, 2024).

Russia positions itself culturally within the Islamic world, exemplified by the Quran recitation competition in Moscow, placing it among global Islamic centers like Istanbul, Rabat, Algiers, Tunis, and Cairo. In December 2023, the XIX International Muslim Forum was held at the Moscow Cathedral Mosque, hosted by Sheikh Ravil Gaynutdin, Chairman of the Russian Muslim Religious Board, and attended by various prominent political, religious, and public figures (Galeev & Semenov, 2024).

Russia's support for the Palestinian cause is acknowledged in the global Muslim community, with its leadership praised for advocating the rights of Palestinians. Additionally, Russia's domestic Muslim population has responded to the Gaza humanitarian crisis by organizing and providing aid (Galeev & Semenov, 2024).

Russia maintains longstanding diplomatic relations with Israel across various sectors. Recent events, including political instability in Israel and the COVID-19 pandemic, have slowed cooperation (Smirnov, 2023), but both countries are committed to preserving their constructive bilateral ties, guided by mutual recognition of national interests and pragmatic engagement (RIA, 2024a).

Russian media aims to maintain a neutral stance in covering the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, advocating for an "immediate cessation of hostilities, prioritizing humanitarian issues, and transitioning to negotiations for resolving the Palestinian issue based on the two-state solution and relevant UN resolutions" (RIA, 2024a). This balanced approach reinforces Russia's role as a global mediator committed to diplomatic resolution (TASS, 2024b).

5.10. Geopolitical Tensions Between Russia and the West

The Russia–West conflict (TASS, 2019) notably influences Russian media's coverage of the Israel– Hamas war. Russia's balanced reporting challenges Western narratives, promoting a multipolar world order and positioning itself as an alternative to U.S.-centric media.

Russian media's criticism of the U.S. and its allies for not achieving a fair resolution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict highlights the geopolitical divide along the Russia-West axis. Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov stated, "Instead of collaborating with the League of Arab States, the Americans are monopolizing mediation efforts and shifting the dialogue away from a political settlement and the creation of a Palestinian state. They aim to replace UN Security Council resolutions with talks focused on the socio-economic issues of the Palestinian population..." (RIA, 2023b).

5.11. U.S.-Iran Confrontation

The confrontation between the United States and Iran plays a significant role in shaping the use of news language in American coverage of the Israel– Hamas conflict. By frequently using phrases such as "Iran-backed Hamas" or "Iran-sponsored Hamas", U.S. media emphasize Iran's alleged role in arming and supporting Hamas, portraying the group as a tool in Iran's broader effort to undermine U.S. influence in the region.

Taken together, these results reveal not only linguistic and tonal differences but also distinct patterns of political alignment. The contrast between Russian and U.S. coverage demonstrates that framing choices extend beyond journalistic routines and are rooted in broader ideological, diplomatic, and national interests. These framing differences can be interpreted through the lens of each country's political, social, and economic environment. The United States' long-standing alliance with Israel and its dominant pro-Western media tradition may explain *Nytimes.com*'s tendency to prioritize Israeli perspectives and to employ emotionally charged vocabulary when describing attacks. In contrast, *Ria.ru*'s relatively balanced and diplomatic tone reflects Russia's geopolitical positioning as a power seeking to maintain relations with multiple actors in the Middle East. Economic factors, such as defense cooperation and energy partnerships, also influence how national media align with broader foreign policy narratives. Socially, collective memory and domestic public opinion shape each outlet's language choices and interpretations of victimhood and aggression.

The findings of this study are consistent with previous comparative framing research that examined international conflicts through the lens of national media perspectives. Similar to the results reported by Dimitrova and Strömbäck (2005) in their analysis of Iraq War coverage, the present study reveals that tone and source selection vary systematically according to political alignment. Moreover, Kamhawi (2002) and Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) identified "conflict" and "responsibility" frames as dominant in conflict reporting—patterns that are also evident in the coverage of both *Ria.ru* and *Nytimes.com*.

In this context, Mann (2016) demonstrates how national media can legitimize state narratives through selective framing: The *Times of India*'s portrayal of Sikhs as violent and irrational served to justify state coercion, reinforcing Cavanaugh's (2009) notion of the "myth of religious violence." Similarly, Ibrar and Khan (2025) found that ideological orientation plays a decisive role in conflict framing. While *Al-Jazeera* emphasized Palestinian resilience through narratives of strength and resistance, *CNN*

reinforced Israeli-centric views using securitized frames such as “militant,” whereas China’s Global Times adopted a neutral, diplomacy-focused approach, highlighting “conflict” and “war” frames. Likewise, Alsharairi et al. (2025) demonstrated that humanitarian and emotional framing on social media platforms— particularly in Jordan—fostered empathy while simultaneously deepening polarization, revealing how affective discourse mirrors ideological divides even outside traditional journalism.

Aligned with these findings, this research shows that the use of emotional language and selective sourcing reinforces policy-aligned framings, particularly in U.S. media. Hence, the results extend earlier studies by demonstrating that national interests continue to drive framing decisions even in the digital news era.

Overall, the comparative findings discussed above underline the central argument of this study: that media framing of the Israel–Gaza conflict operates within the boundaries of national interest and geopolitical strategy. The following conclusion summarizes these key insights and outlines their broader implications.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that Russian and U.S. media framed the 2023 Israel– Hamas conflict in systematically different ways in terms of tone, source use, and language. These divergences are not coincidental but rather correspond to each country’s political orientations and foreign policy objectives.

Russian media adopts a neutral tone, presenting balanced perspectives on both Palestinian and Israeli narratives. This approach aligns with Russia’s broader diplomatic objectives— maintaining ties with diverse Middle Eastern actors and reinforcing its image as a global mediator. The focus on ceasefire, the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, and humanitarian concerns reflects a commitment to long-term conflict resolution.

In contrast, American media coverage skews toward pro-Israeli framing, marked by emotionally charged language and a focus on personal stories that evoke sympathy for Israeli victims. This aligns with the strategic U.S.–Israel alliance and reflects U.S. foreign policy priorities, especially in countering regional adversaries such as Hamas and Iran.

The findings reaffirm that media framing of international conflicts functions as a reflection of national perspectives and as an instrument through which states project their political narratives to domestic and international audiences. This research thus contributes to the growing literature on comparative media framing by illustrating how the same global event can be transformed into different discursive realities through national media filters.

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the analysis is limited to media coverage from the immediate aftermath of the 2023 Israeli–Palestinian conflict, specifically from October 7 to 10. Media framing is dynamic and often influenced by evolving political discourse. Future research could extend the analysis over a longer timeframe to track how dominant frames shift in response to political developments.

Second, the study examines only one news outlet from each country. This narrow scope limits the ability to generalize findings across the broader media landscape. Future research could include multiple news sources within each country—representing a range of political orientations—to explore potential correlations between editorial stance and framing strategies. Further analysis could also compare public and private media within a single country to identify structural or ideological differences in coverage.

Third, a broader cross-national comparative study could enhance understanding of global media framing. Including countries such as Turkey and various Arab states would provide a more comprehensive picture of how the conflict is portrayed across different geopolitical and cultural contexts.

Beyond these limitations, this study contributes to comparative communication research by integrating political orientation and foreign policy context into frame analysis. By incorporating both Russian and American perspectives, this approach broadens the geographical and ideological scope of media framing scholarship, illustrating how national interests and geopolitical alignments shape journalistic narratives. This study also offers a methodological contribution by illustrating how cross-linguistic qualitative coding can ensure cultural and contextual accuracy in comparative media framing research. In doing so, it provides a practical framework for future scholars examining global media representations of conflict. Ultimately, it advances understanding of the media's role not only as an information channel but also as a mechanism through which political narratives and national interests are communicated to global audiences.

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