Terrorists are those who target and kill non-combatants (including, as on the USS Cole, military people not engaged in hostilities) for the purpose of spreading fear and terror. No definition more accurately describes the aims and actions of Palestinian groups such as Hamas, Islamic Jihad and Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigades that have murdered or maimed thousands of innocents since September 2000.

Yet many news organizations justify not using the word “terrorist” to characterize the perpetrators of mass killings of Israeli civilians. (On occasion they may paraphrase Israeli officials using the term – yet rarely use it directly themselves.) Many substitute “activists,” “militants,” “bombers” or “factions” for “terrorists.” At the same time, other groups, including those associated with Al Qaeda, the killers of thousands of Americans on 9/11, are unambiguously – and correctly – termed “terrorists.”

Some media outlets will call attacks on Israelis “acts of terror,” but refuse to label the perpetrators “terrorists.” They seek to shield the criminal from the crime. This is neither objective or neutral; those who commit acts of terror are terrorists – even when their victims are Israelis.

Many journalists claim they should not “judge” or “take sides” by using the negative label “terrorist.” But refusing to attach the term to groups that target and kill Israeli men, women and children is also taking sides. The terrorists’ side.

It’s time for ONE media standard in reporting on terrorist groups.