



DE DETAILED ANALYSIS

2025-10-05 heute journal vom 5. Oktober 2025

Broadcast: heute-journal | 2025-10-05 | Analysed on: 2026-03-12 18:32

Version 2.2-detail | Konverter 3.3 (2026-05-14) | Masstab: §26 MStV

OVERALL SCORE

5.5/10

Considerable bias

0 = balanced, 10 = strongly one-sided/manipulative

POLITICAL SPECTRUM

Classification according to Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) 2024

The Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES 2024) is an academic survey of 609 political scientists in 31 countries. Each party is rated on a scale from 0 (far left) to 10 (far right).

Party	Linke	Greens	SPD	BSW	CDU/CSU	FDP	Freie W.	AfD
CHES	1.23	2.28	3.41	3.78	6.23	6.54	6.77	9.10
Spectrum	Left	Left	Left	Left	Right	Right	Right	Right

The overall tendency is displayed on a 0–10 scale (0 = strongly left-favouring, 5 = balanced, 10 = strongly right-favouring). The calculation is based on the difference in average favouring of left vs. right parties (grouping according to CHES 2024).

TENDENCY (L – R)

4.9 / 10

Balanced

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

← Left

Right →

Source: Chapel Hill Expert Survey 2024 — chesdata.eu | [Jolly et al., Electoral Studies, 2022](#) | Thresholds: [Pew Research Center](#)

This section serves political classification and does not feed into the overall score.

BROADCAST INFO AND THEMATIC FRAMEWORK

Broadcast data

- Title: ZDF heute-journal
- Date: 05.10.2025
- Presenter(s): Heinz Wolf and Marietta Slomka (dual presentation)



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- Reporters / Interview partners: Alisa Jung (correspondent Israel), Jan Busse (expert, Bundeswehr University Munich), Bouliné/Gulené Atay (correspondent Syria/Damascus), Christoph Söller (report Oktoberfest), Christiane Lange & Claudio Ambruster (culture report), Miguel Chevalier (artist, interviewed)

Actors	Function	Party/Affiliation	Political spectrum
Marietta Slomka	ZDF presenter	ZDF (public broadcaster)	Left-liberal (self-perception: neutral)
Heinz Wolf	ZDF presenter	ZDF (public broadcaster)	Left-liberal (self-perception: neutral)
Jan Busse	Middle East expert, Bundeswehr University Munich	Academic	Moderately liberal, security policy
Alisa Jung	ZDF correspondent Israel	ZDF	Institutionally Western
Gulené Atay	ZDF correspondent Syria/Damascus	ZDF	Institutionally Western
Netanyahu	Israeli Prime Minister	Likud	Right-conservative (cited only)
Donald Trump	US President	Republican	Right-populist (cited only)
Hassan Ajam	Civil rights activist Syria	Civil society	Democratic-pluralist
Rana Ascheikh Ali	Lawyer, women's rights activist Syria	Civil society	Liberal-feminist
Ahmad Aschara	Syrian transitional president	HTS successor structure	Islamist-pragmatic
Carsten Linnemann	CDU Secretary General	CDU	Conservative
Miguel Chevalier	Digital artist	Cultural sector	Non-political

Main topics of this edition

The broadcast's main topic is the Middle East negotiations on the hostage exchange between Israel and Hamas on the occasion of the second anniversary of 7 October, supplemented by a Syria report on the first parliamentary election after Assad. Secondary topics covered include the Russian missile attack on Ukraine, domestic political topics (Bürgergeld reform, deportations to Afghanistan, arson attack on CSU headquarters), the conclusion of the Oktoberfest, and sports and culture reports.



CHAPTER 1 — DETAILED ANALYSIS OF THE 15 CRITERIA

Hard facts — 9 techniques that are countable and scientifically robust

1. EXPERT SELECTION

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Expert 1: Jan Busse, Middle East expert, Bundeswehr University Munich

Timestamp	approx. 06:00–13:00
Statement	**"I am, as far as this first step is concerned, reasonably optimistic."* / **"Some of them are convicted terrorists and murderers."*
Assessment	Busse is employed at a Bundeswehr university — an institution subordinate to the German Ministry of Defence. His security policy background shapes the perspective: pro-Israel, critical of Hamas, Western-institutional. No obvious personal conflicts of interest, but institutional proximity to German security policy.
Missing counter-voice	An expert from the field of international law (e.g. from Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch or a university without Bundeswehr ties) or a Palestinian political scientist would have provided a counter-perspective.

Expert 2: Gulené Atay, ZDF correspondent Syria

Timestamp	approx. 18:00–22:00
Statement	**"The country is on the brink. The country is an open wound."*
Assessment	As a ZDF correspondent, institutionally committed to the broadcaster; his assessments are journalistic, not academic. Positive: he openly identifies weaknesses in the electoral process.
Missing counter-voice	A Syrian political scientist or a representative of the Kurdish self-administration would have brought in the perspective of the excluded population groups.

Missing expert groups:

- International law expert/ICC expert on the Gaza war
- Palestinian political scientist
- Representative of a humanitarian organisation (UNRWA, MSF)

Summary: The expert selection is one-sidedly Western-institutional; with Jan Busse, exclusively an expert with a Bundeswehr background is interviewed, without a counter-voice from the Palestinian, Arab or international law sphere.



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2. SOURCE SELECTION

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Claims without primary source = penalty points (rumour check)

Source 1: Donald Trump (US President)

Timestamp

approx. 03:00 — Statement: *“They have begun the negotiations. They will take a few days. We’ll see how they turn out. But I’ve heard it’s going very well.”*

Assessment

Trump is a party to the conflict (arms supplier to Israel, mediator); his statements are cited without critical contextualisation of his position of interest.

Missing counter-source

UN Secretary-General Guterres, Arab mediators or Palestinian negotiators would have provided a counter-perspective.

Source 2: Netanyahu (Israeli Prime Minister)

Timestamp

approx. 03:45 — Statement: *“Let’s hope we can do it the easy way, not the hard way.”*

Assessment

Netanyahu is the main actor; his statement is cited without contextualisation of his domestic political motives (maintaining the coalition through continuation of the war).

Missing counter-source

Israeli opposition politicians, representatives of hostage families who criticise Netanyahu for delaying negotiations.

Source 3: Carsten Linnemann (CDU Secretary General)

Timestamp

approx. 23:45 — Statement: *“And then they will find that the SPD and the Union are looking in the same direction...”*

Assessment

Linnemann is a party to the domestic political discourse; his statement on the Bürgergeld reform is presented without a counter-voice (trade unions, social welfare associations, SPD critics).

Missing counter-source

DGB, Paritätischer Wohlfahrtsverband, SPD social wing.

Summary: The source selection is consistently institutional-Western and close to government; critical counter-voices from civil society, from those affected or from non-Western perspectives are systematically absent.



3. TIME DISTRIBUTION									6/10
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Estimated airtime per topic/position:

Topic/Position	approx. time	Share
Middle East (Israel/Gaza/hostages)	approx. 13 min.	~46%
Syria	approx. 7 min.	~25%
Ukraine attack	approx. 1 min.	~3%
Domestic politics (Bürgergeld, deportation, CSU arson)	approx. 2 min.	~7%
Oktoberfest	approx. 3 min.	~11%
Sport	approx. 1.5 min.	~5%
Culture (AI/Chevalier)	approx. 2 min.	~7%
Weather	approx. 0.5 min.	~2%

Within the Middle East block:

- Israeli perspective (hostages, survivors, Netanyahu): (46%)
- Expert interview (Western-institutional): (54%)
- Palestinian civilian perspective: approx. 45 sec. (6%)
- Humanitarian/legal dimension: 0 min. (0%)

Summary: The Middle East block dominates the broadcast with almost half of the airtime, but is internally distributed in a strongly asymmetric manner — Palestinian voices receive less than 10% of Middle East airtime; the massive Russian attack on Ukraine receives only approx. 1 minute despite its severity.



4. OMISSION (Selective Omission)

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Omission 1:

Context

ICC arrest warrant against Netanyahu and Gallant (issued November 2024) and ICJ proceedings on genocide charges

Relevant at: timestamp approx. 00:30–13:00 (entire Middle East block)

Effect

Viewers receive no picture of the international legal situation; Netanyahu appears as a legitimate negotiating partner without legal burden.

Omission 2:

Context

Humanitarian situation in Gaza: hunger, blockade of aid deliveries, destruction of the healthcare system

Relevant at: timestamp approx. 04:50 (Palestinian voices)

Effect

The Palestinian civilian population appears as a passive victim without structural context; Israeli blockade policy is not addressed.

Omission 3:

Context

Israeli settlement expansion in the West Bank during the Gaza war

Relevant at: timestamp approx. 11:30 (discussion on two-state solution)

Effect

The discussion about a Palestinian state appears abstract-theoretical, without addressing the simultaneous destruction of the basis for that state.

Omission 4:

Context

Death toll in Gaza (over 40,000 according to UN figures at the time of broadcast)

Relevant at: timestamp approx. 00:30–13:00

Effect

The war is portrayed as a hostage problem, not as a humanitarian catastrophe with massive Palestinian deaths.

Omission 5:

Context

Domestic political pressure on Netanyahu from the Israeli protest movement of hostage families

Relevant at: timestamp approx. 02:10 (Israeli civilian voices)

Effect

Netanyahu appears as an acting party without domestic political opposition; criticism of his delaying of negotiations is absent.



Summary: The omissions are systematic and without exception concern information that would burden the image of Israel; Palestinian suffering, the international legal situation and Israeli domestic political criticism are structurally absent.

Missing voices

- ICC lawyer/international law expert: Would have contextualised the ongoing proceedings against Israel and Hamas and shed light on the legal framework for the negotiations.
- UNRWA spokesperson/MSF representative: Would have documented the humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza with concrete figures (hunger, medical care, casualties).
- Israeli opposition politician (e.g. Lapid): Would have presented the domestic political criticism of Netanyahu and his delays in negotiations.
- Palestinian political scientist/representative of the PA: Would have explained the Palestinian negotiating position and the role of the Palestinian Authority from their own perspective.
- Arab diplomat (Qatar/Egypt): Would have presented the mediating role and regional interests first-hand.
- Hamas-affiliated spokesperson or representative of the Palestinian diaspora: Would have explained the logic of Hamas's negotiations from their perspective (even if to be assessed critically).
- Survivor from Gaza / Palestinian journalist: Would have deepened the perspective of the civilian population under bombardment.
- Critical security expert on US mediation: Would have shed light on the conflicts of interest of the Trump administration (arms deliveries, Middle East policy).



5. MANIPULATION OF FIGURES

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Complete figures include: absolute value, share (%) and trend

Finding 1:

Timestamp approx. 07:00

Figure: "20 living and 28 killed hostages on the part of Hamas [...] in exchange for 250 prisoners with long sentences and then another 1700 with shorter sentences"

Missing context

The total number of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails (over 10,000 at the time of broadcast, many in administrative detention without charge) is not mentioned. The total number of Palestinian casualties is also absent.

Effect

The exchange appears approximately symmetrical (48 hostages against ~1950 prisoners), without the structural imbalance in prisoner numbers becoming visible.

Finding 2:

Timestamp approx. 08:30

Figure: "up to 30,000, 40,000 well-trained fighters" (Hamas before the war)

Missing context

These figures are disputed; Israeli military figures tend towards higher numbers, independent estimates vary considerably. No source cited.

Effect

The portrayal of Hamas's strength appears as established fact, although these are estimates.

Finding 3:

Timestamp approx. 27:00 (Oktoberfest)

Figure: "6.5 million people celebrated [...] Drank approximately 6.5 million litres of beer."

Missing context

No figures given for comparison years or economic significance — however, the omission here is not manipulative, as this is an entertainment report.

Effect

Neutral.

Summary: The use of figures in the Middle East block is selective: Israeli hostages are named precisely, Palestinian casualties and prisoner numbers are completely absent, producing a distorted picture of proportionality.



6. GUILT BY ASSOCIATION									4/10
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Association 1:	
Timestamp	approx. 24:30
Quote	<i>**Federal Interior Minister Dobrindt is pushing for the possibility of regular deportations to Afghanistan. [...] Contacts with the Taliban are controversial.**</i>
Technique: The mention of "Taliban" immediately after "Dobrindt" without further contextualisation creates an implicit association between the CSU politician and the Taliban.	
Effect	Dobrindt appears as someone willing to cooperate with terrorists — without the broadcast objectively examining the trade-off (deportations vs. human rights situation).

Association 2:	
Timestamp	approx. 07:30
Quote (Busse)	<i>**Some of them are convicted terrorists and murderers.**</i>
Technique: The characterisation of Palestinian prisoners as "terrorists and murderers" is not questioned and is thus implicitly adopted by the broadcast.	
Effect	Palestinian prisoners are collectively criminalised; the question of the legitimacy of Israeli military courts or administrative detention is not raised.

Summary: Guilt-by-association techniques are moderately present in this broadcast; the most problematic association concerns the uncritical adoption of the characterisation of Palestinian prisoners as "terrorists".



7. TIMING

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Finding 1:

Position: 00:00–00:45 (broadcast opening)

Content: "The big question will be whether at least the first point of the peace plan to be addressed will succeed. The exchange of the remaining Israeli hostages for Palestinian prisoners."

Timing effect

The broadcast opens with the hostage question as the primary framing — before any contextualisation of the war, the humanitarian situation or the anniversary. This sets the agenda for the entire broadcast: the war is primarily a hostage problem.

Finding 2:

Position: approx. 14:30 (after the Middle East block)

Content: Syria report with reference to refugees "as we here in Germany know only too well"

Timing effect

The Syria report follows immediately after the Middle East block and, through the refugee reference, activates the German migration debate — an implicit linking of Middle East instability and German migration pressure.

Finding 3:

Position: approx. 23:00 (after Syria, Ukraine, before Oktoberfest)

Content: Bürgergeld reform (Linnemann/CDU), deportations to Afghanistan (Dobrindt/CSU)

Timing effect

Domestic political topics are embedded briefly and without depth between international crises and entertainment topics — this minimises their impact and prevents critical engagement.

Summary: The timing of the broadcast is strategic: the hostage question as the opening topic sets the Middle East framing; the Syria report implicitly activates the migration debate; domestic political topics are marginalised between crises and entertainment.



8. SELECTIVE OUTRAGE

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Outrage = bias. Selective outrage reinforces the finding. Score = degree of outrage (0–5) + selectivity (0–5)

Finding 1:

Timestamp

approx. 04:50 — Reaction: *"An entire residential building in the Al-Tufa neighbourhood was hit in a barbaric Israeli attack"*

Comparable without outrage: The Hamas terrorist attack of 7 October 2023 is described in the same report as "a music festival at which Hamas had killed people" — without a comparably strong adjective such as "barbaric".

Asymmetry: "Barbaric" for Israeli attacks (from a Palestinian source, not distanced) vs. neutral description of the Hamas massacre — this asymmetry is not journalistically justifiable, even if "barbaric" comes from a direct quote.

Finding 2:

Timestamp

approx. 22:00 (Ukraine)

Reaction: "The Russian army had again massively attacked Ukraine the previous night with drones, rockets and cruise missiles."

Comparable without outrage: Israeli attacks on residential areas in Gaza are described in the same report significantly more briefly and with less outrage than Russian attacks on Ukraine.

Asymmetry: Russian warfare receives stronger moral framing than Israeli warfare — even though both affect civilian populations.

Finding 3:

Timestamp

approx. 24:00

Reaction: Arson attack on CSU headquarters is reported as a news item; state security is investigating.

Comparable without outrage: Attacks on mosques or left-wing institutions are not mentioned in this broadcast — no comparison possible, but the prominence of the report (CSU headquarters) is noteworthy.

Asymmetry: Not clearly manipulative, as arson attacks on party headquarters are generally newsworthy.

Summary: Selective outrage is evident above all in the asymmetric assessment of Russian vs. Israeli warfare and in the uncritical adoption of the adjective "barbaric" for Israeli attacks without a comparable evaluation of the Hamas terrorist attack.



9. COMPLETENESS

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The Gaza war has been ongoing for two years at the time of the broadcast; on 7 October 2023, Hamas carried out a terrorist attack on Israel in which approximately 1,200 people were killed and over 250 taken hostage. Israel responded with a military offensive in Gaza which, according to UN figures, claimed over 40,000 Palestinian casualties and led to a humanitarian catastrophe. The international community is divided between solidarity with Israel (right of self-defence) and criticism of the proportionality of Israeli warfare and the humanitarian situation in Gaza. Negotiations on a ceasefire and hostage exchange failed several times; the USA under Trump is now mediating again.

Share of perspectives covered

Inverted: original value measures coverage (higher = better). Displayed as deviation (higher = greater gaps).

- [A] Israeli civil society / relatives of hostages: demand for immediate release, criticism of the Netanyahu government for delays
- [B] Israeli government (Netanyahu): security policy justification for the conduct of the war, conditions for a ceasefire
- [C] Palestinian civilian population in Gaza: humanitarian situation, casualties, displacement, perspective on the war
- [D] Hamas perspective / Palestinian political representatives: conditions, motivation, political goals
- [E] International legal perspective (ICC, ICJ): ongoing proceedings against Israel and Hamas, war crimes allegations
- [F] Humanitarian organisations (UNRWA, MSF, ICRC): situation of the civilian population, access to aid deliveries
- [G] US foreign policy / Trump administration: mediating role, leverage, interests
- [H] Arab neighbouring states (Egypt, Qatar, Saudi Arabia): mediating role, regional interests
- [I] Critical Israeli voices (opposition, peace movement): criticism of the conduct of the war, demand for a political solution
- [J] International legal classification of Israeli military operations: proportionality, law of occupation, settlement policy

[A] INDICATED

Timestamp: approx. 02:10 — Quote: "I am hopeful that the hostages will come back and that the deal will work out. But my heart has been broken so many times that I'm also afraid to believe in it."

Assessment: Survivors of the Nova festival are briefly heard, but without criticism of Netanyahu or the Israeli government.

[B] INDICATED

Timestamp: approx. 03:45 — Quote: "Let's hope we can do it the easy way, not the hard way."

Assessment: Netanyahu is only indirectly included through quotes; no direct questioning or critical contextualisation of his negotiating blockades.

[C] ADDRESSED (limited)

Timestamp: approx. 05:20 — Quote: "We see no change in the situation, on the contrary. We don't know what to do."

Assessment: Palestinian civilian voices are present, but very briefly and without structural contextualisation of the humanitarian catastrophe.

[D] OMITTED

Timestamp: — — Quote: —

Assessment: The Hamas perspective is described exclusively through Israeli and US sources; no Palestinian political voice.



[E] OMITTED

Timestamp: — — Quote: —

Assessment: ICC arrest warrant against Netanyahu, ICJ proceedings on genocide charges — not a single word.

[F] OMITTED

Timestamp: — — Quote: —

Assessment: Humanitarian organisations are not cited; the catastrophic supply situation in Gaza is not addressed.

[G] ADDRESSED

Timestamp: approx. 03:00 — Quote: "They have begun the negotiations. They will take a few days. We'll see how they turn out."

Assessment: The Trump perspective is presented in detail, but uncritically and without questioning US interests.

[H] OMITTED

Timestamp: — — Quote: —

Assessment: Egypt as mediator is mentioned, but Qatar, Saudi Arabia and their interests are completely absent.

[I] OMITTED

Timestamp: — — Quote: —

Assessment: Israeli peace movement, opposition (Lapid, Gantz) or protest movement of hostage families against Netanyahu — not a word.

[J] OMITTED

Timestamp: — — Quote: —

Assessment: International legal classification of the occupation, settlement policy in the West Bank, ICC arrest warrant — completely blanked out.



Soft facts — 6 qualitative techniques

10. FRAMING (setting the frame)

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Finding 1:

Timestamp	approx. 00:30
Quote	<i>**The big question will be whether at least the first point of the peace plan to be addressed will succeed. The exchange of the remaining Israeli hostages for Palestinian prisoners.**</i>
Manipulation	The topic is framed exclusively as a hostage question — not as a ceasefire, not as a humanitarian catastrophe, not as an end to the war. The term "peace plan" is used for the Trump plan without questioning it.
Why problematic	Viewers perceive the conflict primarily as a hostage problem, not as a war with over 40,000 casualties on the Palestinian side. The framing structurally privileges the Israeli loss perspective.

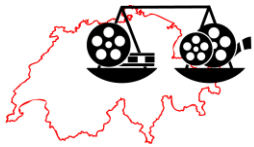
Finding 2:

Timestamp	approx. 01:00
Quote	<i>**And so new hope is stirring in Israel in these days of remembrance.**</i>
Manipulation	"Days of remembrance" frames 7 October exclusively as an Israeli day of remembrance — not as the beginning of a war that also marks a date of mass death for Palestinians.
Why problematic	The emotional framing ("hope", "remembrance") is assigned one-sidedly to the Israeli side; Palestinian suffering receives no comparable emotional framing.

Finding 3:

Timestamp	approx. 04:50
Quote	<i>**An entire residential building in the Al-Tufa neighbourhood was hit in a barbaric Israeli attack**</i>
Manipulation	The word "barbaric" comes from the direct quote of a Palestinian source (not clearly attributed in the transcript), but is embedded in the report without a distancing formula.
Why problematic	On the one hand, "barbaric" for Israeli attacks is the only evaluative term in the entire report — no comparably strong adjective is used for the Hamas terrorist attack of 7 October. On the other hand, clear source attribution is missing.

Summary: The main topic is consistently framed as an Israeli hostage question; the Palestinian war perspective, humanitarian catastrophe and international legal dimension remain structurally blanked out. The framing is one-sided, but not extreme.



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11. CHOICE OF WORDS AND TERMS									5/10
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Finding 1:	
Timestamp	approx. 07:30
Quote	<i>**Some of them are convicted terrorists and murderers.**</i>
Manipulation	The expert Jan Busse describes Palestinian prisoners as "convicted terrorists and murderers" — this characterisation is not questioned or contextualised by the presenter.
Why problematic	A neutral alternative would be: "Palestinian prisoners who were convicted under Israeli law" — since Israeli military courts are internationally contested and human rights organisations have documented systematic procedural deficiencies.

Finding 2:	
Timestamp	approx. 00:45
Quote	<i>**Palestinian prisoners** (for the other side) vs. **Israeli hostages** (for the Israeli side)</i>
Manipulation	Asymmetric choice of terms: Israelis are "hostages" (emotionally charged, victim status), Palestinians are "prisoners" (neutral-juridical, no victim status).
Why problematic	Many of the Palestinian prisoners were held in administrative detention without charge; the choice of terms suggests a moral asymmetry that is not journalistically justified.

Finding 3:	
Timestamp	approx. 02:50
Quote	<i>**Trump publishes online a map that is supposed to show where the Israeli army must withdraw to**</i>
Manipulation	"That is supposed to show" is a mild distancing formula — however, Trump's plan is overall referred to as a "peace plan" without questioning the designation.
Why problematic	A neutral alternative would be: "the proposal described by Trump as a peace plan" — since the plan is rejected by the Palestinian side and parts of the international community.

Finding 4:	
Timestamp	approx. 14:30 (Syria moderation)
Quote	<i>**The country from which millions of people have fled, as we here in Germany know only too well.**</i>
Manipulation	The insertion "as we here in Germany know only too well" links the Syria topic to the German migration debate — an implicit framing that defines Syria primarily as a German migration problem.



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**Why
problematic**

A neutral alternative would be: "The country from which millions of people have fled" — without the German reference, which forces a particular reception perspective.

Summary: The choice of words shows systematic asymmetries in favour of the Israeli perspective (hostages vs. prisoners) and contains several unquestioned value judgements; the choice of terms for Palestinian prisoners is particularly problematic.



12. MODERATION BEHAVIOUR									5/10
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Finding 1:	
Timestamp	approx. 00:30
Quote (presenter Slomka)	<i>**And so new hope is stirring in Israel in these days of remembrance.**</i>
Analysis	Slomka uses emotional language ("hope is stirring", "days of remembrance") exclusively for the Israeli side. A comparable emotional framing for Palestinian suffering is completely absent. This is a structural asymmetry in the language of moderation.

Finding 2:	
Timestamp	approx. 14:30
Quote (presenter Slomka)	<i>**We stay in the region and turn to Syria. The country from which millions of people have fled, as we here in Germany know only too well. In which cities were, among other things, reduced to rubble and ashes by Russian bombers.**</i>
Analysis	The moderation frames Syria primarily as a German migration problem and emphasises Russian war crimes — without mentioning the role of the USA, Turkey or other actors. The formulation "as we here in Germany know only too well" is an implicit activation of the migration debate.

Finding 3:	
Timestamp	approx. 23:30
Quote (presenter Wolf)	<i>**US Secretary of Homeland Security Noam has described the major US city of Chicago as, quote, a war zone in which criminals were destroying people's lives.**</i>
Analysis	The formulation "quote" distances itself from the statement — correct. However, any contextualisation of the political dimension is absent (Trump strategy, democratically governed cities as targets). The following sentence mentions the Democratic counter-criticism, but without elaboration.

Summary: The moderation shows a consistent emotional asymmetry in favour of the Israeli perspective and implicitly frames Syria as a German migration problem; critical follow-up questions to the expert Busse are largely absent.



13. QUESTION ASYMMETRY

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Asymmetry 1:

To Jan Busse,
approx. 06

30: "With regard to what has now been attempted from tomorrow, i.e. a release or exchange of the hostages, how optimistic are you?" — soft/open

To Jan Busse,
approx. 09

00: "Is that also a sign that Hamas has actually been severely weakened by this entire war?" — suggestive (answer implied)

Comparison

Not a single critical question about Israeli negotiating delays, about Netanyahu's role in previously failed deals or about Israeli warfare. The questions are consistently focused on Hamas weakness and the hostage problem.

Asymmetry 2:

To Gulené
Atay, approx.
18

30: "These elections were not what we would understand by general free elections." — critical towards the Syrian government

Comparison

No comparably critical framing towards Israeli or US actors in the Middle East block. The moderation's willingness to be critical is noticeably higher towards non-Western actors.

Asymmetry 3:

To Jan Busse,
approx. 11

00: "The Israeli side would hardly agree to that, would they?" — rhetorical, anticipating the answer

Analysis

The question suggests that Israeli demands are legitimate and Palestinian demands are unrealistic. A counter-question ("Will Hamas agree to Israeli conditions?") would have established symmetry.

Summary: The questions to the expert are consistently soft and focused on criticism of Hamas; critical questions about Israeli warfare, about Netanyahu or about US interest politics are completely absent.



14. FALSE BALANCE

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Finding 1:

Timestamp approx. 11:30

Construct: "A Palestinian state is only mentioned very vaguely and quasi at some point perhaps in the distant future in this peace plan of the American side."

Analysis

The presenter presents the two-state solution as a theoretically distant possibility, without naming the concrete destruction of its foundations (settlement expansion, Gaza destruction). This creates a false balance between "there is a plan" and "it is difficult" — without naming the structural obstacles.

Finding 2:

Timestamp approx. 18:30 (Syria)

Construct: On the one hand praise for Aschara (UN appearance), on the other hand criticism (loss of trust) — apparently balanced.

Analysis

The balance is actually present here; the correspondent identifies both positive and negative developments. No false balance problem in this segment.

Summary: False balance is not a dominant problem in this broadcast; the asymmetry lies more in omission than in false balancing; however, the Middle East block shows a structural imbalance due to the absence of Palestinian counter-perspectives.



15. AGENDA-SETTING

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Finding 1:

Agenda element set: The Gaza war is primarily a hostage problem that can be solved through a deal.

Timestamp

approx. 00:30 — Evidence: *“The big question will be whether at least the first point of the peace plan to be addressed will succeed. The exchange of the remaining Israeli hostages for Palestinian prisoners.”*

Alternative agenda: The Gaza war as a humanitarian catastrophe, as an international law problem, as a question of the proportionality of Israeli warfare — this agenda is completely absent.

Finding 2:

Agenda element set: Trump is a constructive mediator who exerts pressure on both sides.

Timestamp

approx. 09:30 — Evidence: *“lies not only on this side, but also in the fact that a US President was for the first time truly willing to also exert pressure on Benjamin Netanyahu.”*

Alternative agenda: Trump's conflicts of interest (arms deliveries, Middle East business, Jared Kushner), his earlier positions (Riviera plan, support for annexation) — this agenda is absent.

Finding 3:

Agenda element set: Syria is primarily a German migration problem and a stability problem.

Timestamp

approx. 14:30 — Evidence: *“The country from which millions of people have fled, as we here in Germany know only too well.”*

Alternative agenda: Syria as an example of reconstruction after dictatorship, as a question of international responsibility, as a test case for Western democracy promotion.

Summary: The agenda-setting of the broadcast is consistent: the Middle East conflict is framed as a solvable hostage problem, Trump as a constructive actor, Syria as a German migration problem — alternative agendas (international law, humanitarian catastrophe, US interests) are systematically blanked out.



CHAPTER 2 — OVERALL EVALUATION

Results

Dominant techniques

- 1. Omission / Selective Omission (Score 7):** The most systematic manipulation technique in this broadcast is the structural absence of key information: ICC arrest warrant against Netanyahu, Palestinian casualty figures, humanitarian situation in Gaza, Israeli opposition voices and international law perspective are completely absent. This produces a fundamentally distorted picture of the conflict without a single false statement needing to be made.
- 2. Agenda-Setting (Score 6):** The broadcast consistently sets an agenda that defines the Gaza war as a solvable hostage problem, portrays Trump as a constructive mediator and frames Syria as a German migration problem. This agenda-setting occurs in the first 45 seconds of the broadcast and is maintained throughout the entire programme.
- 3. Framing (Score 6):** The main topic is framed one-sidedly from an Israeli perspective through emotional language ("hope is stirring", "days of remembrance"); Palestinian suffering receives no comparable emotional framing. The framing is consistent and structural, not isolated.

Core messages of the broadcast

MESSAGE 1 (SUBSTANTIVE): "The Gaza war is primarily a hostage problem that can be solved through a deal brokered by Trump — if Hamas cooperates."

Technique: Framing, agenda-setting, omission — Evidence: 00:30, 03:00, 09:30

MESSAGE 2 (POLITICAL): "Israel is a legitimate actor negotiating under pressure; Hamas is a weakened terrorist organisation giving up a valuable bargaining chip."

Technique: Choice of words, expert selection, question asymmetry — Evidence: 07:30, 08:30, 09:00

...

...

Justification: The broadcast shows a clear but not extreme one-sidedness on the main topic of the Middle East. The one-sidedness manifests itself less in false statements than in systematic omissions (ICC proceedings, humanitarian situation, Palestinian casualties) and in a consistent emotional asymmetry in favour of the Israeli perspective. Pursuant to §26 para. 1 MStV, broadcasters are obliged to ensure balance; the ZDF State Treaty (§6) specifies this as a requirement for diversity of opinion and objectivity. The present broadcast does not meet these requirements in the Middle East block, as key perspectives (Palestinian civil society, international law, humanitarian organisations) are structurally absent. The secondary topics (Syria, Ukraine, domestic politics) show lesser but likewise measurable asymmetries.

CONCLUSION

The heute-journal of 5 October 2025 shows, on the main topic of the Middle East, a clear, structurally conditioned one-sidedness that is produced primarily through systematic omissions and not through false statements. The Gaza war is framed as an Israeli hostage problem; Palestinian casualties, the humanitarian catastrophe, ongoing ICC proceedings and Israeli opposition voices are completely absent. This violates §26 para. 1 MStV, which obliges broadcasters to ensure balance and diversity of opinion, as well as §6 of the ZDF State Treaty, which requires objectivity and completeness of reporting. The completeness score of 3/10 demonstrates that of ten relevant perspectives only three were addressed even approximately. The broadcast is therefore not to be classified in the Middle East block as balanced basic provision within the meaning of the ZDF State Treaty; a complaint to the ZDF Television Council or to the supervisory authority (Rhineland-Palatinate) would be justifiable on the basis of this analysis.



CHAPTER 3 — PARTY-POLITICAL BIAS

Party	Score (-5..+5)	Concrete evidence (timestamp + brief quote)
CDU/CSU	-1	approx. 23:45 "Linnemann assumes many billions in any case" — Linnemann is allowed to present his position unchallenged (slightly positive); approx. 24:30 "Dobrindt is pushing for [...] deportations to Afghanistan [...] contacts with the Taliban are controversial" — implicit association with Taliban (slightly negative). On balance slightly negative due to Taliban association.
SPD	0	approx. 23:45 "Union and SPD continuing work on the reform of the Bürgergeld" — neutral mention; no independent SPD voice, no criticism, no favouring.
Greens	0	Not mentioned. No bias measurable.
FDP	0	Not mentioned. No bias measurable.
AfD	0	Not mentioned. No bias measurable.
BSW	0	Not mentioned. No bias measurable.
Linke	0	Not mentioned. No bias measurable.
Freie Wähler	0	Not mentioned. No bias measurable.

Note: The party-political bias of this broadcast is low, as domestic political topics are only marginally covered. The dominant bias is of a foreign policy-geopolitical nature (Israel/Palestine, USA, Russia), not party-political.

Party bias summary

- Most favoured: SPD (Score 0) — neutral treatment without criticism
- Most disadvantaged: CDU/CSU (Score -1) — slight disadvantage through Dobrindt-Taliban association
- Average deviation from 0: 0.1
- Political spectrum that dominates: None clearly — the broadcast shows no clear party-political bias in the domestic political area
- Conclusion: The party-political bias of this broadcast is negligibly low, as domestic political topics are only covered as brief news items. The actual bias lies in the foreign policy area (pro-Israeli/pro-Western in the Middle East conflict, pro-Ukrainian in the Russia conflict) and is geopolitical, not party-political in nature. An assessment of party-political bias on the basis of this single broadcast is therefore only of limited significance.



CHAPTER 4 — LEGAL CLASSIFICATION (§26 MStV / ZDF State Treaty)

Assessment pursuant to §26 MStV and ZDF State Treaty

Violation 1:

Norm: §26 para. 1 MStV (balance requirement) / §6 para. 1 ZDF State Treaty (objectivity, completeness)

Facts: Systematic absence of key perspectives in the Middle East block (ICC proceedings, humanitarian situation, Palestinian casualties, Israeli opposition)

Evidence: Timestamp 00:30–13:00 — Quote: "The big question will be whether at least the first point of the peace plan to be addressed will succeed. The exchange of the remaining Israeli hostages for Palestinian prisoners." — The entire 13-minute Middle East block treats the conflict exclusively as a hostage problem without incorporating the humanitarian dimension, the international legal situation or Palestinian political perspectives.

Assessment: §26 para. 1 MStV obliges broadcasters, when reporting on matters on which different opinions exist, to give adequate consideration to the diversity of opinions. The present broadcast violates this requirement by addressing only three of ten relevant perspectives even approximately and completely omitting five. The completeness score of 3/10 quantitatively demonstrates this violation.

Violation 2:

Norm: §6 para. 2 ZDF State Treaty (separation requirement opinion/news) / §26 para. 2 MStV

Facts: Uncritical adoption of evaluative terms without distancing formula

Evidence: Timestamp approx. 07:30 — Quote: "Some of them are convicted terrorists and murderers." — This value judgement by the expert Busse about Palestinian prisoners is not questioned by the presenter, not contextualised and not supplemented by a counter-perspective.

Assessment: The separation requirement demands that opinions be recognisable as such. The uncritical adoption of a one-sided characterisation without contextualisation of the contested legitimacy of Israeli military courts violates the objectivity requirement of the ZDF State Treaty.

Violation 3:

Norm: §26 para. 1 MStV (diversity of opinion) / §6 para. 1 ZDF State Treaty

Facts: One-sided expert selection without counter-voice

Evidence: Timestamp 06:00–13:00 — The only Middle East expert (Jan Busse, Bundeswehr University) represents a Western-institutional, security policy perspective; no counter-voice from the Palestinian, Arab or international law sphere is included.

Assessment: §26 MStV requires the inclusion of different perspectives on controversial topics. A seven-minute expert interview with exclusively one perspective and no counter-voice violates this requirement, particularly on a topic of the complexity and controversy of the Gaza war.

Overall assessment §26 MStV

§26 MStV obliges broadcasters to ensure balance, objectivity and diversity of opinion; the ZDF State Treaty specifies these obligations for ZDF as a public-law basic provider with special responsibility for democratic opinion formation. The present broadcast violates these norms in the Middle East block through three identifiable violations: systematic omission of key perspectives (completeness score 3/10), uncritical adoption of one-sided value judgements and one-sided expert selection without counter-voice. The violations are not limited to individual formulations, but are structural and consistently demonstrable throughout the entire Middle East block, which indicates an editorial decision and not a random oversight. On the basis of this analysis, a complaint to the ZDF Television Council (§21 ZDF State Treaty) or to the supervisory authority of the state of Rhineland-Palatinate (§60 MStV) would be justifiable; the present documentation with timestamps and direct quotes meets the formal requirements for such a submission.



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Analysis prepared on the basis of the transcript provided. All timestamps are estimates from the transcript flow, as no technical time markers were available. Direct quotes are taken verbatim from the transcript. This analysis does not replace legal advice.



OVERALL EVALUATION OF THE 15 CRITERIA

Individual scores — All 15 criteria

No.	Criterion	Score	Classification
1	EXPERT SELECTION	5	●●●
2	SOURCE SELECTION	5	●●●
3	TIME DISTRIBUTION	6	●●●
4	OMISSION (Selective Omission)	7	●●●●
5	MANIPULATION OF FIGURES	5	●●●
6	GUILT BY ASSOCIATION	4	●●
7	TIMING	6	●●●
8	SELECTIVE OUTRAGE	6	●●●
9	COMPLETENESS	7	●●●●
10	FRAMING (setting the frame)	6	●●●
11	CHOICE OF WORDS AND TERMS	5	●●●
12	MODERATION BEHAVIOUR	5	●●●
13	QUESTION ASYMMETRY	6	●●●
14	FALSE BALANCE	4	●●
15	AGENDA-SETTING	6	●●●

HARD FACTS SCORE (1-8)

5.7/10

Considerable bias

SOFT FACTS SCORE (9-14)

5.3/10

Considerable bias

OVERALL SCORE

5.5/10

Considerable bias

Averaged from hard facts and soft facts



KEY — Meaning of scores

Individual scores per criterion (0–10)

0	No finding	No relevant anomaly identified.
1–2	Weak finding	Slight anomaly without material impairment of balance.
3–4	Slight to moderate finding	Discernible tendency; relevance of effect low to moderate.
5	Moderate finding with relevance of effect	Relevant bias that influences the opinion-forming potential of the audience.
6	Considerable finding (threshold)	Scores from 6 are reported as "considerable findings".
7	Considerable finding	Clear, well-documented bias with marked relevance of effect.
8–9	Serious finding	Pronounced bias; multiple documented individual findings in this criterion.
10	Maximum expression	Systematic, consistent bias in this criterion.

Aggregated deviation index — interpretation ranges

0.0 – 2.5	Unremarkable	No material patterns discernible; broadcast meets the requirement of factual accuracy.
2.6 – 4.0	Slight bias	Isolated anomalies; statistically visible, but still within the tolerance range.
4.1 – 6.0	Considerable bias	Multiple considerable findings; relevant impairment of diversity of perspectives.
6.1 – 8.0	Serious deviation from the balance requirement. High degree of deviation	Pronounced, broadcast-wide patterns; high relevance of effect.
8.1 – 10	Fundamental systemic one-sidedness. Very high degree of bias	Maximum expression across almost all criteria; systematically one-sided reporting.

Party-political bias (-5 to +5)

-5 to -3	Strongly disadvantaged	Party is clearly treated worse in portrayal, airtime or framing.
-2 to -1	Slightly disadvantaged	Discernible but weak disadvantage.
0	Neutral	No discernible favouring or disadvantage.
+1 to +2	Slightly favoured	Discernible but weak favouring.
+3 to +5	Strongly favoured	Party is clearly favoured in portrayal, airtime or framing.



Legal and methodological classification

No finding of fact	The results presented do not constitute findings of fact about individual persons, editorial teams or broadcasts. They are to be understood as the result of a standardised operationalisation, not as a determination of individual responsibility.
No legal ruling	The aggregated deviation index does not replace a legal assessment within the meaning of §26 MStV. The determination of whether a specific broadcast violates statutory requirements is the exclusive responsibility of the competent authorities (in particular media regulators).
No proof of causality	Statistical correlations are not to be interpreted as proof of causal relationships or editorial intentions. Deviation values may be influenced by topic selection, news situation, political controversy or format logic.
No judgement of intent	The analysis measures observable structural characteristics of broadcasts. A score of 7 means that a considerable bias has been identified — not that the editorial team intended this. The methodology makes no statements about motives or strategic objectives.
Heuristic comparison instrument	The index serves the comparative identification of patterns across thousands of broadcasts, not the precise metric measurement of individual items. Threshold values serve heuristic orientation, not sharp legal qualification.



APPENDIX: CANTONAL LEGISLATION

Legal basis Germany — ARD, ZDF

Law

Media State Treaty (MStV, 2020)

Relevant articles

- §26 para. 1 MStV: Public broadcasting institutions shall provide in their offerings a comprehensive overview of international, European, national and regional events in all essential areas of life. They shall thereby promote international understanding, European integration and social cohesion in the Federation and the Länder. Their offerings shall serve education, information, advice and entertainment. They shall offer contributions in particular to culture. Entertainment shall correspond to a public broadcasting offering profile.
- §5 para. 1 ZDF State Treaty: Obligation to objectivity and impartiality of reporting, consideration of diversity of opinion.
- ARD State Treaty: Basic provision mandate with objectivity and impartiality.

Core obligations

- 1. Diversity of opinion (internal pluralism):** All relevant perspectives must be represented in the overall programme
- 2. Objectivity and balance:** Presenters must treat guests to the same standards
- 3. Contribution to opinion formation:** The audience must receive sufficient information for independent opinion formation

Supervisory authority

- Broadcasting councils of the state broadcasting institutions: supervision of ARD institutions (BR, WDR, NDR, etc.)
- ZDF Television Council (§19 ZDF State Treaty): supervision of ZDF programme
- Legal supervision: respective federal state (ZDF: Rhineland-Palatinate)

Complaints procedure

1. Programme complaint to the competent broadcasting council or ZDF Television Council
2. Administrative court action



APPENDIX 2: SCIENTIFIC FOUNDATIONS

Literature

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- Schläpfer, D. (2026). Systematic AI-Assisted Analysis of Public Broadcaster Impartiality: A Scalable Methodological Framework for Measuring Structural Bias in Public Service Media. [SSRN 6688478](#)
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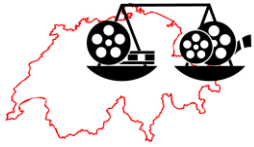
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Unbalanced reporting is the response to the halving initiative in Switzerland: here the manipulation techniques are explained in detail, starting with the selection of staff and source selection. 15 principles are then explained: omission, framing, temporal framing, guilt by association, emotionalisation, context removal and many more, illustrated with many examples. In addition, it becomes apparent where we ourselves apply these techniques — this promotes not only insight but also empathy.

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The interview is not a conversation. It is a stage — and someone else has written the script.

Those who do not know this provide material. Good quotes that are cut incorrectly. Correct statements that end up in the wrong context. Honest answers that are framed as confessions.

This book is not a media criticism book. It is a toolbox — for everyone who has a microphone in front of their face and wants to know what they can do about it. 7 chapters. 7 tools: What an interview really is. The 7 most common traps. The three basic principles of sovereignty — anchoring, reframing, setting boundaries. Preparation in one hour. Body and voice. What to do when things go wrong. And what counts after the interview.

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You think you see the world. In reality you see the frame that someone has placed around it. Framing is the oldest and most elegant manipulation technique in the world. It does not change the facts — it changes what we make of the facts. How we feel. What we believe. How we decide. And it works — because we all participate. Daily. Unconsciously. You too. This book is not a dry textbook. It is a workbook — playful, direct, full of examples from real life. You learn not only how others frame you. You learn how you yourself frame — and how you can use it consciously and fairly.

Because those who understand framing see the world more clearly. Listen to the news differently. Conduct conversations with more confidence. And can no longer so easily have a frame imposed on them that someone else has chosen.

With many exercises and concrete examples from politics, media and everyday life — and the occasional smile.

Framing with style. Because the frame changes everything.



The SRG collects 1.56 billion francs per year — compulsorily, from every household. Those who feel unfairly treated can lodge a complaint. There is even an authority for this: the UBI, the Independent Complaints Authority for Radio and Television.

Only: it is not independent. It has no sanctioning powers. And in 99.6% of all cases it decides: nothing.

This analysis lays bare the system — factually, precisely, without polemic. Proceedings, personnel, powers, costs, statistics, legal recourse. And the constitutional law review that shows: the UBI system meets none of the three fundamental criteria — it is not appropriate, not subject to separation of powers, not market-based. The authority that is supposed to protect citizens protects above all the system it was supposed to control.

Essential reading for everyone considering a complaint — and for everyone who wants to understand why genuine media regulation in Switzerland is still outstanding.