

Transcript

Electronic Intifada's video podcast "Day 17 Roundtable: Gaza's Al-Aqsa Flood"

A 115-minute [roundtable](#) presented on October 23, 2023

Featuring: Nora Barrows-Friedman, Asa Winstanley, and Ali Abunimah from EI, with guests Jon Elmer, Max Geller, Dr. Mads Gilbert, and Calla Walsh

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Nora Barrows-Friedman:

Hello and welcome back to The Electronic Intifada live stream for today, Monday, October 23. I'm Nora Barrows-Friedman, Electronic Intifada's Associate Editor with my cohost Asa Winstanley, and our Executive Director, Ali Abunimah. We have a very full show once again today. We hope you stick around. We have a live report from Dr. Mads Gilbert, as well as action alerts and ways to plug into direct action with our friends over at Palestine Action now that they have a chapter in the United States, as well as expert analysis from our in house analyst, Jon Elmer, so please stick around. Leave your questions and comments in the live chat. And with that, Ali, please give us your opening remarks.

Ali Abunimah:

Thanks, Nora. Earlier today, the Health Ministry in Gaza reported that the number of Palestinians killed in the Israeli American genocide had reached 5087. That includes 2,055 Children. 182 children were killed in Gaza in just the last 24 hours. This means that since October 7, Israel, with the help of the Biden Administration, has been exterminating Palestinian children at the rate of at least 130 per day. I say at least because another 830 Children are reported to be missing under the rubble of destroyed buildings. And in the West Bank since October 7, Israeli soldiers and settlers have killed almost another 100 Palestinians, 28 of them children, enormous carnage that is going largely unreported because it is dwarfed by the bloodbath in Gaza. But any figures I give you are immediately going to be out of date. Every hour new reports come in of wholesale massacres of families all across Gaza, people in their homes in Gaza City, in Khan Yunis, in Rafah, in Jabalia. Nowhere in Gaza is safe.

The images of dead and injured children, grieving parents, blood covered elders, desperate doctors, ambulances in flames and endless rubble reveal a landscape of utter devastation. During Israel's massacre in Gaza in May of 2021, Huda Al-Susi, a young writer, wrote for The Electronic Intifada about braving the savage bombardment, to go and check on her elderly parents whose building had just been bombed. Huda went out despite her husband's fears for her life because the attack was very intense. My husband wanted me home with our baby, Huda wrote, as Israel was actively bombarding Gaza, he

feared the worst for Waseem and I, but Huda went, nonetheless. She wrote before then, I loved going back to the street, where my parents live, and where I grew up. When I visited it, I would usually see many children playing hide and seek and other games. The sense of fun was palpable. But on that day, Huda wrote, nothing prepared me for what I witnessed. It was May 11 of 2021.

There was blood everywhere, Huda wrote, the smell was overpowering a mixture of dust and death. I stepped over rubble from buildings that had just been attacked. And among the debris on the ground, there were smashed up toys, school bags, burnt notebooks, old pictures and a broken wheelchair. Finally, I made it to my parents and hugged them, Huda wrote. My father smiled. My mother had shed tears of joy. Compared to others in the area, they were lucky. Huda wrote about a building that was badly damaged, and lots of people were sadly killed. And that was what she wrote in May of 2021. I do not know how many more hugs Huda gave her parents after that. But I can tell you that there will never be any more. Huda was killed in an Israeli bombing a few days ago along with seven of her husband's relatives, her husband and two children survived. As you know, Israel is not just exterminating Palestinians with these horrifying weapons, bombarding them from the air and firing artillery from the ground, it is also doing so by completely cutting off the water supply and banning the entry of food, medicine and fuel.

Some hospitals in Gaza have already ceased functioning amid an unprecedented and endless flow of seriously wounded people. On Sunday, the health ministry said that 1100 patients who need kidney dialysis face complications that could lead to death quickly because there's no electricity to run the machines. 38 of them are children. More than 70% of Gaza's 2.3 million people are now displaced. With water and food dwindling, they face horrifying sanitary conditions and the growing risk of epidemic disease. There are young children, pregnant women, elderly and disabled people subjected to all this. At this moment, according to the United Nations, people are consuming saline water with over 3000 milligrams per liter of salt content from agricultural wells. This poses an immediate health risk raising hypertension, especially in babies under six months, pregnant women and people with kidney disease. The use of saline groundwater also increases the risk of diarrhea and cholera. Health partners have detected cases of chickenpox, scabies, a diarrhea attributable to the poor sanitation and consumption of water from unsafe sources.

The incidence of such diseases is expected to rise unless water and sanitation facilities are provided with electricity or fuel to resume operations. That's the UN. And this is what Israel has deliberately imposed on a population, its top officials referred to as human animals or human beasts. On Sunday, three major human rights groups in Palestine stated that Israel's complete siege on Gaza and statements made by its leaders demonstrate that Israel is deliberately inflicting on the Palestinian people, conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction, in whole or in part, an act of genocide. And what's the world doing? So far, 34 trucks of aid have entered through the Rafah crossing from Egypt. It's unclear if or when any more will arrive. This is the equivalent to about 3% of the daily average volume of commodities entering Gaza prior to the hostilities, according to the UN humanitarian agency OCHA. And crucially, none of these deliveries have included fuel, which is desperately needed to keep the generators running at the hospitals. But as I've stressed repeatedly, this so called aid is a distraction.

On a normal day, about 500 trucks were entering Gaza through the checkpoints from Israel. Now, with so much death, injury, destruction and suffering, Gaza might need twice that just to even survive. The solution is not aid via Egypt, but for Israel to be forced to end its genocidal siege, now. That's what we have to keep demanding of our governments. I want to turn now to another critical angle we've reported on and which is important to continue to focus on, given Israel's continued production of unverified atrocity propaganda, which is being used to justify its premeditated savagery against the Palestinian population in Gaza that it has occupied, besieged, persecuted and regularly massacred for so many decades. As you may know, The Electronic Intifada was the first English language publication to report in detail on Yasmine Porat, the Israeli survivor of the bloodshed at kibbutz Be'eri. According to Porat, it was the Israeli army's indiscriminate fire, including tank shelling of civilian homes, that killed most of the Israeli settlers in the kibbutz, along with many of the Palestinian fighters, whom Porat said had treated her and the other Israeli civilians humanely.

Last night, our friends at Mondoweiss published an important follow up report. Mondoweiss writes that Porat's testimony is complemented by evidence from Israeli soldiers who described how the Israeli military shot tank shells into buildings where militants and their hostages were hiding. Those are the words of Mondoweiss. The article contains more important evidence that refutes the Israeli propaganda narrative parroted by Western leaders and media that is being used to justify the ongoing slaughter in Gaza. I want to read you a key section because I believe this information is so important and needs to be widely shared. On October 11, Quique Kirschenbaum reported in The Guardian about his tour of kibbutz Be'eri, a tour organised by the Israeli army's propaganda your unit. Here writes, building after building has been destroyed, whether in the Hamas assault or in the fighting that followed, nearby trees splintered and walls reduced to concrete rubble, from when Israeli tanks blasted the Hamas militants where they were hiding. Floors collapsed on floors. Roof beams were tangled and exposed like rib cages.

In another report in Haaretz in Hebrew, it does not appear to be available in English, on October 11, probably following the same army guided PR tour, Nir Hassan and Eden Solomon interviewed Erez, a deputy commander of an armored reserve battalion. He described how he and his tank unit "fought inside the kibbutz from house to house with the tanks." We had no choice, he concludes. Most recently, Nir Hassan returned to Be'eri and interviewed a local resident named Tuval, who is lucky to be away from the kibbutz at the time of the attack, but whose partner was killed. In Hassan's October 20 Haaretz article he reports the following: His voice trembles when his partner who is besieged in her home shelter at the time comes to mind. According to him on Monday night, and only after the commanders in the field made difficult decisions, including shelling houses with all the occupants inside in order to eliminate the terrorists along with the hostages did the IDF complete the takeover of the kibbutz. The price was terrible. At least 112 Be'eri people were killed. Others were kidnapped.

Yesterday, 11 days after the massacre, eleven bodies of a mother and her son were discovered in one of the destroyed houses. It is believed that more bodies are still lying in the rubble. This quote from pirates is important for several reasons. One is because it adds to the understood timeline of events. This testimony would seem to indicate that many Israeli captives were still alive on Monday, October 9, a full two days after the events of Saturday, October 7. While it might be understandable if captives had been killed in the hectic crossfire, an initial Israeli response to the attack on the 7th, this account would

seem to indicate that the decision to assault the kibbutz, and everyone inside, was made as a clear military calculation. It is clear Palestinian militants were hiding in these buildings with Israeli captives, as Israeli soldiers were blasting their way in with massive tank shells in close quarters.

It deserves to be investigated who caused most of the deaths and destruction that took place. This is especially important as these deaths are now being used to justify the destruction of Gaza and the killing of thousands of civilians there. That's from the report in Mondoweiss that I encourage you to read and share. Now that destruction is set only to increase if Israel goes ahead with a planned or threatened ground invasion, and we're going to be talking about that later in today's program. But last night, President Joe Biden, Prime Minister Trudeau of Canada, France's Emmanuel Macron, Chancellor Scholtz of Germany, Prime Minister Giorgio Maloney of Italy and Rishi Sunak, Prime Minister of the UK, issued a joint statement about the situation in Gaza. They "reiterated their support for Israel and its right to defend itself against terrorism, and called for adherence to international humanitarian law, including the protection of civilians. They also welcomed the announcement of the first humanitarian convoys to reach Palestinians in need, and committed to continue coordinating with partners in the region to ensure sustained and safe access to food, water, medical care, and other assistance required to meet humanitarian needs." That's their statement.

But notice. What was completely absent is any call for a ceasefire or any call on Israel, the occupying power to meet its obligations under international law to ensure the supply of food, water and medicine to the people it occupies. What can we make of these leaders statement then? If they believed that their beloved Israel was already adhering to International Humanitarian Law, including the protection of civilians, there would have been no need to make this statement at all. What I think it reveals then, is their full knowledge of the crimes Israel is committing with their complicity and support. It reveals a consciousness of guilt on their part. It is nothing more than a feeble attempt to wash their hands of the blood they are helping Israel spill. As I mentioned, water, medicine and other life essentials are barely trickling into Gaza if at all. But let me tell you what is flowing into the region completely unhindered. As of Sunday night, according to the Israeli newspaper, Haaretz, 62 cargo planes had landed in Israel, bringing in military spare parts and American bombs to drop on Gaza.

According to Israeli Defense Ministry sources, this is the second largest such airlift to the country in its history, after the famous airlift during the October 1973 war. Huda Al-Susi's mentor and our friend Refaat Alareer whose home was bombed last week, and who is now in a shelter with his family, went out a few days ago and took these photos of the shrapnel in the streets of Gaza, sharp, heavy shards of metal from American supplied Israeli bombs that tear through human flesh. That, not any lip service to protecting civilians or humanitarian aid is the true measure of US actions and intentions. That is what the United States is sending to Gaza. As long as the US and Europe, Tel Aviv's chief arm suppliers, sponsors and protectors, are not doing everything in their power to halt the Israeli genocide, they remain just as responsible for it.

Nora Barrows-Friedman:

Thank you as always Ali. Ali Abunimah is our Executive Director here at The Electronic Intifada. I'm Nora Barrows-Friedman. Along with Asa Winstanley, we're both associate editors and cohosts of the podcast and of these live streams. We want to bring in our good friend, longtime friend, Dr. Mads

Gilbert, a Norwegian emergency doctor who has worked in Gaza during successive Israeli attacks. Dr. Mads is speaking to us today from Cairo. He's been trying to join his colleagues in Gaza for the past week and a half. Dr. Mads, thank you so much for being here. I can't imagine just the frustration that you must feel as a doctor who has worked in Gaza all these years and is unable to be working with your colleagues right now at this just catastrophic time. You know, last night, the Israeli military reported that there were more than 320 locations across the Gaza strip that were bombed. It was one of the most intensely bombed, you know, 12, 18 hours that we've seen in the last two and a half weeks, and the Ministry of Health has reported that all of these targets are residential areas, of course, that barely needs to be set at this point. And we're also seeing reports from Gaza Health Ministry, from doctors and nurses that at least 130 premature babies who are in the neonatal intensive care units in Gaza city hospitals are at "grave risk," according to aid workers because of the dwindling scarce electricity and resources and basic medical supplies, medications. In your opinion, as a physician, as someone who's worked in Gaza all these years, how can you assess this catastrophe at this point?

Dr. Mads Gilbert:

Well, good evening. Good morning. Good afternoon. Thank you for inviting me. Ali, Nora, thank you for the incredibly important work you do to promote advocacy and actual inflammation. The situation in Gaza is not a disaster, it's a catastrophic disaster. And what we see playing out live, minute by minute, is the politics of elimination, executed against the colonized by the colonizing forces, because what we see is such a massive attack on the human habitats, the civilian population, crushed into the very narrow space by the siege and also the systematic attack on all the provisions you need to live and that is not first and foremost hospitals and ambulances, it is water, it is food, it is electricity, it is human security and then you may need the medical system. So they are actually choking 2.2 million civilians by thirsting them, starving them, denying them light, denying them warmth, denying them practical possibilities to take care of their children, then they are bombing them, and then importantly, they are also attacking the medical system, which should be of course protected.

We know from the reports that ten hospitals of the Gaza hospitals have been closed so far, and 29 primary health care centers, which are incredibly important, as Ali mentioned, this is 2.2 million people with diabetic patients with hypertonic patients, with acute myocardial infarctions, at any given time, there are 50,000 pregnant women in Gaza, there are 100 deliveries every day, many of them will need cesarean section, and many of the newborn will need follow up care, maybe resuscitation and maybe incubators. On top of that, you have a patient flow of 15,200 war wounded, of which the last number 5000 of the war wounded are children, less than 18, and as an anesthesiologist and emergency medical doctor, I know that taking care of war wounded children is exceedingly demanding and difficult. You need special equipment, the size of things needs to be right and the fluids, everything needs to be appropriate for the care of the kids. So you have a massive influx of wounded that needs care, you have a population which is already more diseased than a normal population because of the 17 years of siege, and then you have this brutal attacks on the health care system, shutting down hospitals, cutting the supply of energy and water to the hospitals.

They have killed so far 54 health workers and injured 90, and I think they have bombed and rocketed around 30 ambulances. Now, this scenario is such a hell, that I think Gaza 2022 makes Dante's Inferno look like a tea party. I will not get distracted in numbers, but they are important but precisely as Ali

started, behind every number, there is a family, there is a human being, there is a brother and a sister, and these immense numbers are hard to comprehend unless you have seen it, and I've seen it firsthand. The shrapnel you showed me the picture of, I actually took one of these shrapnel home to Norway in 2014, they are extremely heavy, they may have this size, the edges are so sharp that you can shave with them. And it's made of a very, very high metal composition.

And they fly at hundreds of kilometers per hours, swirl, and they cut off limbs, they cut open abdomens, they could open chests. And if you're lucky, you die. If you're not lucky, you're heavily injured, you're severely injured. And if you're lucky, you get to an OR, and you have lifesaving surgery. If you're not, you will not have lifesaving surgery. Our colleagues are telling us from Gaza, that the strangulation of healthcare through the last seven years and the massive influx and the total blockade that Israel imposed two weeks ago, makes it impossible to tend to all the injured and they say that war wounded that should have survived are now left to die because they don't have the capacity and they don't have the practical means to take care of them. So from a medical point of view, you know, you always need to look after the root causes and not just treat the symptoms.

And I say, as I've said before, the important thing now is, number one, to stop the bombing of the civilian population in Gaza immediately to secure them, human security, through international protection, to turn on the light and turn on the water to Gaza, to open multiple corridors under international control where you can transport in food, medicine, medical equipment, and of course also fuel for the thousands and thousands of generators needed to operate Gaza, even if the light is turned on because distribution system is so fragile, like many institutions and hospitals will need generators, stop the bombing, lift the siege immediately, open corridors. And what we have seen so far from Rafah, 20 plus, 20, maybe 20 today is I think that is just a political game trying to fool the world to think that Oh nice, now humanitarian help is getting into Gaza. As Ali said, on a normal day during the 17 years of siege, Gaza's population needed five to seven hundred truckloads every day of food, of practical stuff to live. So 20 truckloads after two weeks of complete siege and bombing, it is an insult, it is an insult.

My colleagues are saying that they are running out to everything now. And I guess you have noticed that Israeli generals been repetitiously now threatening the big hospitals, Mustashfa Al-Quds, Mustashfa Al-Shifa and Al-Aqsa, to evacuate, threatened to bomb the hospital, the hospital leadership and my brave colleagues, the doctors, the nurses, the paramedics have refused and they have said we will not leave our patients. So this bombing has actually been obstructed. I also want to end by saying Dr. Eric and I, we want to go in, as we always do, not because we don't think the Palestinian health care workers can't do this job. They are world class experts on this, unfortunately. We go there to stand shoulder to shoulder with our brothers and sisters in Gaza, to bear witness, to collect evidence, to treat patients, of course, but most of all, to provide what is most needed now for the people of Gaza, and that is international solidarity. That is international, big solidarity, true solidarity. And also, I would reiterate the call from the Minister of Health three days ago, to health workers all over the world to establish emergency medical teams travel to Egypt, come to Egypt, and we will go to Gaza and we will help the completely exhausted teams in Gaza, who now have been working around the clock for more than two weeks, not only taking care of their patients, but also worrying intensely for their own families.

I will end with a short story. One of my best friends in Gaza is very skilled anesthesiologist. He is young. He's very experienced, despite his young age. He has eight kids. One of his kids is studying medicine in Egypt. On the third day, just after I came down to Cairo, he called me and he said, my brother Dr. Mads, if we get killed, I want you to father my son. These are the kind of realities that our human brothers and sisters in Gaza are facing now. This is the politics of elimination. This is the Dahiya Doctrine in full scale. Israelis say anywhere from anybody shooting at them from civilians, they define them as legal targets. This is the horrible true face of colonialism. The only solution is the root cause to be solved. And that is a free Palestine. Thank you.

Nora Barrows-Friedman:

Dr. Mads, thank you so much. And just the sadistic nature of what we're seeing, the fact that Joe Biden is congratulating himself for sending, for helping facilitate the sending of 20 trucks for a population being carpet bombed. One of those trucks was full of coffins. We're seeing the reports by your colleagues, anesthesiologists across Gaza, who say that they are performing surgeries without anesthesia because the anesthetic medications have run out. What does that do to the psychology of the physician to have to perform surgeries under these conditions? I can't even imagine.

Dr. Mads Gilbert:

Nora, I think we have to realize that also within the field of medicine, there is this fog of war and rumors, and false news are circulating. Palestinian doctors and nurses do not perform big surgery without anesthesia. They don't. You simply can't. You know, some of the main war wounds are to the abdominal cavity, to the chest cavity and to the head. If you have few shrapnel going into the chest, you can put in a chest tube that you can do in local anesthetic. If you have to go into the abdomen, the patient needs general anesthesia. If we cannot provide that, they will not operate and that patient will die. Because this is another illustration of this attempt to portray the animals in Gaza, oh, they even operate without anesthesia. They don't. Trust me. I've been there. And we've been without anesthetics for some time, then we tried to improvise and find other solutions. But by and large, the medical procedures and practices in Gaza are at highest standard, European standards. They do lack now local anesthetics. So there may be some cleaning of wounds, there may be some debridement, some reduction of fractures done without enough local anesthetics, but that is not outside the border of what is ethically acceptable.

My second point is about the closure at Rafah. We get many questions, why are you still in Cairo? And listen, to get from Cairo to Rafah, you need to go through the desert, the Sinai desert, and the Sinai desert is closed Egyptian military territory. You need permission from the highest security level in the Egyptian military security establishment. We have the full support from the Norwegian government. Our embassy is working very diligently to get the permissions. We have all the permissions from the civilian part of the Egyptian society and departments, but we were missing that last from the military. And they will not let anybody go to Rafah until they have full control, or until they find it suitable for them to let medical personnel in. So there has not been one single person crossing Rafah since they started in and not one single person going out. It's only these 20, 40, 60 trucks, otherwise, Rafah is completely sealed off. That, of course, also needs to be opened immediately. And there must be pressure. The Norwegian government has condemned the siege, the blockade.

It has increased its humanitarian support. And it has refused to call Hamas a terrorist organization. So there are some other voices in the West. There are some other independently, you know, political forces, and our Minister of Foreign Affairs was here down during the Cairo meeting, and we had a long talk with him and we have the full support of our government . And we will stay until we get in and again, the heroes are in Gaza, and I sent to anybody who can hear, Palestinian health workers are true heroes of our time.

Ali Abunimah:

Dr. Mads, thank you so much for that, and I wonder if you can tell us, if you know of other efforts to organize emergency medical teams, as you say at the moment, the Egyptians are not letting anyone through Rafah, but hopefully, and presumably that will change because of the desperate need. Do you know of other efforts to organize teams to come, to be ready to enter Gaza as soon as the permission is granted?

Dr. Mads Gilbert:

Well, only we have tried to sort of get an overview. And it's hard because it's not – At the moment, there is no coordinated efforts. It's the UN systems, and then there is the NGO system, and they have their cluster meetings. But I think what is needed now is not just the big ones, organizing things, they of course have teams that can come, but what we need now is to mobilize this [37:40] the louche of medical solidarity from young doctors, young nurses, young paramedics, ambulance people who wants to come and we know about that, because they call us all the time and ask us can we go please and we say it has to be organized. For our organization, Norwak, we have prepared substitute teams to replace us after we are outworn, after two or three weeks. So we have a plan. The big ones of course, Red Cross, Red Crescent, Medecins Sans Frontiers and others have teams. This is not coordinated. And the sad thing is that nobody, even if you have a team, is allowed in. So we need to mount the pressure on opening the borders.

And I appeal to all US young and old doctors, nurses, ambulance, paramedics, whatever you have radiologists, lab physicians, this is the time to stand up for humanity. This is the time to show that the Palestinians in Gaza and in the West Bank are not alone. This is the time where you write your name in the history books. And on which page you want to be. It's up to you. Now is the time to stand tall in solidarity with the Palestinian people at large, and for us in the healthcare sector to support the Palestinian health workers. Collect money, do whatever you can, but be active, don't be alone and resist all this malignant campaigns against us who support the Palestinians for being anti-Semitic. We are not. We are pro-Palestinian. We are anti colonial and we are for the justice and the good life for all people.

Ali Abunimah:

Dr. Mads, thank you for those comments and that appeal. I think we often forget the important role that the medical community can play in things like this. I wanted to ask you, you have been in Gaza, you were there during Israel's 2014 massacre and you were there previously. From your experience, what can you tell us about the conditions that your colleagues are facing in Gaza right now in Al Shifa or in any of the hospitals under these circumstances? And what are you hearing from them?

Dr. Mads Gilbert:

What we are hearing from them in our multiple communications every day and through the nights is that they are deeply affected by the siege and the lack of equipment, number one. The most important deficiency is the lack of fuel for the generators. So the most critical medical demand now, which must come from our government, is to open Gaza so that the fuel supply can restart the generators, and for Israel to turn on the power to the electrical network already existing in Gaza, then they tell us that they're lacking water. The immediate demand is to turn on the water pipeline system, and the water pumps. The third thing they tell us is that it's very difficult to uphold general hygiene and the special hygiene you need for surgical practice. Because the pressure in the water pipelines when there is pressure is too low to operate the sterilizers, the ones that are sterilizing the medical equipment, then they tell us that the sheer number of injured is so large that they don't have enough operating rooms to amend all of them. And the injuries are horrific.

Today we got a new series of pictures from children being almost melted from burns, where feet were without toes where the burns had obviously just melted away parts of the extremity. We don't know what kind of weapons these are, but the weapons are horrible. So the complexity and the number of injuries is one more problem. And, and then, which is maybe one of the most spectacular horrible things about the current situation is that there is no safe place in Gaza, now. What we saw in 2014, and 2009 was that when they bombed quarters, you know, like a neighborhood, the people from the neighborhood would seek shelter in and around the hospital because they still have an illusion that they are protected through international law. This time, the homeless, who have been forced to flee either by the order to move to the South, or who has lost their habitat, their home, their apartment or their house, these hundreds of thousands are now flocking into the hospitals. So the corridors of the hospitals are completely clogged with people having taken refuge there with their kids, and the number of toilets, the number of you know, sinks and toggles whatever you need for personal hygiene is not there.

So they describe an extremely difficult situation. And they are not the kind of people who are talking about, first of all, their emotions, they are talking about the dignity and the resistance and the medical system as part of the Palestinian resistance against elimination. So they see their role as being part of this national struggle to now avoid extermination and on the long term to have a free Palestine. So I think the most touching and powerful feature and character among my hundreds and hundreds of friends and colleagues in the healthcare system in Gaza, it is their stamina, it is their somood [resilience], their steadfastness and it is their never ending optimism and work energy despite darkness, despite bumping, despite not knowing what the family situation is, despite the most horrible injuries, children coming in, despite even getting your own family in as patients, they stand tall, and as they did the other night, when the Israelis were bombing closely around, Mustashfa Al-Quda and Mustashfa Al-Shifa, as they did also today. They said we are not leaving our patients, historical courage and a moral compass for a world which seems in the north, having lost their compasses a long time ago.

Nora Barrows-Friedman:

Dr. Mads Gilbert, we want to thank you so much for the years of work that you have done. Not only standing shoulder to shoulder with the heroes inside Gaza's medical community, but also making sure to highlight the dignity that is Palestinian doctors and physicians and nurses. And we thank you for your

work. And once again, tell people how they can follow your work and get in touch with Norwalk emergency team.

Dr. Mads Gilbert:

No, no, don't, don't get in touch with me. Don't follow our work. Find your local organization, or organize locally. Don't go into the big, big bank of huge organizations. We are very small, very mobile organization. By the way, I travel on behalf of my University Hospital in Northern Norway. They send me on commission to Gaza. Now, together with Novak and Dr. Eric but organize yourselves, find local structures, find local organizations, be mobile, be flexible, and don't waste too much time and money on the on the big structures. This is medical guerrilla warfare. This is medical mobility; this is medical speed. And if you want to know, by the way, what it feels like working in Gaza, you could buy my last book, which is called Night in Gaza, and which is a description of the horrific conditions during the 2014 assault on Gaza. I'm not saying this, I earn not a nickel from it. All the money goes to the solidarity work. But it is a pretty graphic and close to reality description. And you will meet in the book, many of the nurses, doctors and paramedics that are fighting for their patients and for their nation today. Night in Gaza.

Ali Abunimah:

Dr. Mads, one thing I really appreciate is how you do not try to separate "humanitarian issues from politics" because all of this horror that we're seeing, the injuries, that you are so desperate to get into Gaza to help treat are caused by political decisions. It's not a hurricane or an earthquake. So I just want to say how important that is your willingness to speak about colonialism and to tie what's happening to these political realities. One thing I want to ask you; I know that there is no substitute for being in Gaza to help, to be side by side with your colleagues there, but is there anything that you're able to do? You mentioned your colleagues sending you pictures of injuries, is there anything you're able to do from outside in terms of giving them advice or helping to respond to questions they have about treating some of these things?

Dr. Mads Gilbert:

Thank you, Ali. That's a good question. They don't need advice. They know everything. They want cooperation in order to disseminate information and we work around the clock in our little headquarter here in in Cairo. We're by the way in the Mustashfa Falestin, which is the Palestine Hospital in Cairo, which is operated by the Red Crescent Society, Palestine Red Crescent Society. So we're working around the clock with distributing information that they send us. We're in close contact with the Red Crescent Society, with the Minister of Health, with the different hospitals. We communicate with our politicians in Norway. We try to keep on top of the development. And I think one of the most important things that you can do today, if you care, it is to keep updated and read and follow alternative news sources. I haven't been following Western news sources and of course, the Arab ones, Al Jazeera English and other ones, and it's two completely different pictures. So keep yourself informed, study, watch the fantastic lecture that Ilan Pappé had, two days ago, three days ago at Berkeley. It's on YouTube.

It is the most illuminating analysis on what is going on now and what is the root cause of what we're seeing now. Ilan Pappé, it's on YouTube. Be informed, spread information, be knowledgeable, study

the issue, go beyond the superficial. And for us, merely having somebody on the outside to talk with is important for them. Because as I said, they feel abandoned, they feel left behind by the world. And they always say that when we come in, they feel that they are not in the complete darkness. So we do whatever we can around the clock, we also meet a lot of other people. And of course, we push hard to get in. And we hope Inshallah, that we will get in and then you will hear from us from the inside when we have time, and we have a break in the patient treatment. But again, the heroes are in Gaza. They work tirelessly, night and day. What we need to do now is to have our governments force the US government to say you do not attack any civilian hospital in Gaza, you do not bomb any ambulance, you turn on the water, you turn on the electricity, and you allow fuel, water and food to get in. If they don't, they are complicit. Joe Biden will write his name in the dark part of history, if he doesn't soon stop Israel. And the key to stop Israel is in the White House and Pentagon.

Nora Barrows-Friedman:

Dr. Mads, again, thank you so much for all that you do and for being with us here today on this live stream. We're going let you go so that you can keep working with your colleagues. And we will, of course, check back with you. Thank you so much again, full solidarity and gratitude.

Dr. Mads Gilbert:

And finally, thank you for having me and really good luck to all the brave US citizens of all genders and nationalities. I have a wide array of contacts, they, you know, take our information, they spread it, they remake it, thanks to David and Bram and Luma and all the other, like yourself, brave people who stand up against the hatred and stand in solidarity with the Palestinians. You the US citizens are the most important in solidarity work now. Shokran! Thank you.

Ali Abunimah:

Thank you Dr. Mads. Thank you.

Dr. Mads Gilbert:

Kollona Gaza. Kollona Gaza. [We are all Gaza]

Ali Abunimah:

we're all Gaza.

Nora Barrows-Friedman:

Thank you, Dr. Mads. Speaking of brave people in the US who are literally putting their bodies where their mouths are. We want to bring in two activists, friends and comrades, Max Geller, who is in London, and he's with Palestine Action, an organization based in the UK that we have reported on for years and years, and also Calla Walsh, who is one of the founding organizers for Palestine Action US, which has just been launched, doing work to bring the factories, the weapons manufacturers, and their work to a grinding halt by activists. And so Max and Calla thank you so much for being with us on The Electronic Intifada livestream today.

Calla Walsh:

Thanks for having us.

Max Geller:

It's really good to be here.

Nora Barrows-Friedman:

Thanks. Calla, can you talk a little bit first about what Palestine Action is and why it has jumped the Atlantic and opened up a wing in the States?

Calla Walsh:

Absolutely. Well, first, thank you for having us on, for all your really invaluable coverage and analysis these past couple of weeks. We in the US are really inspired by the successes of the Palestine Action campaign in the UK. And arguably it is even more important to be doing this kind of work disrupting the very links in these imperialist supply chain that are creating the very weapons being used to mass murder Palestinians right now. I for one and other people involved have been involved in the calls for Palestinian liberation. For years, we have sat in meetings with Congress, people and Senators. We have pushed for legislation. We have pressured local government. We have done boycotts and BDS and mass rallies. The list goes on. And it's not that there isn't value or importance in those other tactics, but that what we're seeing now is a higher level of escalation is needed. We see that mass global consciousness so clearly stands with Palestine. We're seeing tens of millions of people take to the streets around the world, especially in the Global South, but also across the US cities, hundreds of thousands in London, for example.

In Turkey, the youth are storming NATO bases. In Jordan, they're burning the Zionist embassy. In Egypt, they're storming the border crossing to try to deliver aid to Gaza and tens of thousands of people are marching in US cities, marching often to empty halls of power. So imagine what these tens of thousands of people could do if we storm the weapons companies; if we stopped them from making the bombs and the drones and the bullets and the tear gas and the white phosphorus and the surveillance technology that is being used to mass murder Palestinians right now. And not only that, but then being marketed as battle tested to be used at the US border, in the Mediterranean to repressive imperialist US backed regimes around the world. Imagine if these tens of thousands of people were going to the ports and the railroads where these weapons and supplies, to make these weapons are being transported and we shut that down.

So this isn't some crazy idea. This is what we're being called to do by, for example, Palestinian Trade Unions. And we've already seen this example work in the UK where they've successfully shut down many weapons factory or one Elbit factory in the London headquarters, as I'm sure Max will talk about. Elbit has at least 12 locations in the US. And, of course, the US is the very heart of the military industrial complex. So many other weapons companies and their subsidiaries are based here. So I'll stop there and let Max share too about the work happening in the UK. But we've already seen Elbit's stocks dropping in the past couple of weeks since our first big action in the US while every other major defense companies stocks are rising. They even took the address off of their website of the location that we targeted. So they are very scared of the community's ability to shut down these war profiteers and to shut down local weapons companies that are operating in our neighborhoods.

Nora Barrows-Friedman:

Thanks so much for that Calla. Max, can you tell us, tell our audience, what Elbit Systems is, the kinds of weapons that they make and the kinds of actions that Palestine Action in the UK have been taking? You're from the States; what is your reaction to seeing Palestine Action spread?

Max Geller:

Well, I'm not just from the States. I'm from Boston. So, just not to put too fine a point on it, but I am filled with civic pride to see Palestine Action tactics spreading to the US and that Boston was the first city to do it. But listen, the fact that there as we just saw so many different outposts for Elbit in the US is indicative of their importance. Elbit is Israel's largest defense company. It functions as a parastatal organization. It participates in active IDF operations, including the ones that we've seen unfolding over the last 17 days. Israel's largest export is its drone fleet and Elbit makes 85% of its drones. It cannot be overstated how integral to the Israeli economy weapons are, and these weapons end up in the most repressive regimes around the world, from fascist Modi to the ethnic cleansers in Azerbaijan. Elbit's weapons are used wherever there is imperialist repression happening right now, which just underscores the importance of this campaign and why we all have to do what we can to shut this company down.

Listen, I think, you know, we've seen over the last few days, Palestine protesters clashing with riot police in France. We've seen police dogs in Germany. We've seen Babylonian storm trooper, the NYPD, punching people in New York City. And in the UK, this repression is happening too; that march that everyone is happy about. We haven't sort of had a chance to talk about the police attempt to repress it. And we haven't been talking about the trials that so many of my comrades here in the UK are facing. We have three big trials coming up, one starting at the end of this month, and another featuring two of our founders and six others that carry serious jail time, starting in November. So there's like, this context of what we're operating in is, I don't want to minimize it, but Palestine Action remains steadfast, and, you know, the people on trial encouraged me to not talk about their trials and instead focus on the successes that we've had, and the new actions that we've been unfolding; we've had an unbelievable amount of new signups; we've been able to hit the BBC; we've been able to drive a van through the gates of a lesser factory, ending work at that factory for the day. And when one factory is unable to work, many other factories are unable to work, because these factories at least in the UK function in tandem, so we have the opportunity to really take a serious toll on a vital cog in Israel's kill machine. And I encourage people to get involved.

Asa Winstanley:

Max, you've talked about the legal repression that you've faced in the UK, but you've also had legal successes as well. So, you know, prior and until recently, as far as I understand that, every single case that was taken out against Palestine Action was either dropped by the police, because Elbit didn't want to prosecute, or there was even successes in court where you were able to successfully, argue before magistrate or other legal authorities that you –

Max Geller:

Yeah, I mean, as recently as a few weeks ago, we had incredible brave – These are some – I just can't overstate how brave and noble these people are in Palestine Action. This guy, he caused hundreds of

thousands of pounds worth of damage to a Israeli weapon factory and argued in court that it was proportional and one; this is a person who is willing to go to jail but stood tall and was able to convince a jury of their peers that their actions were proportional. And it's so inspiring to see like a movement building around this and leading to sort of the legal victories that we're talking about here.

Nora Barrows-Friedman:

And Calla, can you talk a little bit about, you know, just the importance of, I don't know, it's meaningless, but how vital it is for direct actions to take place and whether you see the US as maybe a more repressive terrain than the UK in terms of doing the same action shutting down these factories? You know, the work of Palestine Action is so effective, because it's not just having a protest or a sit in or signing a petition. These are actual material consequences that these weapons manufacturers are taking. Can you talk a little bit about what it looks like here in the US so far?

Calla Walsh:

Yeah, certainly, we have a lot to study and learn from our UK comrades, and to apply differently in different conditions in the US. So far in this campaign with all of the actions that we've done targeting the Cambridge, Massachusetts facility, we've gotten away without any arrests. And that's also a location as Max mentioned, that we're really interested in escalating with because the legal consequences and political conditions in Cambridge are going to be very different than, for example, the other Elbit locations in Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Texas. And so we want to see, you know, how far we can go. I think the importance of direct action is that Palestine is not going to be liberated by a shift in liberal consciousness in the US. Palestine is not going to be liberated because the Democratic Party suddenly has a moral awakening and decides to go against the will of their AIPAC and weapons industry donors; they're just not, and Palestine is going to be liberated by Palestinians and their relentless resistance and Palestine will be liberated by the people across the world who rose up to resist alongside them.

There have been a lot of direct actions in the past few weeks in the US, mostly targeting politicians, mass arrests in Congress, and we've seen, you know, great support for those actions. But imagine how much more scared the politicians would be if we were targeting the weapons companies, who are their campaign donors. And the examples in the UK, they are literally going into these factories and destroying the equipment to literally stop them from making weapons. The facility in Cambridge, which for context is the neighborhood I grew up in my entire life, is not, you know, a factory; they're not actually manufacturing weapons here. It is a subsidiary of Elbit that is mostly focused on biomedical research. But that doesn't make it any less complicit in this genocide that is going on. These people are still profiting from every bomb and bullet and drone that is being used to kill Palestinians. And so we want to make it as inconvenient as possible for anyone working at this company to get into their place of work.

We want them to realize that they all have blood on their hands, and we want everyone in the neighborhood everyone in the building that they're renting their space from, to realize the same and to actually shut this down. And not only that, but to inspire people across the country to take up action. We want people to realize we are not powerless and that we have a right to and a responsibility to stand up and to do more. And so we are trying to expand. You know, nationally, there's so many different targets

but really focusing in on Elbit is the most effective strategy as we've seen. In the UK, we want to put out so many resources for different people to get organized in their communities.

Palestine Action UK just posted a video of how to fill a fire extinguisher with red paint and douse a building with it. And there's many more resources and trainings that will be available. We're having an official campaign launch tomorrow at 5pm Eastern and 10pm London time, over zoom where everyone can join, learn more about why Elbit is our target and what we're doing to shut it down. But ultimately, we are here to win. And we are here to stand with Palestine and to actually take action to shut down these companies that are operating right now peacefully with business as usual in our neighborhoods. And as long as we allow that to continue, we all have blood on our hands

Nora Barrows-Friedman:

Calla, once again, give us the information for the call tomorrow and where people can go to get involved in and learn more about Palestine action us.

Calla Walsh:

So you can RSVP [répondez s'il vous plait, French for "please reply"] to the call tomorrow at bit.ly/palactionus that link is case sensitive so I can put it in the chat. And then you can follow us on Twitter and Instagram at pal_actionus. I also want to highlight that for the first three days our Twitter was up, we were completely shadow banned. It was actually bizarre; we'd never seen anything like it. Every single person who tried to follow us was automatically unfollowed, our follower count would fluctuate like tens of thousands every few seconds, but it seems that it's finally stabilized today. And we have 200,000 followers now. So this censorship really backfired and only made people way more interested in the work that we are doing and inspired to shut all that down.

Nora Barrows-Friedman:

Thank you! And Max –

Max Geller:

Can I just say one thing? I just want to say, I know, you all have been at it for years. And The Electronic Intifada has been an important resource for me for years. But I just want to really say thank you for the last few weeks. The amount of material you put out there under incredible stress while losing your colleagues, it's been inspiring to all of us. And it's really invaluable. I can't thank you guys enough for how much you're showing up despite how terrible it is and how personally burdensome it must be. And I really appreciate being able to be on here but being in the struggle with you guys.

Ali Abunimah:

Thank you, Max! That means a lot to all of us. And we really feel it. I know we all do, all of us who are here today and many of the people watching and it's a chance for me just to reiterate again that we do this work as part of a community. And that's the only way we can do it. We do it because we feel the love and support of so many people around the country and around the world. And we feel the love and support of our friends and colleagues in Gaza. They support us as much as we tried to support them and we stay focused or we try to stay focused on what they are going through and giving them an opportunity to reach the world when there's such a blockade on information.

And I just think that the actions you take also help to break that blockade on information because something you said, Calla, that really struck me is that Palestine is not going to be liberated by a slow glacial change in the Democratic Party. And I think, as we've said before, on other live streams, I mean, for all the work we did over these years and decades to get, you know, the opinion polls to change and they have changed and to get some members of Congress to be able to speak more forthrightly about Palestine and they are doing that, at the end of the day, that shrapnel is still tearing through the bodies of hundreds of Palestinians in Gaza every day, that shrapnel that's made in America, that's made in Massachusetts, made in Texas, made in Alabama.

And I think the work you're doing, the direct action work you're doing, has an incredibly strong tradition in the United States. People think immediately, of course, of the Civil Rights Movement, which involved a lot of direct action, but I also think about Act Up in the 1980s, who, with direct action challenged the silence of the United States government, which was killing so many people with HIV AIDS, due to silence and inaction of the government and Act Up change that. And I also think of the direct actions in the 80s and 90s at the School of the Americas, where the United States Government trained torturers and murderers from the right wing regimes in Central America and Latin America and many people did direct action there and some of them went to prison for it. So we're very cognizant also of the price that people are willing to put their own personal freedom on the line for a course like this is something really incredible. And I know that that's going to be very – That's a message that is going to provide a lot of comfort to people in Palestine as well.

Nora Barrows-Friedman:

Indeed. [It is] Max Geller and Calla Walsh of Palestine Action UK and US respectively. You can go to Twitter, at twitter.com/pal_actionus. We have the little crawl at the bottom. Please go there. And now you can follow them without interference from Twitter and get involved. Thank you so much, both of you for being with us today.

Calla Walsh:

Thank you! Peace!

Nora Barrows-Friedman:

Thanks. And we do want to bring on now our in house analyst Jon Elmer, journalist, researcher. And, Jon, you know, switching gears for a second, you heard from Mads about the humanitarian catastrophe, the medical catastrophe in Gaza. What are you looking at right now, as you see, Israel's, as you said before, the cowardly carpet bombing of Gaza, while Israeli leaders and, you know, backed and sponsored by the West, are still hinting at a ground invasion, but are being evasive now about when or if it would take place? What are you watching right now?

Jon Elmer:

Yeah, I mean, I think with the humanitarian thing, that's important to say, is that the Rafah border is not a commercial crossing. It's the civilian crossing, and they're bringing these trucks, these tiny little trucks through that crossing and then unloading them by hand. Right around the corner is Kerem Shalom which is a massive Israeli, I mean, it's an Israeli international border crossing connected to a port that

has the ability to resupply a humanitarian mission to Gaza in a wholesale manner and what's happening at Rafah is a fig leaf. It's a joke. It's a gimmick that's happening to distract from the massive catastrophe that's happening in the Gaza Strip. I mean, I think in terms of the Israeli situation, it seems like they're delaying every day, they're delaying this.

Because I think that there's a lack of a plan and there's lack of an understanding about how the maximalist goals that Israel is attempting to achieve, how impossible that is, and how brutal that is. And I think even with, you know, their best friend regime in the US, I think that that's obvious that there needed to be some sort of fake humanitarian fig leaf to this operation. And that's what the Americans delayed the Israelis to do, to go over for Biden, to go over to coordinate their messaging. The White House is doing that; the Pentagon right now is scouring their reserves looking for 155 millimeter artillery shells that can be used with ground troops in the Gaza Strip. You know, Israeli preparedness in general, we're seeing today, disagreements between the army and the political staff in their war cabinet about these objectives. Because the objectives are unclear. They're unclear that they're possible to do but to eliminate Hamas, and its entire, you know, set of fighters for generations to come, as Netanyahu said, is a significant military task that Israel – It's unclear that Israel is prepared for that task.

The outgoing Central Command Head for the US said that the fight in Gaza is the hardest fight on the planet. You know, Israeli generals spoke this weekend, on their radios, talking about how it's an existential fight and that nobody supports the maximalist goals of Israel, but that it's an existential fight. Because Israel has to win this war, they see, because nobody's going to want to live in the South or in the North in these settlements that Israel has evacuated, the South is completely evacuated and the North is evacuated. You're talking about 60 towns and cities evacuated before the war in the North, and the South has even begun. So that gives you an idea of the preparation. We saw in the West Bank yesterday. Again, they're arming their citizens, their Jewish citizens, making militias. There's more than 600 militias that have been armed with 40,000 M4s rifles, helmets, vests, civilian, they're calling them civilian security squads, implying that there's not enough military force to control an uprising in the West Bank, should that happen.

So they're arming Jewish civilians to what they call preempt an uprising in 1948 Palestine and Israel. And so I think we see these signs; we saw Israel bombed from the air for the first time since the second intifada, the refugee camp Jenin, again, implying that they don't have soldiers that can do that kind of work. I think that there's a lot of delaying that's happening within this war cabinet, which is interacting and communicating constantly with the Americans about how to carry this out in front of the whole world amid this, like, absolutely catastrophic civilian devastation that Dr. Mads talked about. It was great to have him on the show. It's an absolute catastrophe, and it hasn't even started yet.

Ali Abunimah:

Jon, you have been talking consistently about how the Israeli is unprepared and how difficult this military task that they've set themselves is, and yesterday, I believe, the Qassam Brigades, the military wing of Hamas, announced that they had carried out a very precise ambush against an Israeli military team of a couple of tanks and armored bulldozers that tried to enter Gaza from the east near Khan Yunis and Qassam announced they attacked them and they destroyed them and they forced them to

flee on foot. And later on Israel acknowledged that one of its soldiers were killed and three others injured in this operation by Qassam.

So all that points to Israel in many ways not being prepared. Also, this operation keeps being delayed week after week after week, we've seen reports in the media of the US saying that or reports that the US is telling Israel, well, let's delay this because we want to try and get the hostages, as they call them the hostages, the captives and prisoners out. But the Israelis keep doubling down publicly on this goal of we're going to go in, we're going to destroy Hamas, we're going to eliminate them completely. There's no sign of them moderating their goals. Oh, and there was a statement last week, which we discussed where one of their spokesperson had said, well, maybe we're not going to do a ground operation, so did they not know what they're going to do? Are they going to do it anyway? I mean, what can we make up all this confusion?

Jon Elmer:

The IDF spokes today said there may not be a ground invasion, and that's the first time that I've heard them say that. They're just talking about the next phase. Yeah, it seems reports in Israeli papers are that the war cabinet and the police and the politicians are at odds, you know, a military going in to carry out an operation without a distinct objective is just generally a bad idea for the Israelis to be framing this as an existential fight, that has to happen for the State of Israel to survive. That's a very maximalist goal because the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip are also fighting an existential fight where their houses have been destroyed, homes have been collapsed on top of people. There's nobody in the world ready for an existential fight quite like the people of the Gaza Strip. And that's the people as well, it's not just the fighters. The fighters aren't separate from the people; they have immense popular support. And if Israel does want to get involved in an existential fight with people who have already lost everything, who already know what it's like to suffer, I mean, that's what my friends are telling me. Everything that's happening right now is devastating, and it's unprecedented, but it's not completely different than what they've experienced before.

They've been subjected to war half a dozen times. They know what they're talking about. And when they say they're ready for a ground invasion, as we saw people chanting outside of Shifa hospital yesterday, we want a ground invasion. The kids who had lost their homes and their parents have been killed and they're sleeping on the floor of the parking lot of the hospital saying that they want a ground invasion. And on the other side of the border, you have 60 evacuated communities, you have people trying to get an air lift from Tel Aviv to get back to Canada. The difference couldn't be more stark. And so if you're talking about an existential fight, then you're talking about a 10-year fight, which is what the New Yorker said that they learned when they were on Biden's trip to Israel, is that some people are talking about 10 years, which seems like a realistic amount of time necessary for a fighting force like Israel that has no record, their record of fighting face to face is very, very thin.

It's very thin and the examples like that we saw the Qassam hitting that tank with an ambush as it came in yesterday, that's what's going to happen to all their armor, all the time when they come in, it's going to be a constant attack. And we've seen Israel respond to those attacks in the past by immediately pulling back and shelling the population in Shuja'iyya in 2014. In one day, they fired the same number of shells as Ukraine does on a 1200 kilometer frontline during their vaunted counter offensive that was

24 hours on a captive civilian population in a densely populated area, raining down shells that Israel in the United States are scouring their stores looking for more because that's what Israel is going to need to defend its troops because you can't defend your troops in a concentrated area like that with airstrikes.

You'll kill your own troops so they need a lot of artillery to waste the area where these civilians are living and to protect their troops that they're promising us are going to go foot by foot and down into tunnels and fight in a tunnel apparatus that is according to Yahya Sinwar 500 kilometers long, you know, comparable to the London Underground, inside which there's weaponry, fighters, prisoners, food, you know, ability to withstand what's going on on the surface level. Palestinians have the ability to defend themselves from those underground warrens that can move all throughout the Gaza Strip. So I think that Israel, the longer they're talking about this, the less political will there is to fight an existential war. Is Israel ready for thousands of their soldiers to die? Because that's what they're calling for, an operation, that's what that entails. If you're talking about actually doing what they say they're doing, which, again, I want to keep saying that they're saying they're going to do that, but we're speculating at this point.

And what I see is an impossible task in front of the Israelis, that would only result in the massacre of civilian populations. It's not going to result in the eradication of 60,000 fighters who have been training for two decades to fight this fight. What it's going to do is it's going to massacre civilians, it's going to rain that shrapnel that Dr. Mads showed us that is it's so heavy, that's the thing you think it looks like a tiny piece of aluminum, it's so dense and heavy. And when the bomb goes off, those pieces are red hot, flying all over anyone around, so Israel is not going to use those weapons when their troops are in the proximity, which just gives them one less weapon and one more truth that they're going to have to fight face to face, soldier to soldier, that's the only way to achieve the objective that they're asking for. And Palestinians are, you know, fighters are virtually begging for that. Because the cowardice of bombing from the air leaves people helpless.

There's nothing they can do but yell at the clouds. If Israel comes in and fights face to face, you're going to have the 60,000 armed fighters in the Gaza Strip, but even if you liquidated them, then what do you think's going to happen? You don't think the 100,000 angry Palestinian civilians aren't going to pick up arms and fight you indefinitely! And the Israeli plan is to then what? Bring Abbas in on the back of an Israeli tank! You don't think the Palestinians are going to fight against him like they do in the West Bank like they did when they drove the PA out of Gaza after winning an election and the Palestinian Authority didn't give over security control, so Hamas fought them and drove them out of the Gaza Strip! If Israel's plan is to bring Mohammed Dahlan back, I mean, this is not serious. It's not serious. Nobody in Gaza thinks that serious. People are not talking about the day after Hamas and Gaza. It's not serious.

Ali Abunimah:

You referred to the artillery ammunition and the fact that Israel's tactic when the troops get in trouble, as they inevitably do is just to shell everything, including their own troops. We talked previously about the Hannibal doctrine. But there are these reports emerging, we can put one up, that the US is so short of artillery ammunition that is actually having to reroute ammunition that it was planning to send to Ukraine, to Israel. And recall that a few months ago, the US was so short of ammunition for Ukraine,

that it actually took the preposition strategic supply of artillery ammunition that it had placed in Israel, it took that out of Israel to send it to Ukraine. And now it's doing the opposite. I mean, what does this tell you? Or what do you read from all of these things?

Jon Elmer:

Well, that there's two active hot wars going on right now in the world, and possibly three, if Hezbollah joins, and the United States and Israel don't have that capacity. They haven't had a wartime economy producing shells enough to fight trench warfare, like World War Two, in Ukraine. And so they had to, yeah, rob their strategic reserves of weaponry, which incidentally was put in Israel in 1973. The last time Israel was almost wiped out, and they needed a weapons airlift from the United States to save them in 1973. And so they decided that they would keep that weapons surplus in Israel so that Israel could tap it. And Israel does tap it. They tapped it in 2006 for the July war, when they needed more shells. They tapped it in 2014 for the attack on Gaza. And those two are tiny examples compared to what the Israelis are talking about right now. 8000 shells in 2014 Shuja'iyya, What would that number be today when they launched ground operation with, you know, dozens and dozens of troops?

And yeah, those shelling events where they use so many shells are follow on essentially Hannibal directive incidents, the Shuja'iyya incident in 2014 that they shelled was when their APC got hit and they thought that they had captured, that Israeli soldiers had been captured, and so they shelled Shuja'iyya. The other one was in Rafah where they also had a tunnel operation and thought soldiers were captured. And that's when they lay waste using these shells, they use more shells in one day in a densely populated area than on the 1200 kilometer frontline of Ukraine, which is a dug-in stationary standoff fire war, where the troops aren't moving, it's a stationary frontline. Israel wants to walk foot by foot through Shuja'iyya raining down artillery shells, digging through their strategic reserves to try to find enough shells! Lebanon was what? 30 something days, 2014 was 50 days. They're promising a war that's at least a year. You know, they're talking about many, many months. And the New Yorker was talking about someone in the Israeli administration saying it would probably take 10 years realistically, how many shells, how many stores, stockpiles, can the United States raid to fund their imperialist wars?

Ali Abunimah:

Well, that's something to watch. And that may be why Israel is so hesitant also to enter into a confrontation on its northern border, because the ammunition simply may not be there for a war on two fronts, and even the bombs will, I mean, not soon enough, but even the supply of bombs cannot be infinite. But I wanted to ask you about another thing. We've seen these claims made by Israeli leaders we can put this up now. This claim from Israel's President Isaac Hertzog that Hamas had plans to destroy chemical weapons. Now, of course, as usual, Israel has presented absolutely no evidence for this. And I put it in the category of Israel's atrocity propaganda of trying to demonize Hamas and Palestinians generally to justify its genocide. But I've seen people speculating and I stress this is speculation, just an online discussion, saying, Ah, this may be that Israel itself is planning to use poison gas, perhaps trying to put poison gas down into the tunnels and try to kill Palestinian fighters that way. I want to ask you if that, and I preface that by also saying that there have been reports, in recent years of Egypt, either flooding tunnels or putting gas in them. And so I wanted to ask you, is that something Israel is capable of doing? And do you have any concern that that might be possible?

Jon Elmer:

Well, that's what the Americans did in Vietnam; they put CS Gas, tear gas, down the tunnels, and it was banned. It's a banned weapon in warfare after that. 500 kilometers of tunnels, it's not clear that you could project gas into that much space. I mean, I'm sure you could do it, the flooding doesn't work, they tried to do that, they can't get enough water pressure to flood 500 kilometers of tunnels, they would have to have infrastructure to do that. So they would have to be on the ground with the ability to do that. You'd have to also find the tunnel entrances to do that. And that's not clear that they can do that. You know, they're really left with mostly what they do is they follow concrete trucks with satellites and hope that the concrete trucks give an indication of where the tunnels are, they don't really have the ground penetrating capacity to understand the network of tunnels to even do something like get a spike in to put gas down in.

Lots of the tunnels are ventilated, so it's not clear that that works. They also have their own people down there. So it's not clear that you want to gas 200 of your soldiers. But, no, these kinds of chemical weapons attacks, I think. One thing that Nasrallah has said from the North is that we're a war to start that Hezbollah has the missile capability to target key Israeli infrastructure, including a chemical plant in Haifa, with precision guided missiles that has been something that Nasrallah has talked about for a long time because Israel's infrastructure has been out of reach for the most part, right. Like their Defense Ministry that's in downtown Tel Aviv surrounded by civilians, is now a legitimate target for Hezbollah rockets that are not defensible by Israel and can knock out key infrastructure, could hit Dimona nuclear plant, which could create a chemical reaction from those attacks. I mean, I don't know if the world would sit by and watch Israel use gas of all, you know, of all countries to use gas to kill their enemies.

Ali Abunimah:

Well, the point is they might not. I think the point and again, distressing the speculation that people have been making is that, well, these Israeli claims that Hamas has or would or wishes to have chemical weapons, they would then say, oh, whatever happened in those tunnels was Hamas's own chemical weapons. Again, that's in the realm of speculation, but given how much Israel lies and lies constantly, when I read that, I thought, well, I just can't dismiss that out of hand.

Jon Elmer:

But it gives you a sense that they're not willing to go in foot by foot. Why isn't that article about their robotic dogs that they've created or their engineering units that have been training for a decade to go down in tunnels? Why are on a military level people discussing things that are not feasible, like flooding or gassing?

Ali Abunimah:

Oh, I didn't say that they're discussing it. I say that they're claiming that Palestinians have chemical weapons. And I'm saying that other people have speculated that this is projection, it may be that Israel wishes to use chemical weapons, and then blame Hamas. And by the way, we've seen those kinds of tricks and hoaxes in recent years in relation to other conflicts in the region, false flag attacks using chemical weapons. So that's why I raised that. But I suppose your bigger point that I take away from this is that even if Israel wanted to try something like that, the technical difficulties and the scale of the

underground network that likely exists under Gaza would probably render it ineffective on any large scale.

Jon Elmer:

Or at least isolated, yeah. The comprehensive nature of the tunnels is really a strategic impact. It's that you can't just go down and get – It's not like one barrack is down underneath, and you just need to get the master barrack and then it all falls apart from there. It's not like that. They're all individual units that are defending each area of a tunnel. They have the ability to close off tunnels, for their strategic areas, for their resource areas under there, for their weapons and food. It's not clear that you're going to ever be able to completely go through the tunnel network, even the absurdity of trying to win that war on the ground level, would then precipitate a war underground. That's never happened in history before. You know, people have used tunnels often in warfare, to hide weaponry, you know, to use it as essentially a bomb shelter, but we haven't really seen this strategic use of tunnels where the impetus will be on the invading force to actually physically go down and fight in an armed area where people are able to reload their weaponry, and in worst case scenarios, they're able to just detonate the entire tunnel area and collapse whatever Israeli special forces unit, should they ever get to that point, can just collapse it on top of the Israeli unit.

They can use the tunnels to blow up Israeli units on top. And so the ambush that we saw yesterday, I think is just the tip of the iceberg of what they're going to face. And then to go down in the tunnels presumes that you've won that war on the surface level, and then you're able to safely muster your troops over top of the tunnel entrance, and then carry out a second operation that goes down into the tunnels to fight, so you'd have to move your way foot by foot, inch by inch from the Gaza border to downtown Gaza City. I mean, just that alone, even if you didn't have a fighting force that was as competent as the Palestinians or as prepared as the Palestinians, that task would take months and any example in military history, months is an optimistic version of that story. So Israel's preparedness has to include their soldiers dying at rates that we haven't seen since the 1973 War. And if they're ready for that they haven't shown any history of that.

They're an army that trains all the time. But their actual face to face combat experience is thin. And the examples of them are examples that are sort of famous for being defeats like the 2006 War in Lebanon, where they tried to invade Bint Jbeil and Hezbollah inflicted a defeat on them, a defeat that the Israelis called the defeat in their commission after the 2006 War, Israel called it a defeat. They'll call it a defeat after their inquest into what happened on October 7, they'll call that a military defeat, as well. So their record is really thin. In 2014, they said they were going to destroy all the tunnels too if we remember. And they pulled back and they didn't, Yahya Sinwar said after the war that they didn't even destroy 5% of the tunnels. And destroyed is not even the right word, they rendered them inoperable, and they're just able to be dug back out again, with the same network, the same mapping as they originally had. So for the defenders, collapsing the tunnel isn't even necessarily the end of the story, if you have access to the roots around it.

The main tunnels have core roots, and then they have branches, of course, that go out. There's defensive tunnels for protection, there's offensive tunnels to come out inside Israel. They have the capacity that we've seen from 2014 War, when Qassam fighters came out of the tunnels, the offensive

tunnels, came out of the tunnels and waited for hours and hours for Israeli troops to show up to attack them. So those troops are mustering now on the border, the Palestinians have the capacity to exit the Gaza Strip through an offensive tunnel and attack mustering troops outside the border. Palestinians have rocket capability for short range rockets.

They have the ability to put more than 100 kilograms of payload into a missile if it's not going a far distance, which it does in their Badir missiles if it's not going a far distance, which the troops mustering on the border are not far away. And we're seeing that. Qassam is targeting them all day long. We're seeing messages of them targeting with their rockets and mortar units that only they have mortar units that are only doing that; they're only focused on that. They have air defense units that are only focused on air defense, they have anti-tank units that are only focused on destroying armor, they have units and a professionalized organized army that's now a decade old. It really does go back to the late [1:43:10] aughts and early 2010s, that they've been formally creating this army, whose people's jobs is a specialized military preparation, preparation that's shared with them from Hezbollah. And they have units that are dedicated to just that purpose. So when we say a guerrilla army or guerrilla warfare, it's not even the most meaningful way to describe this phase of the war.

Israel is going to be going up against a professionalized army, which they acknowledge is a bona fide army, which with its particular units, dedicated their lives, dedicated to that one purpose. And that is what Israel has to defeat before they get into a guerrilla warfare, because as everyone on this show knows, Gaza is going to fight back. Just like Jenin fought back when the fighters Jenin were killed, people join the fight. And so you're talking about a multistage war, where you're pretending like you can defeat the entire professionalized armed groups and then carry out block by block guerrilla warfare against, you know, the stage two of the Israeli plan was to attack the remnants, the remnants of the armed movements, but that's, as we know from Iraq, that's when the guerrilla war started in Iraq when the Americans said they were going after Saddam remnants. That's when the actual war in Iraq began. So it's just not clear to me that, and I don't think I'm alone, that the Israeli objective can be what they're saying it's going to be even if you didn't know anything about the fighting force in the Gaza Strip, like the center, you know, the Central Command Commander said the toughest battle on the planet is an urban fight with demolished buildings.

The Israelis are going to – As we've seen, the amount of destruction in Gaza, the Israelis are going to have to move in with armored bulldozers and move that rubble. So they're going to need armored bulldozers that can't fight back, they're going to need troop escorts for these massive armored bulldozers. They're just sitting ducks, the first tank that crossed the border in this war, the soldiers ran home in their shoes after a Qassam attack, so they need to put scores of armor on the ground. And the first one, the guys have a story to tell everybody that they get back to the base when they're sweating, from physically running away from the Gaza strip back to their bases, and we've seen that and that just to say doesn't include Saturday, the October 7th, when we watched the Gaza Command get collapsed. We saw their Gaza Military Intelligence Unit get ransacked, with presumably all that information and all those operatives that are all captured. You can probably assume that those commanders are being interrogated by Qassam fighters to find out what the war plan is.

It's hard to imagine that you could have a better situation for war preparation than having in your custody, 24/7, the actual commanders of that operation. So sometimes we forget about that because of the mountain of civilian devastation that Israel has wrought since October 7. But we have to remember that October 7th was a major setback for Israel's preparedness to fight a war. It didn't help their situation to lose those commanders and to have those commanders as a potential source of information for further information about what goes on in the Gaza Strip. And we've seen it.

Asa Winstanley:

Jon, sorry to jump in, but I think this is something that's been really lost in all this atrocity propaganda. It is just the sheer scale. You've talked about it before. We've talked about before on the stream, especially in the first few days. But the sheer scale of the military defeat in the South was absolutely unprecedented. You know, as you've said, the entire Southern Command collapsed. You know, senior officers captured. It was a massive, massive setback for the Israeli army.

Ali Abunimah:

And that's why they focus so much on the unverified stories, fake stories of beheaded Jewish babies and rapes.

Jon Elmer:

They say they're all civilians. Right? And we know that that's not the case. I mean, I've watched hours of videos. There is a lot of resistance from the military and from the armed security guards during that raid, which Israel in order to say that it was a massacre to justify their war aims, they actually explain themselves as being much weaker than they've been telling us for decades that they are, they don't actually have the capacity to protect people that live in those – You know, if people look at a map of the where the settlements are around Gaza, their military placements that were put to encircle the Gaza Strip, and Israel has proven that they can't defend that. And in the North, it's the same. They've been talking about how Hezbollah is going to come down through tunnels and attack the North. But Gaza showed you don't need tunnels, you just go right through the wall. They tore down the wall in 30 different places, it took the Israelis days to even patch the wall back up, they still couldn't defend Southern Israel. As Ali said, four and five days later, they're still fighting between the IDF and Palestinians in Southern Israel, and now you're telling us that that same army one or two weeks removed from that collapse is then going to mount this war that they believe they have Western backing for an unlimited open ended mission. And you know, even just –

Nora Barrows-Friedman:

Missing key elements of their Southern Command.

Jon Elmer:

Missing key elements and calling up reserve soldiers who we've saw a report that EL AL flights, Israeli airline flights, are asking people to consolidate their luggage so that their second luggage can be checked, helmets, vests, knee pads for further fighting forces, civilians packing on EL AL airplanes, basic necessities for their soldiers, at the same time their West Bank, you know, at the same time their Israeli police are arming West Bank settlers and Israeli civilian forces with helmets, M4s, vests, but they don't have that for their reserve force. We see lots of signs. I mean, I don't want to say that Israel can't

carry out a long campaign because they're going to run out of artillery shells, because I don't think that's the best way to look at this situation. But it gives you an idea of how stretched they are, before the war has even begun, that they're tapping into strategic reserve that was created, because Israel needed an airlift in 1973 to save themselves, and the United States said, well, next time, let's make it easier to save your country by having the weapons positioned in the country.

And even those reserves, Israel didn't want to necessarily send those reserves to the Ukraine because they didn't want to upset the Russians, who allow them to bomb Syria, because of the weapons shipments from Iran to Hezbollah, you know, rocketry, that would completely change the face of the war, talking about artillery shells versus the ability for Hezbollah to launch like Fateh 110 rockets that go 300 kilometers and carry 500 kilograms of payload. The Palestinian rockets out of Gaza often carry less than 10 kilograms of payload. And the Israelis are very upset about those rockets. The ability for their country to tolerate an open war with Hezbollah in the North, no matter how much the United States wants to float Marines, you know, that they'll have enough artillery shells to massacre tens of thousands of civilians. The war plan that Israel has right now presumes the death of tens of thousands of civilians, there's no other way to do it.

And I mean, we're already, it's difficult to even keep track, but I believe the injured are well into the ten thousands of very serious injuries. We're already talking about tens of thousands of people being killed and injured in awful ways. And the main part of their mission hasn't even, well, the beginning part of their mission hasn't even begun, and then they're talking about these maximalists goals, like removing every fighter. It's not even, it's just not serious. And if it is serious then they're talking about a many years war, and the United States will have to ramp up its wartime industry, which as we know, the Americans love to do, so they'll they're willing to pour hundreds, literally hundreds, of billions of dollars into this existential effort for Israel. And I believe that they'll do that. You know, I don't believe that Israel is going to be left on its own. And so we are talking about Hezbollah and Hamas, ultimately fighting against the combined force of the United States if the goal is existential, according to the Israelis.

Nora Barrows-Friedman:

I think we're going to leave it there. We have obviously so much more to talk about, but we'll save it for the next live stream. Before we go. We have a couple of viewer comments. Go ahead, Asa.

Asa Winstanley:

Yeah, lots of support again tonight for everybody, people saying for all our guests today. Thank you. Dr. Mads. Thank you for describing the reality of this horror Dr. Mads says Billy Clifton. Fight back says thank you, Calla and Max. And Adele says thank you so much for these extremely insightful interviews with incredibly knowledgeable guest. By far the best analysis and pertinent news I have come across. Thank you Adele.

Nora Barrows-Friedman:

Thank you so much. And we want to make sure that everyone hits the like button on the YouTube even though that that seems ridiculous at this point. It does help boost the algorithm so that more people can see this kind of coverage. And so we really appreciate that. As always like and subscribe, go to our website at electronicintifada.net You can sign up for our email list. Check us out on Twitter, @intifada,

all the socials. We're all there. Jon Elmer, thank you so much on behalf of Asa and I and Ali. Thank you everyone for watching and we will be back to you next time. Thanks so much!