

Battle of algiers

[History](#)



Morality and technology in Battle of Algiers (1966) 24 September Justifying the morality of actions during war is complex because people have conflicting interests that influence their ideas of right and wrong. The film Battle of Algiers (1966), directed by Pontecorvo, illuminated the difficulties of examining the morality of actions during wars. This film is based on important events throughout the Algerian War (1954-1962) against the French Government. The most well-known of their clashes is the Battle of Algiers. It is important to analyze the justification, morality, and technology used in this time to understand the moral norms and limitations of the main actors. Terrorist tactics are justified in the context of a war that is a product of colonization and when enemies cannot be differentiated from the masses, although it is not morally acceptable to use terrorist tactics when fighting a terrorist organization because it punishes combatants and non-combatants alike and uses technology to the detriment of the entire colonized people. The tactics of terrorism on both sides of the war are justified because of the nature of the socio-economic and political context of Algeria, where the minority is fighting the colonial rule of France, while France cannot discern combatants from non-combatants. The National Liberation Front or FLN only wanted freedom and autonomy for Algeria. The French, on the contrary, acted as the colonizer, so they aimed to crush the rebellion using all means possible. The FLN knew that it could not defeat the French with a heads-on collision, so it resorted to guerilla tactics, mostly terrorist attacks, to attain the mission of demoralizing the French and inciting the masses to fight their colonial masters. France retaliated to preserve its authority in its colony. It believed that the resistance was composed of the minority, so it felt justified to eliminate the rebels, even if it meant having casualties of non-combatants

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because of the difficulty of differentiating them from the rebels.

It is not morally acceptable to use terrorist tactics, when combating a terrorist organization, because it does not differentiate combatants from non-combatants, thereby killing innocent civilians. The FLN bombed two French cafes and an airport because it knew that it could not conduct an effective offense using direct combat operations. Guerrilla operations would be more effective, even if they were stealthy and undermined the morality of their actions. This included hiding weapons in ordinary places and using women to hide guns under their burka and to launch bombing attacks. France reacted through bombing Arab communities and using torture to force FLN supporters/members to reveal the identity and hideouts of their members and leaders. These actions are immoral because they treated people as means to an end. Non-combatants were particularly vulnerable, because they did not actively support the war, and yet they were often killed in the crossfire. France could separate combatants from non-combatants by using intelligence-gathering actions and other covert activities. This way, they did not have to use terrorist acts that affected non-combatant Arab civilians.

Technology in warfare has evolved since the Battle of Algiers by becoming deadlier and less easy to detect. In the Battle of Algiers (1966), bombs with alarms were used to stimulate the explosions. Nowadays, bombers use cell phones to detonate bombs. Weapons further changed and include nuclear and biochemical weapons that could not be easily detected before they are launched. Like other traditional weapons, these armaments do not differentiate rebels from non-rebels. In addition, modern weapons of destruction can kill many more people and can affect or injure them in

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different ways. Old bombs can mangle bodies, but biochemical weapons can alter thinking and damage physical functioning without immediate death. The evolution of warfare technology heightens the perils of future wars. The film *Battle of Algiers* reminds the audience of the existence of immorality during wars. Terrorist attacks become prevalent which affect combatants and non-combatants alike. People can only fear what future wars will look like with present warfare technology that can kill instantly and in millions, or subject people to extreme suffering before death. Hence, it is hoped that modern states will no longer be involved in actions that can lead to war. A World War 3 or similar battles can produce cataclysmic results that nobody would ever want for their generation or the next.

Reference

Pontecorvo, G. (Director). (1966). *Battle of Algiers*. [Motion picture]. Italy: Igor Film.