

The Viral IDF "Sock Trophy" Story Was Completely Fake

THE LIE

An Israeli soldier bragged online about killing a Gazan girl and keeping her sock to smell as a trophy.

THE TRUTH

It never happened. The photo is real — but it shows an IDF soldier missing his own daughter while deployed, not a war crime.

BACKGROUND

- On July 3, 2026, an X account claiming to belong to a doctor and tailor in Gaza — "Dr. Mostafa Project" — posted a photo of a man in Israeli military uniform holding up a small pink sock. The caption read: *"An Israeli soldier in Gaza holds up the sock of a Palestinian girl after killing her, filming himself smiling, after writing in his post (in Hebrew): 'My new hobby: smelling the sock of a 5-year-old girl twice a day for 4 months.'"* ([Dr. Mostafa Project](#))
- The account presented this as a direct translation of the soldier's own words, but provided no link to the original post it was supposedly quoting.
- The post received over 1.3 million views, 13,000 likes, and more than 8,700 retweets — including one from *The Young Turks* host Cenk Uygur, who used it to call Israeli soldiers "terrorists." ([Cenk Uygur](#))
- The same post has been shared by other anti-Israel accounts across Facebook, Instagram, Reddit, and TikTok, racking up shares on every platform.

TRUTH EXPLAINED

- The photo is real, but the story is invented: it originated from a 2024 Instagram story posted by an Israeli paratrooper named Liran, who was holding his own daughter's sock while deployed, missing her. It was a father's homesick gesture, not a war crime. ([X](#)), ([X](#))
- The Hebrew text in the authentic version references the soldier's own child. The "confession" about a murdered 5-year-old was fabricated entirely by pro-Hamas accounts. ([X](#)), ([X](#))
- Digital forensics — including replies on the post itself — show clear signs of tampering: garbled or inserted text, unnatural image artifacts, and a "Greater Israel" patch on the uniform that real IDF soldiers don't wear. ([X](#))
- This isn't an isolated fake. Multiple versions of the same hoax have circulated featuring different soldiers, all paired with the identical script — a reused disinformation template, not a real event. ([Reddit](#))
- The pattern reveals the truth: pro-Hamas activists keep having to fabricate atrocities because real ones documenting deliberate IDF war crimes don't exist.
- These fabrications are so common that they have earned the name "Pallywood," a term for the recurring use of staged scenes and doctored images to manufacture false atrocity stories against Israel. ([Pallywood](#)), ([Gazawood](#)), ([Israel Foreign Ministry](#))

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QUOTES

"The term 'Pallywood' refers to the staging of scenes by Palestinian journalists in order to present the Palestinians as hapless victims of Israeli aggression. They are able to succeed in this endeavor in large part due to the credulity and eagerness of the Western press to present these images, which reinforce the image of the Palestinian David struggling valiantly against the overpowering Israeli Goliath. Pallywood has led to astonishing lapses in Western journalistic standards in which badly staged scenes regularly appear on the news as 'real events.'" — Pallywood.com

TAKEAWAY

This was a deliberate hoax. Someone took a real photo of an Israeli soldier holding his own young daughter's sock (a keepsake because he missed her while deployed). They edited it and added fake text claiming he had killed a Gazan girl and was proudly smelling her sock as a "hobby." The false story spread to millions of people as fact.

When activists have to invent war crimes by twisting innocent family photos, it shows the real atrocities they claim don't exist. This is a textbook example of "Pallywood," the pro-Palestinian pattern of staging and faking images for anti-Israel propaganda.