Transcript

Electronic Intifada's video podcast "Day 10 Roundtable: Gaza's Al-Aqsa Flood"

A 99-minute roundtable presented on October 16, 2023

Featuring: Nora Barrows-Friedman, Asa Winstanley, and Ali Abunimah from EI, with guests Jon Elmer, Helena Cobban, Refaat Al-Areer, Abdaljawad Omar, and Shahd Abusalama

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Nora Barrows-Friedman:
And welcome back to The Electronic Intifada Podcast. We continue our live stream coverage here as best as we can. We have been furiously trying to get our friends and contributors in Gaza to join. It is very, very difficult to get through at this point as you can imagine, but we are going to have our regular guest John Elmer with us in a little while as well as others such as Helena Cobban, who's a veteran war reporter as well to provide some much needed insight and analysis later on in the program. Ali as always, you have some remarks up top and then we'll get deeper into it. Thank you so much Ali and Asa. I'm Nora Barrows-Friedman. We are The Electronic Intifada. Ali, please take it away.

Ali Abunimah:
Thanks, Nora. This morning, our dear friend Refaat Alareer in Gaza who has joined us on this live stream last week received the horrifying news that his family's home in another part of Gaza was bombed. With great relief, I was able to briefly contact Refaat and learn that he has not yet been able to reach anyone from his family. I cannot imagine the utter horror, devastation and grief he like so many other people in Gaza are facing. We're thinking of him and praying for his family's safety. Earlier today, I also contacted another friend from Gaza, who is in Istanbul and I asked him about his family, he wrote back: "unfortunately, my uncle and his entire family were wiped out. My brother in law's family were wiped out. I lost at least 36 persons from my relatives and close friends. I know of no words to say except those that we customarily say, *Allah yerham el shohada wa yousabber ahebba'ahom,* May God have mercy on the martyrs and grant patience to their dear ones.

The reality is that no one in Gaza knows from hour to hour, let alone from day to day, if they will still be alive. Death can be anywhere and everywhere. The morgues are full, the cemeteries are full, and now that people are being buried in mass graves. The UN has said that Gaza is even running out of body bags. I think of the friends and relatives of people from Gaza who are abroad who do not know if the

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lack of a text of a WhatsApp message or a tweet from their loved ones in Gaza is because of the collapse of the electricity and communication systems caused by Israel's attack, or because they too have been killed in this holocaust. Today, Israel's campaign of extermination by air, land and sea in Gaza is in its 10th day, killing Palestinians at a rate of one person every five minutes. Israel is sparing nothing and no one including hospitals, ambulances, doctors and journalists. The number of confirmed dead is now approaching 4000 including more than 1000 children. Many more are under the mountains of rubble beyond rescue beyond hope. That means that Israel with its allies in Washington, London, Berlin and Brussels has exterminated almost two in every 1000 Gaza residents and one in every 1000 Gaza children in just over a week. This is genocide. This is a holocaust planned and perpetrated openly and with the full support of the United States and European countries.

Over the decades, there has been a mountain of books, articles, lectures, seminars, sermons, movies, documentaries, you name it, asking the question, how can evil happen while this world watches? Why did no one stop Hitler's Holocaust? Admonitions to learn the lessons of Never Again inundate us every day. Well, now we're watching this in real time. In Gaza, those who survived the bombing may well die of dehydration or diseases in drinking water, which Israel has cut off is rapidly running out as is food, what water there is, cannot be pumped without electricity, forcing people to drink and give their children polluted water. More than 1 million people have been displaced in a confined territory in which nowhere is safe, and there is no shelter. But here it is again. And some of the most powerful people in the world are not merely silent, but to actively assisting the extermination campaign. Obviously, the biggest culprit is the United States, which has given Israel a green light for genocide. Joe Biden is flying bombs to Israel to kill more babies to bury them in rubble and in mass graves.

No less lethal is the campaign of lies that provides the justification for genocide. Biden himself spread the inflammatory lie that Hamas fighters beheaded Jewish babies. He may be the most powerful accomplice in this slaughter, but he is far from the only one. They are countless, but one which caught my attention today is David Lammy, the Foreign Affairs Spokesperson for Britain's Labour Party. He went on national television and actually claimed that Palestinians had raped Jewish babies. This unspeakable lie, this Nazi like demonization and incitement against Palestinians, places the blood of the children of Gaza firmly on the hands of those who spread them. What's most galling is that the soulless people are willing to help murder Palestinian children for nothing more than a better job, a ministerial car, another junket, a few more votes. They must be held accountable and so I was happy to see that this morning, the International Center of Justice for Palestinians issued a notice to the leaders of Britain's Labour Party that it plans to bring prosecutions against them for complicity in war crimes and crimes against humanity.

And indeed, in the Genocide Convention, complicity in genocide is a punishable crime. This came after the same legal advocacy group said similar notices to Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and other government officials. While they spread these deadly lies, the truth is coming out not just about the utter horror that Israel is inflicting on civilians in Gaza, but also about what happened before. Late last night The

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Electronic Intifada published a bombshell report that they urge you all to read and share as widely as possible. An Israeli woman, Yasmin Porat, who survived the initial Hamas assault on settlements near the Gaza boundary, on the seventh of October, says Israeli civilians were undoubtedly killed by their own Israeli security forces. It happened when Israeli forces engaged in fierce gun battles with Palestinian fighters in Kibbutz Barry and fired indiscriminately at both the fighters and the Israeli prisoners. And it likely happened elsewhere too.

They eliminated everyone including the hostages, Porat told Israeli radio that was very heavy crossfire and even tank shelling from the Israeli side. She talks about the Israelis firing tanks at the kibbutz house where she had been hiding. The woman, a 44-year-old mother of three, said that prior to the Israeli assault, she and other civilians had been held by the Palestinians for several hours and treated humanely. That her word. This explosive revelation is now being suppressed. Porat's interview has been removed from the website of Israel state broadcaster, Kan. But The Electronic Intifada has published the recording along with subtitles in the transcript, please share it as widely as possible. The accomplices in the ongoing extermination campaign built on lies and there are many of them, include US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, who is today back in Israel to continue offering support, not just for a genocidal extermination campaign, but also ethnic cleansing.

In recent days, we've seen disturbing reports that Blinken has been touring the region to urge various Arab regimes to support what is in effect, a final solution for the Palestinian people in Gaza, their expulsion by Israel to Egypt Sinai Peninsula, where they would begin another horrifying chapter of mass dispossession. We saw, for example, the report in the Egyptian publication, Mada Masr, last week, which reads that Egyptian sovereign agencies fear that Egypt's weak position may lead Israel with American support to propose a plan to resettle Palestinians in Sinai, a matter that Egypt has repeatedly rejected over the past two decades, especially if this proposal is linked to incentives, such as writing off a large portion of its debts or any other economic incentives. According to the sources, this is Mada Masr writing, there are concerns that the Egyptian administration sees this as a potential reprise of the 1991 Gulf War model when late President Hosni Mubarak agreed to a military intervention exchange for dropping a significant portion of Egypt's debts, especially if Gulf countries join these demands and exert pressure on Egypt.

The veteran investigative journalist Seymour Hersh also wrote this week that his sources are telling him that the United States is trying to convince Egypt to allow the expulsion of a significant part, if not all of Gaza's 2.3 million people. The Americans want them to be relocated to a tent city in the desert funded by Qatar according to Hersh that would then allow Israel to effectively destroy Gaza. Hersh writes, "with the staff doubt civilian population forced to leave, the Israeli operational plan calls for the Air Force to destroy the remaining structures in Gaza City and elsewhere in the North. Gaza City will be no more. Israel will then begin dropping American made 5000 pound bombs known as bunker busters." Antony Blinken, the American angel of death, has admitted that so far, he is having difficulty selling this plan for ethnic cleansing and genocide around the region. On Sunday, Blinken denied supporting the

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ethnic cleansing plan. The Secretary of State said, “I've heard directly from Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, and from virtually every other leader that I've talked to in the region, that the idea is a nonstarter, and so we do not support it. But we should take no reassurance from this.

Note what Blinken did not say! He did not say that ethnic cleansing, the forced removal of an indigenous people is morally wrong, a crime against humanity, which violates every notion of law and decency. He merely called it a nonstarter because he didn't find enough support for it. Presumably he will continue to look for that support and keep trying to build it, so the danger is grave. And we should not make the mistake of underestimating the fanaticism and willingness of the genocidal regime in Tel Aviv to take full advantage of what they undoubtedly see as a historical opportunity to complete the ethnic cleansing of 1948. And if they succeed in Gaza, with the flashing green light from the West, and inaction from the rest, they will turn their sights next to the West Bank, and then to the Palestinian population, and so called Israel, the Palestinian territories occupied by the Zionists in 1948. Nor should we take any comfort from President Biden statement on 60 minutes last night, that it would be “a mistake for Israel to reoccupy Gaza in full.”

He once again reaffirmed that Israel has his full permission to go as far as it wants. Biden stated, “Israel is going after a group of people who have engaged in barbarism that is as consequential as the Holocaust. And so I think Israel has to respond. They have to go after Hamas. Hamas is a bunch of cowards. They're hiding behind the civilians.” All of this is a license to kill and a license to continue exterminating Palestinian civilians and particularly Palestinian children. Because if the Palestinians are Hitler, according to President Biden, and if what happened on October 7th is as consequential as the Holocaust, then what is not permitted. The United States and its allies used atomic weapons against their enemies in World War Two. They fire bombed entire cities with the full sense of moral superiority because they were fighting the evil of Hitler. On Saturday, we received a voice message by WhatsApp from our dear friend, Ahmed Abu Artema, the writer and one of the founders of Gaza's Great March of Return, the nonviolent mass movement, which in 2018, Israel met with military snipers, murdering and maiming thousands of unarmed people rallying for their rights along the Gaza boundary.

I'm relieved to say that Ahmed was still able to text me this morning, in fact, just a few minutes ago, although he only gets a few minutes of connectivity a day. But I want to come back to the words Ahmed sent us on Saturday. He wrote, “the priority now is to protest. We need very, very, very huge protests in the United States, in Europe, everywhere to say enough, to say stop the genocide.” So please do what you can go out and join a protest to organize one, call all your representatives! I know we all struggle with the knowledge and the reality that there is little we can each do individually. But remember that a little is not nothing. And it is what we have to do. And also remember that what has happened is bad enough, what is happening is bad enough, but the ground invasion will be much worse. That glimmer of hope is that it hasn't happened yet. And maybe if we make enough noise, we can still stop it. Thank you. Thanks, Nora.

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Nora Barrows-Friedman:
Thank you so much, Ali. Ali Abunimah, Executive Director here at The Electronic Intifada, also joined by Asa Winstanley, my colleague and fellow Associate Editor, we're going to bring on our good friend Jon Elmer, he is a researcher, journalist spent years reporting from inside the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. John, your initial thoughts on the humanitarian situation right now inside Gaza, as we said earlier, we can't seem to get a hold of anybody on the ground right now who can join us to talk about the situation from their perspective and through their eyes right now. We are still trying, obviously. And as soon as we can get someone we'll have them right on this live stream. But from the reports that you're seeing, from your experience as a war reporter in Gaza, what is the humanitarian situation like? Have you seen anything like it thus far?

Jon Elmer:
No. I mean, that's what everybody says, nobody's seen anything like this before. The scale of it already is unbelievable. I mean, it's terrifying when we're sending messages to our friends and you're seeing that they're being delivered but not being responded to because, you know, it can mean the worst and everybody, you know, like, when Ali's phone went off, like, I don't know how we're supposed to turn our phones off. I don't know how we're supposed to. Yeah, I mean, we see that the situations where a baby will show up in the hospital and they don't know the family because the entire family's been killed. We don't know if our friends' phones are in those piles of rubble. And the messages are being delivered as checkmarks because the phones are in a pile of a ten storey building. I mean, it's absolutely horrific. I don't I think we're all almost speechless about it even after spending years in the Gaza Strip. I've been on shows, including yours, talking about the siege on Gaza for 20 years. There's been these periodic episodic periodic invasions that are brutal. And so when people are saying that this is the worst they've ever seen, we're talking about the most violence inflicted people on the earth, trying to tell us something. And it's difficult to know how much they have to tell us before we react to this. The humanitarian situation is brutal. The idea that you can evacuate hospitals, It's brutal. I don't even know what else to say.

Nora Barrows-Friedman:
And not just the hospital situation, but we're seeing now dehydration across the Gaza Strip, we're seeing rationing of the precious little water that people have left. Our good friend Refaat tweeted earlier today that last, I don't even know what time is anymore, but he tweeted that they've started rationing water, giving it to the children first, and then what's ever left the adults get. And of course, this is like, you know, many households sheltering together in one place. I mean, you can't even begin to imagine the horror that people are feeling when they're trying not to let their children die either from above or from dehydration. When Israel is controlling the electricity, and the water supply, they literally turned off the water pipes. And without any electricity to pump the water, it's useless if they turn them back on, which is what the Israeli said that they did, at least in the southern half of the Gaza Strip yesterday. But that, obviously like that's, you can't just turn on water pipes after they've been turned off without also allowing access to electricity to make the water pumps do the thing that they're supposed to do to deliver

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water to people. So we're seeing absolute genocidal tactics being played out and not just water, but also food. There is no in no out of supplies from any of the crossings.

Ali Abunimah:
And we've seen, Nora, the scenes of people lining up just lengthy, lengthy, lengthy lines of people lining up at bakeries that have no bread and have no flour. They have very little and this morning, there was a horrifying report that a bakery in Sheikh Radwan district was bombed or at least the Israelis bombed the building next to it and of course, it's all completely indiscriminate. And dozens of people were killed who are just trying to get some bread. So there's no food. There's no medicine. Israel has continued to shell, to attack hospitals and ambulances. There was absolutely harrowing footage this morning, taken from inside an ambulance that was being shelled and attacked. And as of this morning, at least seven more medical workers were killed. And this brings, I mean, there's already been dozens. So if I give you a number, it's already out of date by the time I give it to you. And we're talking about direct attacks on hospitals, on medical clinics, on ambulances, and on doctors. Many senior doctors, the head of the medical faculty at the Islamic University of Gaza was murdered with his entire family in an airstrike on Saturday.

And there are lists circulating of all the senior doctors who have been killed. People with years of experience who have been targeted and killed in their homes with their entire families. I mean, I think words like genocide are often abused or sort of lose their value because of overuse, but this is a genocide. This is targeted and deliberate destruction of a people as a people, the destruction of their entire society, the deliberate targeting and wiping out of multi generation families, everyone from newborn babies to the seniors, the eldest, who have lived through many, many such wars in their lives. And it's difficult even to comprehend it and to process it and to understand how people can even survive from hour to hour in such a situation. And there's still no aid coming in. There was reportedly disagreement brokered by the United States, as if the United States can broker anything, since they are full partners in this, but supposedly to allow aid across the Rafah crossing from Egypt in exchange for Egypt allowing US citizens, hundreds of US citizens, who are trying to get out of Gaza, out of the country.

Some countries have sent aid this is now sitting in Egypt, but it's not getting in. And we're talking about not just food and water that Israel has cut off, but basic medical supplies, medical consumables, as they call them. When you've got this number of injuries, where al-Shifa hospital alone is saying that hundreds of injured people are arriving every hour. For each person, you need gloves, you need bandages, you need anesthetics, you need antiseptics, etc. And none of that is coming into Gaza. What hospital is going to have that amount of supplies to deal with a disaster on this scale? When there's an earthquake in Turkey in February, it was an absolute calamity on a massive scale. And in Syria, too, we saw what happened in Syria where aid wasn't getting in. People die under the rubble because nobody can reach them. At least when there's an earthquake, countries around the world say we're going to fly aid in and

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we're going to get there as soon as we can. We're going to send rescue teams. No rescue teams are coming to Gaza. No medical supplies are coming to Gaza.

And that's before you consider the issue which the doctors keep saying. You know that Israel keeps threatening these hospitals and shelling them and say, you have to evacuate the hospitals in the north of Gaza. And the doctors are saying, We can't, it's impossible. There's nowhere to go. But how are you going to transport people? How are you going to transport sick and injured people? There's no fuel. There's no vehicles. Israel is bombing ambulances. And what about the chronically ill? People who need insulin, people who need chemotherapy, people who have other ongoing health issues, those things don't stop, pregnant women, those things don't stop because of the war. So we're not just talking about the health needs of the people who are being injured, but the normal health needs people have. And so the doctors who are at some of these hospitals, we've seen Dr. Hasan Abu Sitta, who is the British Palestinian surgeon who is still tweeting, who said we're not leaving, I believe he's at al-Quds hospital in the north, if I'm correct, he said we're not leaving, we can't leave. There's no way to leave. But also we can't leave the people who are behind here, who still need medical care.

I just don't know how to comprehend or to begin to understand the enormity of what is being done with malice or forethought. This is not because there's, you know, these things don't exist, that there aren't medical supplies in the world or in the region or right there on the border with Gaza. It's because Israel decided and the United States agreed with them. And the European Union agrees with them that people in Gaza should be bombed at this rate and that medical aid, water and food should be withheld from them. I mean, is it hyperbole to call this Auschwitz? I don't know!

Jon Elmer:
I think it's also important to note, Ali, that when we're talking about the infrastructure in the Gaza Strip, it was already devastated. So when we're talking about water, I think people here think like oh, they turned the tap off and so when you go to your tap and you turn it on, there's no fresh water and that they're going to just flip a switch and the fresh water is going to come back on. That's not how it works in Gaza. They pumped saltwater through the taps. Most of people's water comes from tank, so it's going to have to be trucked in. The situation is already critical. The siege of starvation and dehydration has already gone on according to doctors that we've spoken to, that this is already a mission critical situation for vulnerable patients that we have already reached that day number where that's happening. And each hour that that goes on, it continues, there's not going to be this moment where they go, Okay, now is a humanitarian pause, and we just turn on taps and everyone fills up their bathtub with clean water. It's not like that. You can't even wash your dishes in Gaza with the water because it leaves salt all over the dishes.

And the hospitals themselves were already short on supplies. They already are under siege from the siege before this draconian siege that's happened. So I just want to make that clear about when we do talk about even a humanitarian pause, that it's not like a switch that gets flipped. The situation, you

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know, and you mentioned the bombing of the bakeries. I mean, that kind of thing, you know, you just listed in something of all the atrocities but the level of destruction for the society, when you have no water, no bread. Yeah, it's already at mission critical. It's not something that we're just talking about in vague terms about what might happen. We're getting to those points, that that's the point that we're getting to by the hour. We don't have days to discuss this, you know, Israel in the United States are discussing how to carry out the occupation of Gaza, how to carry out the ethnic cleansing of Gaza. They're negotiating with themselves. They're not negotiating with a good faith, you know, international actor who's supporting the Palestinian position and all this.

Nora Barrows-Friedman:
In in a moment, we'll bring on our good friend Helena Cobban, longtime veteran war journalist and publisher, essayist. But, Jon, before we go to Helena, I want to ask you about the mechanisms of possible ground invasion at this point, when Israel talks about a ground invasion, what will it look like, right now, as the northern half of God as everywhere across Gaza has been flattened to rubble? What do they mean when they talk about a ground invasion?

Jon Elmer:
Well, what they've been saying is that the ground invasion is going to entail killing every single member of the armed groups, and they haven't sort of tempered those statements yet. So if that's the plan, if liquidating the entire, you know, armed movements, after you've ethnically cleansed the population is the goal, then what they're setting themselves up for is, you know, like the oldest threat in military like Sun Tzu warns you not to carry out a siege on an urban population. They're going to be fighting in the most densely populated area of the earth. You know, you're talking about a built-up area. So you're talking about tall buildings. Just the geography alone, makes it one of the hardest fights in the world, independent of the actors taking part, independent of Qassam, independent of the IDF. You're talking about an encircled enclosed area, and if they do push people to Egypt, that's one thing, but if they don't, they're all still trapped inside that area.

You're talking about tall buildings that have been felled. So there's piles like many, many mountains of rubble everywhere. And all of those are defensive positions for the Palestinians, for the defensive fighters. It's always much easier to defend the territory regardless of the characters that you're talking about. Qassam can do this in the Gaza Strip. They can make the war not be on just the ground level. They have the ability to use apartment buildings where you can move from window to window from floor to floor, you can move to the roof, you can move through mouse holes, from building to building. The defensive advantage that that is for a dug-in armed group like Qassam, that has been preparing pretty much for only this scenario for more or less their entire existence, but definitely for the past 20 years with significant support, you know, and training outlines from Hezbollah, who are, you know, a number of years ahead of Qassam in terms of this preparation. But you're talking about rubble all over the area, which for the Israelis, if they're talking about destroying the territory, what they're doing is they're dropping these buildings down on top of the tunnel network, where all the fighters that they've

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promised to kill every last one of them. And every Israeli is saying this, it's not like some people are tempering their speech, everybody's saying that this is a war of annihilation.

And if that's true, then you're talking about going into each of the tunnels, you're talking about fighting street to street, you know, block by block, soldier by soldier. The soldiers are going to have to go in an armor and they're going to have to walk beside the armor, they're going to have to move at a pace where fighters underneath the ground are moving up all around them. And even if you drop these buildings on top of the tunnels, you might block one of the entrances from the tunnel. But the Israelis don't know where the tunnels are. And the Qassam Brigades do. So essentially, what the Israelis are doing is dropping concrete and rebar buildings, people's lives, on top of the tunnels, making it even harder to access the tunnels, which is where of course all of this fighting is going on, literally on top of the prisoners that Qassam holds. You know, and that's just the landscape. That's just the geography of the fight. And then you talk about the players in the fight. And what we saw from the Qassam Brigades, you know, a week ago, Saturday, shows that they have the ability to jam and intercept.

They have cyber units that have the possibility of dropping the Israelis Vontade network connections that their entire fighting force depends on which we saw them do one week ago. We're not talking about abstract or theories here. We saw them do it. You know, you're talking about anti-armor divisions that live there. They know every nook and cranny. They've been preparing for every invasion. And again, you're not talking about Fallujah. You know, people have talked about urban warfare examples like Fallujah, or Graziani. Those aren't examples that are relevant in this case, because in both of those places, the civilian population was effectively pushed out into a hinterland, in Fallujah, the desert, you know, in Graziani into the hills, that doesn't exist in the Gaza Strip. There's no hinterland, so the fighting is in a contained space that nobody can change the geography of that fight. And then you have the Qassam Brigades who are prepared to fight on all of those levels, to fight in the air with their new drone capacity, which we saw disable the entire Israeli network, that could drop armor armaments on top of Israeli tanks that aren't armored properly in that way.

They're moving through building after building, which is why when you talk about ethnic cleansing or genocide, that has to happen, that has to be the precursor to an Israeli permanent invasion of the Gaza Strip, if that's what they're talking about. Because it's going to be necessary to drop all those buildings, which is what those intelligence officials were telling Sey Hersh in his story is that if they are going to do what they say they're going to do, then you do have to drop all the buildings, otherwise the buildings are fighting positions that risk your troops. If you are going to access the tunnels, and you're not going to physically one foot over the next which I believe is the only way to take out the tunnels literally one foot over the next. Somebody has to go into that tunnel. If you're not doing that, then what the people that Sy Hersh was talking to, the military people were talking to, was using bunker buster bombs, bombs that penetrate the ground and then explode. And they're built to destroy military bunkers, which is effectively what the Israelis have put on top of the tunnel network built into the sand in the Gaza Strip.

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By dropping all these buildings on top of the sand they've created It effectively in many cases four and five, six times the thickness of a bunker that needs to be penetrated by a bunker buster. So I don't even think it's possible to do what Seymour Hersh was talking about in that article without killing tens of thousands of people and killing thousands of people in a single strike. A bunker buster bomb dropped on top of a ten storey concrete and rebar building will blast concrete and metal and people's lives, which is what these buildings are, people's lives. It'll blast that over a radius that would kill thousands of people. And the only reason it wouldn't kill Israelis is because they've completely moved their people out of the entire southern Gaza area. And that's just Qassam and the landscape. Then you have the Israelis. The Israelis are attempting to come in with – In 2014 war, it was 75,000 troops, you know, minimum offensive numbers that militaries talk about is three to one, they want to be at least three to one to the defenders. So if you have 40,000 Qassam Brigades, you know, tens of thousands of other fighters, how many soldiers are you talking about putting into this area?

Where are those soldiers mustering? They are mustering on the border with Gaza within range, as we've seen of Qassam Brigades' mortars, artillery. It's not clear to me how they're even going to muster on the border, let alone move in. And the minute they move in, there's going to be very, very public displays of Israeli casualties, significant Israeli casualties, which even eight years ago in 2014, after weeks of pummeling, when they moved in, on the ground in Shuja'iyya, the first place they encountered moving in from the east, they got smoked right away. They thought their troop carrier was blown up, just one instance, in this case, to occupy Gaza, you would have to put dozens, scores, hundreds of troop carriers and those troop carriers all contain soldiers who can be captured, which is what was happening in 2014, right when they went into Shuja'iyya, they believed that their soldiers had been captured right away. So you're putting all these soldiers in on the ground, which is just putting them at significant vulnerability to increase the level of destruction that these people, Qassam, who you're saying you're going to destroy every one of them are subjecting your people.

It's not clear to me that that's even possible. But if it is, then that's what Seymour Hersh is talking about. Seymour Hersh is asking his Israeli sources, like, okay, let's skip over all of the other possibilities. If you're actually saying you're going to go in and kill every single fighter, what does that look like? That looks like bunker busters. That looks like occupation that takes months. You know, you're talking about foot by foot, one foot over the next. Are the Israelis ready to fight one foot over the next, face to face with Qassam fighters? Because I'll tell you, that's the thing that the Qassam fighters have been waiting their whole life for. This utter cowardice of the bombing from the sky. When you're in the Gaza Strip, the cowardice of it is unspeakable. Because a bomb drops out of the sky like lightning, and death is just like a lightning bolt. They're not moving in like Jenin, where people can fight in 2002. And you know. It's the most cowardly way of fighting. The aerial bombardment of civilians is unbelievable cowardice. So, are you going to, after this unbelievable cowardice, become the most courageous army in the world that moves inch by inch and becomes the first army in world history to go down into a tunnel network and fight in a tunnel network? It's a recipe for just brutal massacres, if that's actually what Israel is talking about doing.

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Nora Barrows-Friedman:
That is Jon Elmer. Jon, thank you so much for your analysis. We want to bring on Helena Cobban. Helena is the author of the first ever major study in English of the PLO. She's a longtime supporter of the Palestinian rights. She's a book publisher and currently an essayist at globalities.org. Helena, when you listen to Jon's analysis of the humanitarian catastrophe, the genocide airs, planning yet another genocide on top of genocide in the Gaza Strip, when you are hearing from your friends in Gaza, what's going through your mind? What are we learning about what's happening now?

Helena Cobban:
So first of all, I really want to thank you and Ali in particular and Asa and Jon for organizing this amazing livestream series. I mean, I think you're doing a wonderful service for a public in this country that has been systematically groomed for many decades now to value Jewish Israeli lives over Palestinian lives, and groomed to demonize Palestinians and Muslims, as you would have seen just now in Chicago, where somebody just randomly not randomly, but you know, from outright hate, killed a six year old Muslim boy, because he was Muslim, stabbed him, and stabbed his mother. You know, this is enabled by our President and our political class and our corporate media that have systematically been grooming people for decades, to hate Muslims and to, you know, put the interests or as they see them, the interests of Israelis above those of Palestinians. So, you know, you guys are doing a remarkable job. So when I get the news from Gaza, it gives me a lot of flashbacks to when I was a war correspondent in Beirut in the early years of the Lebanese civil war, and, you know, the fighting in highrises, and, you know, the Holiday Inn positions versus the intercontinental positions in downtown Beirut and how you know, that those kinds of three dimensional wars get fought and, and obviously cause terrible, terrible losses and suffering.

I just want to add to what the description that Jon gave is that most of those pancaked high rise multi story structures actually contain the bodies of dead Palestinians. When Jon talks about them embodying Palestinian lives, they contain dead Palestinians. And you know, Dr. Basem Naim, and others in Gaza's health ministry are saying that there's at least a 1,000 Palestinians are lost, you know, unrecoverable from those pancaked buildings. So, it's just horror upon horror upon horror. So it gives me flashbacks to when I covered the fall of the Tel al-Zaatar refugee camp in East Beirut, which again, was a deliberately aggressive and illegitimate and horrendous atrocity undertaken by Israel's allies from the Falangist party to the extent that when I was with a group of journalists that was taken around Tel al-Zaatar refugee camp, the day after it had fallen to the Falangist, Bashir Gemayel had a little press conference and said, I am proud of what you're going to see in Tel al-Zaatar. I mean, I had never, like, had that experience before of a military leader crowing so blatantly about the atrocities because of course, what we saw was just, you know, heart bending, it was terrible.

I mean, I can remember scenes from it until today. That was 1976, so, 47 years ago. Okay, so, yeah, I guess that's saying too much maybe, but in the present circumstances – I just want to go back to 1982. I

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wasn't there during the Israeli assault on Lebanon in 1982 because I had to and I was able to save my own two children. We were living in Beirut, and it was the epicenter of fighting, in 1981, so I scooped up my children and brought them first of all to the UK, and then here to the United States where I wrote my book on the PLO. So I wasn't there then but I was here in, first of all, Cambridge, Massachusetts, and then here in Washington, DC, during the assault on Lebanon, which was named by the Israelis. I mean, they always have these grotesque names for their assaults. This one was called Operation Peace for Galilee. And it was surreal. It was like, traumatic for me, because I was here trying to write my book and, you know, look after my children as a single mother, here in the United States, in an atmosphere in which the vast majority of the political and commentating class was a hundred percent pro-Israeli.

The only people who actually had, like, voiced some criticisms of what Israel was doing back in the day were liberal republicans like Mac Mathias, and others. Liberal republicans! Does anybody even remember? Like, these are an artifact of history. Those guys now – Oh, and the other thing I want to note about 1982 was that Jane Fonda, whom you might remember, as you know, this great antiwar activist who traveled to Hanoi to protest the US war on Vietnam, during the 1982 Israeli assault into Lebanon, she was proudly disporting herself on IDF tanks as they bombed Beirut. I mean, the left in this country was so supportive, I mean, Jane Fonda, the left, whatever, you know, but the left was so supportive of this Israeli assault on Palestinians.

Ali Abunimah:
How different do you think that is now, Helena? I mean, just like, we always like to tell ourselves, well, we're making progress and, you know, that all our efforts are not in vain. And I believe they're not in vain, because the levels of popular expression and support are there. But how do we explain our complete inability to change anything above the popular level? I mean, just to see, the cold bloodedness with which Biden and Blinken are pursuing, they issued instructions to State Department personnel, this came out, this was reported, not to use terms like ceasefire or restraint. As we mentioned last time, the White House spokesperson called calls for ceasefire repugnant. And of course, everyone falls in line with that. I mean, there may be a few members of Congress who make statements that are somewhat critical, but how do we explain that lack of our failure to make any change at that level?

Helena Cobban:
So Ali, you raised some really important and interesting questions. The first thing I'd say is that your efforts have not been in vain, you know, that we have seen the massive demonstrations all around the country of people protesting the genocide in Gaza. That is real. And then if you look, there was recently a poll that showed that younger Americans, you know, overwhelmingly, not overwhelming, it's like an age spectrum thing, older Americans overwhelmingly support Israel in the current struggle, and I think it was taken on October 12th or 13th. Before, you know, all the horrendous pictures out of Gaza were coming out, older Americans were supporting Israel and younger Americans were not supporting Israel, in fact, like, you know, supporting the Palestinians more than the Israelis, and that's significant. That's important. And that, you know, that kind of generational shift needs to continue. Obviously, it hasn't

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reached very far into the political class yet. So that's one thing. And you know, we know the reasons for that, it's electoral money. You know, it's fundraising. It's all these big AIPAC linked donors.

The other thing I think is really important to say is that for the last 30 years, the United States has dominated every single aspect of Arab Israeli peacemaking, including it has connived with Israel, again and again and again, to delay getting to the final status talks for Palestine, which has allowed, of course, you know, the systematic expansion of the settlements in the West Bank, the annexation of Jerusalem, I mean, Washington, under Trump, recognize the Israeli annexation of Jerusalem and Biden has not rescinded that recognition. So the United States has given Israel a carte blanche for the last 30 years, in a period when the US exercised hegemony at the global level. That has changed. That has significantly changed. You know, Blinken goes off to all the Arab countries and pleads with them to you know, express outrage at what Hamas has done, and in every single Arab country that he's visited, they have refused to go along with those one sided requests. And they have called for an urgent peace conference to resolve the Palestine issue on the basis of a two-state solution. Now, I know, Ali, that you and I could discuss a lot about a two-state solution. But the idea that countries around the world, including Egypt, and Saudi Arabia, and Iran in the Middle East, which are all or will soon be members of the BRICS are absolutely in line with what is coming out of China and Russia, which is a call for an international conference, to resolve the Palestine issue. So this is all challenging Washington. A lot is changing at the international level, as well as at the grassroots level here in the United States.

Nora Barrows-Friedman:
Hellena, we want to just pause for a second. We are trying to get a colleague contributor from Gaza on the line right now. We want to see if we can reach her. Ali, what do you –

Ali Abunimah:
Yeah, I do agree with what Helena is saying. I think particularly the change of the international geopolitical level is probably going to have an impact long before any impact we have on US domestic politics. The generational shifts within the US that Helena talked about are very real. And we've seen them for years. In fact, at the time of the May 2021 Israeli attack on Gaza, there were majorities supporting Palestinians in poll after poll, which is quite shocking if you're someone who has closely watched these matters over the years in the United States. But I think that the international decline of the United States relative to China, Russia and other rising powers, is probably going to change things faster. But the problem is that the United States, the US Empire, is like a wounded animal. And it can do tremendous, tremendous, tremendous harm and damage as it goes down. And we're seeing that in Palestine. We're seeing that in Ukraine as well.

Nora Barrows-Friedman:
I believe we have Maha Hussaini on the line with us from Gaza. Maha, Are you there? Can you hear us?

Ali Abunimah:

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I think we're still working to get her on line.

Nora Barrows-Friedman:
There she is. Maha, are you there? Can you hear us?

Maha Hussaini:
Yes, I can hear you.

Nora Barrows-Friedman:
Wonderful! Maha, are you in a safe place? I don't even know where to begin? Where are you exactly in Gaza?

Maha Hussaini:
Well, we have evacuated four days ago to the Central Governorate. We received recorded messages from the Israeli occupation asking us to go and evacuate to relatively safer areas. These areas are in the centre of the Gaza Strip, south of Gaza Strip [south of the Gaza Valley]. I'm in a house along with 50 people and around 60% of them are children. Whether the place is safe or not, it's not safe. There is no place that is safe in Gaza. Actually, I've been here for four days and every night and every day I hear explosions everywhere. There is a place that is not very far from where I am now that was targeted. We hear the naval forces bombing different places across our area that we are staying at. I cannot say that the place is safe. I stay also with employees of international organizations that said that relatives of them were killed. Many colleagues of these people working at international organizations were also killed. Their homes were demolished. Yeah, this is the place we're staying in with limited supply of water, supply of electricity and limited supply of food also.

We have a supply of food for the next five days only. And the water, we get it day by day. You're not going to get it tomorrow [Nobody can be sure if they will find water tomorrow]. And the thing is that the children are always asking for water but, you know, the scarcity of water, we all need to give one sip for each child actually. The situation is dire. We do not have internet connection. I would have hoped or love to be with you here on internet and on Skype, etc. But I only have this line which is also very weak. Both my relatives and friends try to reach out to me but they cannot because after the Israeli occupation bombed the two main companies of telecommunications here in Gaza, we have been facing difficulties to reach out to each other and making sure each other are okay. So the worst thing about this is that you live here or stay here for days or maybe weeks and you do not know who is still alive out there. You will not know if any of your loved ones are killed or injured or etc because we don't have any connection with them. We lost connection with our colleagues at Euro-Med Monitor, for example, for the past days, we lost connection with our offices outside. Maybe our offices try to reach out to us every two days make sure that we are alive. That's the situation we're living in now. It's very dire and the catastrophe we're living in, we have never lived this amount and this level of catastrophe and this level of widespread bombing of whole neighborhoods.

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Nora Barrows-Friedman:
That's the voice of Maha Hussaini phoning in from the Gaza Strip. Maha, what is – I don't know the question. Ali, maybe you can step in. I'm overwhelmed.

Ali Abunimah:
Maha, thank you for joining us. And the question I have is, is there any sense that people in Gaza are moving? The Israelis gave the order to move out of the north out of Gaza City. What's the situation there? Are people moving? What are they expecting?

Maha Hussaini:
Well, a large number of the people living there, in the north of Gaza, in Gaza City has already moved, a lot of people, we're talking about 1 million people, who have moved or who have been displaced from their homes. A large portion of these people now are at UNRWA schools and another large number also are staying at relatives' homes and also, many of them have also returned home, for example, we are staying now – In the first two days, we were 70 or 80 people together. But now we are around 60, let's say, or 50 people because three families or full families have already went back home because they said that there is no place that is safe and we have witnessed already bombing, a lot of bombing around us, even in the area that was deemed safer by the Israeli occupation. So there is no need to leave home. We will go home whatever happens so there are people who are going back home, actually, because they have witnessed that even the areas that were, they were asked to go to are already bombed also.

So we're thinking, actually, we're thinking that in the next two days or three days, if this operation or if this genocide that is being committed against the whole population of the Gaza Strip is not finished, we will go home. If this is the last place, let's die at home because we don't feel even safe here. We were supposed to feel safe after following the instructions, let's say, like even here, there is a very near place that was targeted and there were people who were killed and injured around us. So I'm not sure what is safe here because even the employees of the international organizations, the journalists, the medics, healthcare professionals are all targeted, so this situation and how the situation is actually exacerbating in the last attacks on the Gaza Strip. There were also targeting of medics and journalists, etc. But this time it is systematic. It is happening every single day. Every one hour, around 14 people are killed in Gaza, most of them are children. Around 65% of those killed are children. And Israel has very sophisticated weapons that can specifically target the areas they want to target.

If they claim that there are people or armed fighters in these areas, they can specifically use bombs and weapons that target specific area. But what they are using are concussion bombs for example, and let me tell you that concussion bombs, these are bombs when you for example, when they bomb an area, the whole surrounding areas feel the, let me say, shaking underneath their legs or their foot. We feel shaking after Israel for example bombs a place in the next or in the other side of Gaza. They have also used white phosphorus, which is an internationally prohibited weapon. And they have been also using other

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kinds of weapons that we still did not recognize, but we have recognized that these are unconventional weapons because the nature of the injuries and those killed arising to the hospitals, we feel that we have witnessed that these natures of injuries are not conventional or not natural.

We didn't get used to this amount of injuries and the nature of injury. So, yeah, I guess what is really actually more serious is the blackout, the total blackout of the population of Gaza, making this population or besieging this population, preventing the supply of food, water, electricity and internet and also bombing them at the same time while also silencing them and making sure they are disconnected, completely disconnected from the world is what is more dangerous. And that is why we are telling people outside of Gaza, people around the world, to keep talking about Gaza, to keep talking about what's going on, because this is what Israel wanted. What Israel was hoping to do is to kill the people of Gaza, to kill the population while making sure they won't speak or uncover these crimes that amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Nora Barrows-Friedman:
Maha, some Western leaders are supporting Israel, you know, Israeli leaders' suggestion that Palestinians should be able to leave Gaza and go into the Sinai desert. And you know, people are like, well, this is very reasonable obviously. It's a humanitarian corridor. You know, let's look at how humanitarian Israel is, you know, that they would provide, you know, a cities and infrastructure for the 2 million Palestinians in Gaza if they only left. How are the people in Gaza feeling about this suggestion, and especially for you, is this something that you would ever entertain?

Maha Hussaini:
This is something that we are not even thinking of. This is something that is not even in the horizon in our near future, I don't think that it is possible to leave Gaza. We have already been internally displaced. We have agreed to be internally displaced within the areas of Gaza, but I'm not sure or I'm sure that the people of Gaza wouldn't actually accept another Nakba. They wouldn't actually be twice refugees. We have already witnessed this amount of violence and these intentions back in 1948 and we already have an experience with that. So, I'm –

Nora Barrows-Friedman:
That was Maha Hussaini. They're having so much trouble trying to maintain clear connections. I'm really glad we had her for the last 10 minutes.

Ali Abunimah:
And we'll try to send her a message backstage just to make sure she's okay but she did tell us that it was very likely that the line would cut. So we're very glad that she was able to join us at all. We've had a very difficult time reaching anyone in Gaza. I have, you know, I always breathe a sigh of relief when I'm able to get a mere SMS text message back from somebody there. So we're happy she could join us.

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Nora Barrows-Friedman:
But Ali, maybe, and John and Helena, too, I, you know, what is, I mean, this is it's just the open admission of Israel's, you know, 75 year plan, to completely expel Palestinians, to bomb them into submission, to get them to leave. This was also Sharon's plan, of course, to push people in Gaza out into the Sinai to never let them back in. What do you make of this latest suggestion, you know, masquerading as a humanitarian mission in Gaza right now?

Helena Cobban:
Well, I think you summed it up that it's an ethnic cleansing, masquerading as a humanitarian mission, and people who are losing a lot of, like, diplomatic energy trying to get a humanitarian pause or a humanitarian corridor or whatever. I think they are completely wrong. What we need is a complete ceasefire. There –

Ali Abunimah
Which by the way, Helena, I'd like you to comment on this. Antonio Guterres, the UN Secretary General, has refused to call for a ceasefire. What do you make of that?

Helena Cobban:
You know, three of the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, are former colonial powers or current colonial powers, England, France and the United States, and they have, you know, always dominated UN decision making, so the fact that we have currently a diminution of US hegemony globally, is counterbalanced by the fact that the UN Charter has kind of embodied this veto.

Ali Abunimah:
You're right about all that, but I'm talking about, yeah, we know the Security Council is paralyzed because of the US and Britain and France but I'm talking about the UN Secretary General, as a person, Antonio Guterres, has refused to call for a ceasefire. And yes, we can say, you know that, all right, well, he's in the pocket of the Americans everything. But this is a man who is at the end of his career, close to. He's very well paid. He's probably got a very good pension ahead of him. He's probably got good savings. You know, he's not going to starve if he calls for a ceasefire. What is happening with people? What is happening with people that they can look at – The UN Secretary General, who is presumably getting all the most up to date reports from the UN personnel on the ground, who can see what's happening, who can see AlJazeera, who can see what's happening, what stops someone like that? What's wrong with their soul? That they're not calling for a ceasefire? What's left for Antonio Guterres and of course, I'm not Just talking about Antonio Guterres, but we could name a whole number of other people, what's wrong with their soul that they can't look at this? And they've all called for cease fires in Ukraine, by the way. They all say stop the fighting in Ukraine, stop the violence, but not here. Is this not complicity in genocide? Is this not saying we want to give Israel time to kill as many Palestinians as possible?

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Helena Cobban:
I think you're right, Ali. I think you're completely right. And it is also a result of this decades long process of grooming of everybody in, you know, Western dominated public life to value Israel's position more than the rights of Palestinians. I don't know Guterres personally, but I'm sure that he's, you know, he's come up through that system. And maybe he like Chuck Schumer and all these other, like decades old US politicians like Joe Biden, for example, you know, they've just come up through this system in which Israel is always right. I do think that things are changing considerably, however, in a number of ways that are relevant to the current situation. One is that I don't think Netanyahu has a plan at all. I mean, Jon has told us, you know, all the reasons why generations of Israeli leaders have said doing a major ground operation in Gaza is a really bad idea. I think Netanyahu was acting overwhelmingly from, like, absolute fear and humiliation because of the collapse of Israel's security system under his Prime Ministership.

So, you know, he knows that this whole, from the Israeli security point of view has been a complete debacle, that this is going to come back to haunt him forever, much more than, you know, the upset of the 1973 war eventually did for Golda Meir. This is going to be how his career is remembered. So he's desperately trying to cast around and think of something he can do. Personally, I don't believe he's going to launch this ground operation. But you know, in the meantime, by continuing to rely on the air operations that have been described by Maha, described by Jon, as so damaging, so horrendous, you know, including, we could see the bunker busters, which, you know, were given to Israel by the United States, with the idea that they could be used against Iran's, very deep, you know, claimed nuclear weapons development, whatever that are deep in the Iranian mountains. That's why the Israelis have bunker buster bombs. And we may see those being used. I don't know, it's possible that the Israeli military will launch a ground operation, but it's equally possible that they won't, but in the meantime, they are inflicting this horrendous, horrendous suffering on Palestinians.

And they apparently can continue to do so. So one thing that prevented them, another thing that's prevented them from launching the ground operation, is this direct communication from the Iranian Foreign Minister that if they do so, the hands of the resistance, the Hezbollah in Lebanon are on the trigger. So there's actually a multilateral, very complicated system of deterrence and counter deterrence going on here. Because our famed military and its dreadful leader, Lloyd Austin, and its dreadful president have threatened Iran, you know, that if Hezbollah should do anything, don't even think about it, you know, so they are fairly directly threatening Iran that there will be American bombings of Iran and Lebanon, if Hezbollah does anything. Meantime, Hezbollah is kind of deterring Israel. Hezbollah and Iran are deterring Israel from doing a ground operation.

And a lot of people in the international community, I would say the global majority, including capitalists and socialists, and communists, and everybody, especially the capitalists, they know that this kind of escalation would be like, just disastrous for the global economy. So they don't want the escalation and I think Guterres fairly rapidly will shift to a position where he says this is just like, we can't carry on like

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this. But he's probably quite prepared to allow Israel to carry on killing Palestinians at a rate of about 450 Palestinian dead every day, you know, for another two weeks or so. I don't know.

Ali Abunimah:
I mean, my question for you and perhaps for Jon also is, we have seen Iran take a position, of course, they're leaving some ambiguity about what they might do, the hinting that they would not sit idly by or they would not be an observer, to use the term of the Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian yesterday, but haven't the Israelis torqued themselves into a corner, I mean, at this point, they have been so explicit and Joe Biden yesterday on CBS that they have to go in and destroy Hamas, you know, eliminate it. And I think Biden even talked to this was on 60 minutes about, you know, bringing in the Palestinian Authority to Gaza, presumably on the backs of Israeli tanks to govern the smoking rubble of Gaza on behalf of Israel. But, you know, haven't they torqued themselves into such a corner? What would be the ladder Netanyahu could climb down to limit this, albeit utterly horrendous apocalyptic bombing campaign and not take it to a ground war? Is there any way for Israel to back out of that?

Helena Cobban:
I think the way is when it comes home to Biden, that, you know, his actions have been so very, very destructive of American interests worldwide. You know, that interview with Biden that was aired yesterday, was actually recorded on Thursday, which is interesting that they held it for so long, that they had had such a long turnaround time. But if you think back to last Thursday, that was when, you know, it was kind of peak outrage, in terms of like, the way the American media were endlessly replaying and re-reporting all the atrocities that Hamas, as they claimed, had committed in the Israeli settlements near Gaza. And thank you, by the way for posting on your website that very powerful testimony from –

Ali Abunimah:
Yasmin Porat. Because that whole narrative of Hamas got, I mean, remember Netanyahu, who actually said in the immediate aftermath, that this was, that Hamas were lining people up and just machine gunning them into mass graves. And there is absolutely no evidence of that whatsoever, let alone the beheaded Jewish babies, or as the UK Labour Party's candidate for Foreign Secretary suggested raping babies, I'm sorry to even use this language. But this is what people have been saying and so. but I mean, again, Helena, and also this is perhaps if Jon wants to jump in, but I mean, you would say, Okay, this notion of US interests and what the US elites think is good for them. But it wasn't a good idea for them less than a year after their humiliating defeat in Afghanistan, 20 years of lies, 20 years of bombing weddings and fighting against, you know, simple people with the AK 47s and failing even to achieve their goals there.

It wasn't in the US interest to rush into a proxy war against Russia, and to think they could win a land war against Russia. It wasn't in their interest militarily, strategically, economically, and yet they still did it. And that's Ukraine. Now we're talking about Israel, where they all have this sort of fanatical, absolutely fanatical emotional connection to Israel, which has been drummed into them for decade after

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decade after decade. Remember Helena that Joe Biden said, I mean, he said this repeatedly, but there's a famous video of him from the 1980s saying that if Israel didn't exist, we'd have to go out and invent it. I mean, this man is a demented Zionist. So where can we see these people ever sitting? Who is there? I mean, I'm certainly not going to praise the old days of the American empire. But there were people at a certain point, who at least had the sense to say, this is not going to work out for us. Those people don't seem to exist anymore, that it's just all completely unhinged fanaticism now, or am I wrong?

Helena Cobban:
You're completely right about the unhinged nature of this, which I think affects decision making in Israel as in this country. But I have to tell you that I grew up in England, during the 1950s, at the time of the collapse of the British Empire, and I can talk a lot about that, but what I want to note is that there were paroxysms of mindless violence in the course of that collapse, including, of course, the participating in the trilateral aggression against Egypt, alongside France, and Israel in 1956, which didn't make sense at all, but they wanted, you know, they wanted to cling on to Suez or cling on to something in the region. And of course, at that time, it was the United States as the young and upcoming global powers that push to help push them back. So now we have the US Empire in a decline, some of whose dimensions you have very well described Ali, both, you know, in Afghanistan, and in Ukraine, and earlier in Iraq, and everything else. And it's hard for people who've enjoyed hegemony, for you know, all their career to suddenly realize they don't have it. And so I think that's kind of the roots of the unhinged nature, which is played out on the bodies of our friends in Gaza. I mean, it's just unconscionable. So, which is the rising coalition of powers that can help to rein in this parasitism of violence? I think it has to be China, Russia, the BRICS, and the global majority, stepping up to the plate and saying, in Palestine, as in Ukraine, these western wars have to stop.

Nora Barrows-Friedman:
Thank you so much, Helena. I wanted to go to Jon, just to get your thoughts on regional significance of what's happening right now in Gaza, especially if you can talk about the Northern Front, and Lebanon, specifically Hezbollah and what you're watching closely there.

Jon Elmer:
I mean, Hezbollah has promised for years that the next fight against Israel wasn't going to be happening in Lebanon, it was going to be happening in northern Israel. And Israel has been talking about it for years that Hezbollah is going to come down and take the Galilee, that the fight is going to happen inside Israel. And we just saw one week ago, the fight in the south inside Israel, and what that looked like. The ability for the Israelis to defend the northern border against Hezbollah, who are years ahead of Qassam, all due respect to Qassam. And they have access to foreign countries in a way that the Qassam Brigades do not. Their missiles sophistication is on a different scale. They're able to fire missiles at Israel that are devastating, that are destroying critical infrastructure, offshore oil wells, chemical plants, nuclear facilities. I mean, I think we have to be serious about this and the fact that Israel believes that they can

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muster hundreds of thousands of troops on the southern border, what do you think's going to happen in the north?

The back and forth between Hezbollah and the Israelis has been very careful. They're very carefully constructed rules of engagement on the northern border that could fall apart at any moment. And we're looking even just as we're on the air fighting in that area, it's just on a completely different scale. There's no way Israel can handle the fight with Hezbollah in the north alone, let alone when the primary objective of their operation is to create a new – Like the whole thing about what we were talking about Gaza is so crazy. We're talking about turning the worst refugee camp in the world into a refugee camp 10 miles further away so that this can all start all over again. I think that the fight inside Israel that was shown in the south is nothing compared to what's going to happen in the north. And I think that the ability for Hezbollah, for this conflict, you know, the discussions about peace, you want to see discussions for peace, wait till Hezbollah is occupying the Galilee, then you're going to be seeing a lot of people, Antonio Guterres and the like calling for peace, they're going to immediately sue for peace.

We can even remember 15 or 17 years ago in the July war, as soon as the Israelis went in on the ground and got smoked, all of a sudden there was all kinds of peace talks. After months or weeks, I guess it was a month, they had the same language. I remember here in Canada, the Canadian prime minister saying no ceasefire, no ceasefire. That was the line in 2006 in the July war, until the Merkavas went up and were stacked up on the border until the Israelis were fighting inside the buildings in South Lebanon when Hezbollah came up through tunnels inside the buildings that the Israeli soldiers were in. They remember that, their televisions remember that. We remember CNN with the camera on the border watching the Israeli troops come back from Lebanon looking like they were not going back to Lebanon to fight another war. And these are the same soldiers that you're going to ask to station themselves along the Gaza border six months from now. The settlers that you're going to ask to go back into the kibbutz in the north and the south. This situation has the ability to really run out of control.

There's American warships, carrier groups, destroyer groups encircling the carrier, right off the shore, and Hezbollah has anti-ship capabilities. I mean, we saw it in 2006. That was a generation ago. They have the ability to make those American ships and Israeli ships off the coast be a factor. And this situation can very quickly run. If you're talking about bringing Iran in, you've got American troops all around Iran floating on their warships all off the coast of Iran, what do you think's going to happen to them? They're well within Iranian range for any kind of conventional warfare. They're floating right off their coast. They've moved this carrier battle group, apparently off the coast of Israel and Lebanon. I don't think we've seen it because I don't think it's going to come anywhere close to the shore. They're sitting in their control rooms on these destroyers, watching and calculating every Hezbollah missile, its exact range and speed, how fast it can sink their battleships, how fast they can reply to that before the second round comes in. This is a very dangerous thing to be talking about. It has the ability to really spiral out of control for Israel, and I'm talking about for Israel. I'm talking about for Israel. If you want airlifts out of Tel Aviv of Israelis with second passports, wait till Hezbollah's occupying the Galilee!

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Wait till the fight is taking place in 30% of Israeli territory! And they're trying with these reserves that they just called up a week ago to hold back Hezbollah's special forces! Radwan units that have been fighting for 15 years, real fighting, house to house fighting in Syria, not watching from computer screens, while their computer network is the most sophisticated one on the world! It's a completely different thing. You're talking about Hezbollah units that have actually fought face to face, door to door, house to house, street to street. I don't think the Israelis are ready for that. And what you guys are saying is true. The Israelis are torqueing themselves into something that they cannot back up. Independent of the diplomacy and the massive humanitarian catastrophe, there there's a real military issue for Israel. They could lose that war, straight out, lose the war. And then what happens? Netanyahu is giving his speeches from a bunker. I mean, they did that just today. The Knesset is in a bunker right now. I mean, Hezbollah has hundreds of thousands of missiles and rockets, so we're talking about, you know, Qassam in the thousands or tens of thousands, presumably in the tens of thousands. It's a completely different scale.

Nora Barrows-Friedman:
Indeed. I think we're going to wrap for this live broadcast today. There is so much more to talk about, obviously. We are indebted to all of this crucial critical analysis, Helena Cobban, Jon Elmer, of course, our friend Maha Hossaini, we will, of course be checking in with her and with all of our contributors and friends and comrades in the Gaza Strip to make sure that everyone's okay. We will will be back on Wednesday and again on Friday. We're just going keep the schedule indefinitely.

Ali Abunimah:
And I just want to take the opportunity again to say on behalf of all of us at The Electronic Intifada, how grateful we are for the support. These are tough days for all of us, we feel it very emotionally. I know, we've had so many messages and emails from people saying how much they appreciate these live streams, just also as a way to feel that they're not going through this utter horror alone, and having to just be bombarded by the horrific lies and propaganda we see on mainstream media. And that sense of community is also extremely important for us. So I want to say on behalf of all of us, thank you for the support, it keeps our spirits high, it enables us to continue doing the work we're doing. And just to say, we will continue with our brilliant podcast team. And also I just want to give a shout out to Tamara Nassar behind the scenes, who makes all this look so wonderful and go smoothly, and also to our editors. If you go over to The Electronic Intifada website, you're going to see fantastic articles. Our colleague, Maureen Murphy, has been doing every day, an incredible written roundup of everything that happens in Gaza.

And I'll tell you, it's one of the ways I stay informed. The reason I'm able to come on here or to go on another show and tell you the latest is because of the incredible work that Maureen is doing, and all our editors and writers, Omar, David, Michael and we're thinking particularly right now of all of our writers in Gaza, many of them have continued sending us pieces. I don't know how they're writing, under the

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circumstances. You know, they're even sending us articles via WhatsApp. They're saying I had a few minutes of internet and I'm sending you this article, edit it, as you see fit and get it up. Don't even come back to me about edits, as we usually do; we're always going back and forth with our writers. So I won't have electricity for more than five minutes, get this out to the world. And we are tremendously honored to have that opportunity to support them and serve them in that way in terms of getting their voices and their reality out. So just allow me to say to all of you, thank you. And we'll see you next time and I'll hand it back to Nora and Asa.

Nora Barrows-Friedman:
Thank you, Ali, and we are eternally grateful for you. Every single day you are working nearly 24 hours a day these days. And yeah, it means a lot to hear comments and getting emails and texts from people the over the world. And we can only do this with your support, so please head over to electronicintifada.net. Donate if you can! Sign up for our email mailing list where you will get the latest information just once a day in your inbox specially promoting these live streams. Please be safe everybody. Thank you so much and we'll see you on Wednesday. Thanks everyone.

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